

Affordable communications for all Australians

Access to affordable telecommunications for all consumers is one of ACCAN's three key objectives. Affordability is becoming increasingly important as access to telecommunications services is essential for full economic, social and cultural participation.

For example, the main method of communicating with many government agencies is increasingly through online channels and, with the Coalition Government's Digital First Strategy, this will only become more widespread. This Strategy will require *all* government services and public interactions to be available online by 2017.

In order for the Digital First Strategy to be a success, all Australians need to have access to the internet. There are a number of factors that contribute to a lack of internet uptake, and affordability is often found to be a factor.

In 2014, the [Australian Bureau of Statistics](#) (ABS) found that 98 per cent of households with a household income of \$120,000 or more had internet access, compared to only 57 per cent of households with a household income of less than \$40,000.

A [2013 study](#) conducted by Anglicare Victoria found that 50 per cent of those on low incomes cannot afford internet access.

The big question is how do we address these affordability issues?

This question and others will be explored at ACCAN's 2015 National Conference, [Dollars and Bytes – Communications affordability now and tomorrow](#). We invite you to attend the Conference and join the affordability conversation. **Early bird pricing has been extended until 5pm on Tuesday, 11 August.** [Register now](#) to take advantage of this offer.

This year's keynote speaker is Claire Milne, Visiting Senior Fellow, Department of Media and Communications, London School of Economics. Claire's work has looked at the socially valuable uses of telecommunications and information technologies, which has led to research on universal service and affordability of telecommunications.

The sessions will cover topics such as affordability research, pricing and digital inclusion. Speakers include politicians and representatives from industry and consumer groups.