

ACCAN Economic Regulation Quarterly Progress Report

Period: 1 January – 31 March 2025

Please note: this report contains developments after the end of the quarter (up until 4 April 2025) to account for the completion of key milestones.

All activities undertaken within this report represent ACCAN's actions to meet the objectives and intended outcomes of the Funding Agreement (**the Grant**) signed by the Minister for Communications on 5 November 2024. As stated in the Grant, the objectives and intended outcomes are to:

- provide funding to allow ACCAN to participate in Special Access Undertaking activities including NBN Co's consultation on the company's Replacement Module Application
- enable the SAU to support the long-term interests of end-users through the provision of consumer perspectives from ACCAN.

Specifically, ACCAN's activities are part of its efforts to ensure consumers are represented during the **pre-lodgement consultation and input** stage of the regulatory reset process, chiefly through ACCAN's participation in NBN Co's Regulatory Proposal Forum.

Activity 1 – Represent the views and interests of telecommunications consumers from a range of sectors.

Since the approval of the SAU Variation in October 2023, ACCAN has worked proactively with the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (**the Department**) to ensure that consumers are effectively represented throughout this regulatory reset process. To this end, ACCAN has widely consulted with its membership base and undertaken preparatory research to inform our consumer representation.

ACCAN continues to be an active participant in the Regulatory Proposal Forum (**RPF**), using our expertise to ensure that NBN Co's expenditure proposals and work programmes are informed by consumer interest, with particular regard for low-income, First Nations, and regional, rural and remote consumers. ACCAN continues to work closely with our RPF colleagues to ensure that these groups and general consumers are effectively represented in this forum.

ACCAN has represented the views and interests of communications consumers through the following activities:

- Participation in the fourth and fifth meetings of the Regulatory Proposal Forum, in which ACCAN is one of seven members, representing consumer views in advocating for greater transparency and stronger investment governance frameworks over NBN Co expenditure.
- Observation over three meetings of the End-User Panel, conducted by NBN Co, and observed by ACCAN and other members of the RPF.
- Submitting to NBN Co's Consultation Paper 2.
- Participating in the two additional RPF sessions hosted by NBN Co.
- Hosting and attending regular independent meetings of the Regulatory Proposal Forum Meeting to canvass views across the forum and agree on our areas of focus in the interest of consumers and the efficacy of the regulatory process.

Activity 2 – Provide funding for representation projects and/or conduct research into social, economic, environmental or technological implications of developments relating to telecommunications.

ACCAN has commissioned work from FTI Consulting, covering four key areas of the RMA process:

- Workstream 1: Review of Service Standards
- Workstream 2: Price Control Methodology
- Workstream 3: Benchmark Demand Forecast
- Workstream 4: Satellite Broadband Services

ACCAN and FTI Consulting have made considerable progression across these four workstreams, with FTI holding workshops to inform ACCAN of their work on Service Standards and Benchmark Demand Forecasting, and future sessions planned for Satellite Broadband Services and Price Control Methodology. FTI's work has informed ACCAN's representation as part of the RPF, including our responses to Consultation Papers 1 and 2.

Activity 3 – Educate consumers and organisations on telecommunications issues.

Given significant aspects of the NBN RMA process are commercial-in-confidence, ACCAN's ability to inform and educate consumers and organisations on telecommunications issues is limited at this stage. At present, ACCAN's most public contribution is in its submission to NBN Co's Consultation Paper 1, which contains significant regulatory and consumer context to promote a broader awareness of issues facing NBN in this regulatory reset process. In addition, we are soon to publish a forthcoming summary of our response to Consultation Paper 2.

ACCAN is committed to a regulatory reset process that meets the needs of all Australian consumers. To ensure that ACCAN members as well as non-member stakeholders and general consumers are effectively represented within this regulatory reset process, ACCAN is currently developing a stakeholder engagement and consultation plan in order to meet with underrepresented community members across the country. ACCAN expects to share more about its public-facing communications and consumer education in Q4, once details are finalised, with activities to commence in July 2025 (Q1 FY26).

Activity 4 – Develop and maintain effective and productive relationships with stakeholders.

ACCAN has continued to engage extensively with NBN Co through active attendance at its scheduled panel sessions, observing its end-user panel meetings, as well as our regulatory scheduled bilateral meetings. In addition, ACCAN has continued to be an active member of the Low Income and Digital Inclusion Forum, ensuring that there are consumer voices throughout NBN's consultation processes. ACCAN also continues to meet regularly with the Department, briefing the Broadband and Emerging Communications Branch on ACCAN participation at NBN Co events as well as providing regular reporting updates.

ACCAN meets regularly with RPF colleagues, hosting independent meetings to engage on core issues in advance of RPF sessions, as well as communicating informally to discuss specific issues of concern. In addition, we meet with core stakeholders who may be affected by particular matters being discussed in the RPF, such as representatives of RRR communities, to ensure that their needs are being met in the engagement process.

ACCAN is currently developing a stakeholder engagement plan to advance throughout this calendar year, to inform our submissions to the ACCC as part of the RPF, as well as independently in the subsequent ACCC-led consultation process, and will provide further updates in future reports.

Activity 5 – Maintain sound governance and reporting arrangements

ACCAN has established appropriate internal governance arrangements to promote effective oversight of the economic regulation project. To this end, ACCAN's Board has established a committee of economic regulation to provide expert advice and guidance on ad-hoc developments, ensuring that ACCAN staff deliver against their goal of effectively representing consumer interests in the economic regulation of NBN Co. ACCAN has further created an individual project budget in order to effectively monitor and administer the Australian Government's financial grant.

ACCAN has established appropriate reporting arrangements with the Department to promote transparency and accountability of our activities under the grant. In agreement with the Department, ACCAN has established monthly meetings with Department officials to track the progress of the grant and report back on ACCAN consumer engagement activities and participation in the RPF. In addition, ACCAN has established quarterly financial reporting arrangements as per the agreement with the Department, to ensure effective oversight and the smooth operation of the grant.

ACCAN intends to upload public-facing quarterly reports of its activities to its website, to ensure that its activities are transparent and accessible by relevant stakeholders, including government, industry and the general public.

Activity 6 – Proactively and positively engaging with the media

As ACCAN's activities continued to be contained within the commercial-in-confidence nature of the Regulatory Proposal Forum, we have had minimal engagement with the media to date. We note that following the publication of our response to Consultation Paper 1 onto ACCAN's website, that this was taken up by the Communications Day industry publication which reported the headline findings (Tuesday 18 February 2025), with a follow-up response by NBN Co the following day (Wednesday 19 February 2025).

ACCAN is developing a media and community engagement strategy in Q4 (April – June) to deploy following NBN Co's lodgement of the RMA by 2 July 2025, with the concurrent finalisation of the Regulatory Proposal Forum. ACCAN expects to promote aspects of the project in local and community media as part of our broader consultation strategy, expected to be implemented over July – November 2025 (Q1 + Q2 FY26).