

Media Contact: Alec Bennetts | 0409 966 931 | media@accan.org.au

Media Release

2 September 2024

Medical authorities must urgently address ‘ticking time bomb’ of devices impacted by 3G shutdown

Medical authorities must take urgent action to ensure that users of up to 200,000 medical devices are aware of the health threat posed by the looming 3G network shutdown.

ACCAN CEO Carol Bennett said the recent delay to the shutdown of the 3G network was to be applauded, but there was growing concern that people were not being warned about the impact on medical devices.

“Many people are simply unaware that devices like insulin pumps, heart rate monitors and personal safety alarms may all be impacted by the shutdown of 3G networks by Telstra and Optus. It is a major health risk,” Ms Bennett said.

“Medical devices are poorly regulated in Australia, they fall far short of pharmaceutical regulation even though they involve implanting equipment into people’s bodies. This has led to some catastrophic failures historically around surgical mesh, breast implants and ASR hip implants.”

Ms Bennett said it was not acceptable for manufacturers to fail to maintain appropriate records or contact patients when there are device failures or at risk of failure.

“The Therapeutic Goods Administration should require medical device manufacturers and their agents to take urgent action to alert consumers to these changes and put in place penalties for non-compliance.”

“The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) should also alert medical practitioners of the changes so they can ensure they can manage appropriate medical care where medical and safety equipment is being used to manage health conditions.”

“ACCAN advocated successfully for a delay to the shutdown of Telstra and Optus 3G networks that was due at the end of August. It was concerned about the impact of the shutdown on medical devices but also the number of people that would no longer be able to use the phones to contact 000.”

“The interim findings of the Senate Committee which looked into the 3G shutdown, released in August, found that up to 380,000 mobile phones may be unable to make regular

calls or reach triple zero emergency services when the nation's 3G networks was due to be switched off."

ACCAN looks forward to collaborating with industry, government and the community sector to deliver vital messages to consumers.

The Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) is Australia's peak communication consumer organisation. The operation of ACCAN is made possible by funding provided by the Commonwealth of Australia under section 593 of the Telecommunications Act 1997. This funding is recovered from charges on telecommunications carriers.

ACCAN is committed to reconciliation that acknowledges Australia's past and values the unique culture and heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. [Read our RAP](#)
