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Media Release

28 August 2024

New Register to fight SMS scam scourge should be mandatory

The growing rate of scams and the devastating impact they are having on Australians has been recognised by the Federal Government through the establishment of the SMS Sender ID Register – but it should be made mandatory.

ACCAN has welcomed this important step in the fight against scams but urges the government to ensure that all industry participants are doing their part to stop fraudsters from stealing money or information from Australians. That requires a mandatory scheme.

ACCAN – Australia’s peak body for communications consumers – welcomed the passage of the *Telecommunications Amendment (SMS Sender ID Register) Bill 2024* through the Federal Parliament on Thursday 22 August.

Under the Bill, the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) is now required to establish and operate a Register which will list authenticated alphanumeric SMS IDs. Scammers can currently impersonate genuine businesses and government agencies to send fraudulent messages, which contributed to consumers losing \$2.7 billion to fraud in 2023.

ACCAN CEO Carol Bennett said that the Register is a vital consumer protection measure that will help Australians more easily determine whether a text message is a scam or legitimate notification from businesses, service providers or governments, and urged the Government to listen to widespread calls to make the Register mandatory.

“ACCAN is a strong supporter of the SMS Sender ID Register and is confident that it will benefit both consumers and businesses. It will help to reduce scam losses and also increase consumer trust in SMS marketing and notifications sent by businesses,” Ms Bennett said.

“Consumers tell us that they receive scam or spam text messages purporting to be from legitimate businesses on a daily basis. While many Australians are confident that they can spot a fraudulent message, scammers are becoming more sophisticated and the old scam give aways, such as spelling or grammar mistakes, are becoming a thing of the past thanks to artificial intelligence. Scam losses remain unacceptably high, and this is contributing to significant financial and emotional distress for Australian families.”

“It is yet to be decided if the Register will be voluntary or mandatory. As legislated, the Bill allows for the adoption of either model. We urge the Minister for Communications to move towards a mandatory registration model, as preferred by 89% of respondents in consultation, in order to reap the full benefit of the Register.”

“We congratulate the Minister for Communications Michelle Rowland, Shadow Minister for Communications David Coleman and other MPs for the efficient and bipartisan manner in which this reform has progressed through Parliament.”

“ACCAN looks forward to seeing a reduction in scam contacts, consumer losses and trauma as a result of the implementation of the Register. Now we need to see it amplified through a mandatory model,” Ms Bennett concluded.

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](#)
