



## **Standing Advisory Committee on Disability Issues**

### **May 2011 Meeting Report**

The SACDI Chair welcomed everyone to the seventh meeting of the Standing Advisory Committee on Disability Issues (SACDI) and acknowledged the traditional owners of the land. Three apologies were noted.

#### **Discussion of member issues**

The committee discussed emergency service access, approaches to the Hearing Health Review, captioning, training for people with a disability, upcoming research projects and the audio description trial. The committee welcomed the government set top box assistance program, commenting on the quality of the set top box model chosen for distribution. The committee expressed concern at the eligibility criteria, hoping that more people could be included as digital TVs don't have include a screen to speech feature.

#### **Disability Policy Advisers' update**

Community and business feedback for the Disability Action Plan has been positive and the document is being considered for approval by the ACCAN Board. As part of the Inclusive Communications campaign ACCAN is compiling a compendium of current gaps in equipment provision. This will show that a wider service and an independent disability equipment provision service is needed. ACCAN will continue to lobby the ACMA and the DBCDE for measurable captioning benchmarks, pushing for 98% accuracy, a maximum 3 second lag and live captions only for live events. It was agreed that channel seven, in particular the Sunrise program, is setting a high bar that the rest of industry should follow. The committee commended their mix of pre-prepared and live captions only as required. Members were thanked for their feedback on the ICT procurement policy.

#### **Grants and Research Projects**

The committee was provided with an update of the ACCAN grants and research programs. ACCAN's 2011 grants program received a record 71 applications, a 300% increase on previous years. An independent panel has assessed the applications and their recommendations are being taken to the Board. 2010 grant programs are nearing completion and member feedback for all projects was welcomed. SACDI members were invited to assist with ACCAN's latest research project on consumer decision making in the telecommunications market. Several committee members volunteered to be part of an ethics committee to review projects like this.

#### **ACCAN Policy Update**

The committee was provided with a brief report on ACCAN policy and campaigns achievements. Highlights included the launch of the NBN Guide, the Fair Calls For All campaign, a submission to the TIO governance review and a smartphone safety roundtable event as part of Cyber Security Awareness Week.

#### **Industry course on web accessibility**

The committee was briefed about the new Graduate Certificate in Web Accessibility developed by the University of South Australia and the MEAA. This is the first course of its kind in Australia



and one of the first in the world. It will be delivered online over six weeks with three assessments. It will cover policy, usability, WC3, authoring tools, video captioning and future technologies.

#### **National Public Inclusive Infrastructure (NPII)**

The committee was keen for Australia to engage with the NPII project as discussed in the October 2010 SACDI meeting. The project has been allocated funding in the US budget. SACDI and ACCAN agreed to encourage awareness in the DBCDE of the initiative.

#### **Access to emergency services**

The committee discussed the status of emergency SMS services for the Deaf and hearing-impaired communities in Australia. ACE have developed an iPhone application for emergency services. The app allows users to set up a detailed profile and connect to the NRS. It provides the NRS with the user's location information using GPS. The committee was very interested in the smartphone emergency service developments but stressed that emergency SMS services were still needed as not all consumers had access to or could afford a smartphone.

#### **ACCAN outreach and advocacy**

The committee discussed how ACCAN distributes policy information and communicates with members. Appropriate staff members discussed ACCAN's social media strategy and email systems. Staff also briefed the committee on how ACCAN deals with individual consumer inquiries as ACCAN's remit is to address systemic rather than individual issues. Individuals who contact ACCAN are provided with information and referred to the appropriate body for assistance. Sometimes this requires follow-up investigation by ACCAN staff. Individual contacts are asked if they consent to being used as anonymous case studies in ACCAN's policy work.

#### **Other business**

The committee was introduced to the Universal Communications Symbol, developed by Scope. This symbol, much like the universal wheelchair symbol which lets people know if a building is accessible, will let people with complex communication needs know that a business is trained to communicate with them. Members were thanked for their feedback on the Reconciliation Action Plan and reminded to complete the Standing Advisory Committee review questions.

This was the last time the 2010-11 term of SACDI met. Members were thanked by the chair for their contributions. The committee thanked the Disability Policy Advisors and all ACCAN staff for their work.