



Hot issues

Introducing the 2016 ACCAN Grants projects

We're pleased to announce the successful Grants for 2016. This year the projects look at a range of communications consumer issues including the ballooning market of mental health apps, the security implications of smart home Internet of Things devices, and ways to assist victims of identity theft.

The [ACCAN Grants Scheme](#) funds projects which undertake research on telecommunications issues, represent consumers or create educational tools which empower consumers to derive the greatest benefit from telecommunications products and services.

"I am pleased to announce the projects for 2016 as they cover a range of vital and contemporary communications consumer issues," said ACCAN Deputy CEO, Narelle Clark. "Congratulations to all of the successful teams. We look forward to working with the recipients on these exciting projects."

Research and outcomes achieved by Grants projects inform ACCAN's work and contribute to the broader evidence base for consumers, regulators and service providers in the telecommunications market.

The successful projects are listed below. For more information on the projects, visit the [current Grants page](#).

University of Sydney, Charles Perkins Centre

Finding peace of mind: Navigating the marketplace of mental health apps

The market for apps targeted at mental health is booming, yet completely unregulated. This project will develop a toolkit that will allow consumers to identify and mitigate risks related to privacy, predatory or deceptive advertising, and commercial biases.

Financial and Consumer Rights Council (FCRC)

Rank the Telco 2017

FCRC will publish a 'Rank the Telco' report, similar to its 'Rank the Bank' report, documenting the views and experiences of Victorian financial counsellors regarding the financial hardship practices of telecommunications services. The project will raise awareness of hardship protections, provide a voice for consumers' experience of telecommunications companies' hardship practices and the quality of customer service.

Australian National University, Research School of Management

Understanding Consumer Identity Theft Risks Across Communications Media

One in five Australians have been victims of identity theft and this number is growing. This project will develop consumer-oriented preventative information, and a series of interventions that can be

applied directly to victim risk assessments.

Queensland University of Technology, Digital Media Research Centre
Australian consumer access to digital media content

This project assesses the relative availability of digital media content to Australian consumers, focusing on download and streaming services. An ongoing comparison tool between the Australian and US media markets will be developed, helping Australian consumers to make informed choices about digital media content.

University of New South Wales, School of Electrical Engineering and Telecommunications
Increasing Public Awareness in Australia on Security and Privacy Threats for Smart-Home IoT Devices

Consumers are increasingly buying Internet of Things (IoT) appliances for their homes. These devices can pose huge risks to consumers' privacy and security. This project will profile these threats using real devices available in the market, and develop materials to educate consumers and inform policy-makers on the risk associated with widespread adoption of IoT.

The Association of Hazaras in Victoria
Telecommunications Education

This project will better inform the Afghan community on telecommunication issues by providing linguistically and culturally appropriate information sessions, brochures and other material on topics such as internet plans, mobile phone data usage, phone bills and where to go for help.

For more information on the 2016 Grants projects, contact the ACCAN Grants team on grants@accan.org.au or 02 9288 4000.