

**Media Contact:** **Andrew Williams | 0409 966 931 | [media@accan.org.au](mailto:media@accan.org.au)**

## Media Release

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### **Consumers facing domestic and family violence must see better protections**

The Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) is calling on the Federal Government to implement direct regulation, via a service provider determination, to protect consumers facing domestic and family violence.

ACCAN welcomed the Government's decision earlier this year to enforce protections for financial hardship. Yet just as financial hardship should not be a reason Australians are forced to go without essential communications services, victim-survivors of domestic and family violence (DFV) should not be cut off from crucial means of communication due to the actions of abusers or as a result of poor practice on the part of service providers.

"ACCAN has unfortunately continued to receive extremely concerning reports of victim-survivors being asked to engage with perpetrators," said ACCAN Deputy CEO, Dr Gareth Downing

"Technology-facilitated abuse is becoming more commonplace, and it is unconscionable that Australians facing DFV risk being cut off from potentially life-saving channels of communication, due to poor practices and processes on the part of some in industry" said Dr Downing.

"The efforts of many in industry to drive best-practice and lift standards across the sector need to be acknowledged, but this does not mean that we can excuse unsafe practices by underperformers."

"Recent work by industry to improve outcomes through the Telecommunications Consumer Protection (TCP) Code, while positive, is not supported by a robust and effective enforcement and compliance framework, making it an inappropriate instrument to provide for the protection of victim-survivors" Dr Downing continued.

"Protections for victim-survivors facing serious risks to their personal safety need to be mandatory, readily enforceable and provide strong incentives for industry participants in order to drive compliance."

"Australian telcos should recognise that when it comes to domestic and family violence, the stakes are too high to lean on self-regulation. This is an issue where government should step in to ensure robust protections are in place."

ACCAN looks forward to building appropriate protections for at-risk consumers with stakeholders in government, industry and the community sector.

Read ACCAN's policy position in full [here](#).

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