# Australian mobile benchmark shows improved network coverage

The 2015 edition of the P3 CommsDay Mobile Benchmark Australia shows improved results from the three carriers tested – Telstra, Optus and Vodafone. Now in its second year, the benchmark compares the three network operators against each other and also against their scores last year.

ACCAN congratulates P3 and CommsDay on this important initiative because it provides consumers with independent benchmarking so they can make informed decisions. Improved consumer decision making is one of ACCAN’s [Policy Priorities for 2015-16](http://www.accan.org.au/news-items/media-releases/1116-policy-priorities-2015-16-release).

The benchmark measures smartphone voice and data performance and is based on weeks of extensive testing around the country. The tests measure voice call quality, success rates, download and upload speeds, website access and video streaming performance.

Major metro areas, small towns and cities and connecting highways were a part of the testing areas. The areas tested cover 70 per cent of the Australian population.

Once again, Telstra was the winner, followed by Optus then Vodafone. The maximum score a telco could receive is 1000. Telstra scored 846, Optus scored 780 and Vodafone scored 720. Telstra scored the best in major metro areas and small cities and towns. Optus came in second for metro areas and small cities and towns but had the best coverage on highways. Vodafone was placed third for all areas tested.

A table and graph below show the final results and a breakdown of what the operators scored in metro areas, small cities and towns and highways.

It should be noted that all three mobile operators improved on their scores from last year which reflects their continued investment in mobile networks.

This was also recently reflected in the drop in mobile coverage complaints by almost 50 per cent shown in the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman (TIO) [Annual Report 2014-15](http://annualreport.tio.com.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/191886/2014-15-AnnualReport_with_Financials.pdf).

Mobile coverage is a key issue for many consumers, especially those in rural and remote areas, so these improvements are promising for consumers. ACCAN encourages the telcos to keep investing in mobile network upgrades so consumers can access reliable mobile coverage around the country.

Initiatives like the [Mobile Black Spot Programme](https://www.communications.gov.au/what-we-do/phone/mobile-services-and-coverage/mobile-black-spot-programme) will also contribute to improved coverage for consumers who are poorly served.

The results of the mobile benchmark are also a practical tool for consumers that will help to improve their decision making when choosing which mobile provider will suit their needs.

When choosing a mobile provider consumer should:

* Compare performance of the network operators using the benchmark test
* Compare plans and prices using comparator websites like [WhistleOut](http://www.whistleout.com.au/) to ensure they’re getting the best deal
* Compare coverage maps from the providers as a guide to see if they are likely to get coverage in the areas where they live and work



