



Standing Advisory Committee Disability Issues Meeting Report

Thursday 23 February 2012, 10.30am – 3.30 pm

PRESENT: Cathy Clark – Deaf Australia
Kim Curtis – Aboriginal Disability Network
Lachlan Hazelton – Physical Disability Council of NSW
Scott Hollier – Media Access Australia
Kyle Miers – ACCAN Board (Chair of SACDI)
Nick Rushworth – Brain Injury Australia
Andrew Stewart – Deafness Forum of Australia
Denise Wood – University of South Australia
Hank Wylie

Kim Curtis acknowledged the Gadigal people of the Eora nation and brought greetings from her people.

Briefings

Members were provided with a briefing on the ACCAN mid-term review conducted by the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy. The Committee was also informed of the upcoming review of the Strategic Plan by ACCAN's Board.

Indigenous access to disability services

Problems with mobile coverage in remote Indigenous communities were discussed as well as poor quality internet speeds which prevent access to the Video Relay Service (VRS). Members discussed the upcoming trial of the National Relay Service in three Aboriginal communities, noting that some people won't know how to use equipment required to access the service.

Media Access Australia /ACCAN Social Media grant update

A report, detailed guides and quick tip sheets for the accessible social media project are complete and will be available in multiple formats on MAA website from 24th February. Researcher Scott Hollier will be presenting the project at the CSUN conference in the United States on 27th February. The committee discussed ways to promote the resources and the need for multiple accessible formats including simple URLs and Auslan videos. Members identified a need for a resource on producing material in accessible formats.

Grants and Research Update

Members were given an overview of the ACCAN 2012 Grants scheme and invited to participate in and promote the scheme. Members requested further detail about the information given to unsuccessful applicants.

Presentation - Katrina Harrison, Customer Focused Design Manager, NBN Co.

Katrina explained how NBN Co is working on educating people on the value of the NBN and demonstrating how to use technologies. NBN will be redesigning its equipment, like the “NBN Box”, to consider accessibility and safety issues over 12-18 months, working closely with ACCAN to understand universal design principles. NBN Co is aiming to ensure that personal medical alarms can be used without disruption and setting up “community pods” to test devices (especially older devices). NBN Co would like to provide guidelines on compatibility. NBN Co has the capacity to “tag” different services and will update ACCAN on the ability to “tag” different types of services for the purposes of prioritisation for emergency service access.

Members discussed issues with the NBN, stressing the importance of creating consistent and accessible information. Members suggested testing accessible devices and Auslan videos. NBN Co will liaise with ACCAN to identify opportunities to test equipment compatibility across fibre, wireless and satellite at specified sites.

NBN discussion

Members thought that lines of responsibilities may be confused between the Telecommunications Universal Service Management Agency (TUSMA), service providers and NBN Co. Advocates are now waiting to hear from Telstra on the status of their Standard Marketing Plan and Universal Service Obligation policy statement after TUSMA starts.

Members discussed the backup battery consultation. It was recommended that people be supplied with uninterruptible power supply units so they could always make emergency calls with VRS or internet relay.

Presentation – Rohan Buettel, Acting First Assistant Secretary, Networks Policy and Regulation DBCDE

Rohan provided a summary of the structure, primary functions and funding for TUSMA. Members raised concerns about transparency of TUSMA contracts, responsibility for disability equipment and the need for consumer representatives to be involved in TUSMA advisory bodies. The Senate Environment and Communications Legislation Committee’s review of the TUSMA bills may take into account ACCAN’s view about the need for more consumer representatives. TUSMA has the ability and flexibility to give grants for one off pieces of work.

Inclusive Communications

Members were asked to provide feedback on priorities and next steps for ACCAN’s Inclusive Communications advocacy work. Members suggested that further conversation take place via an email based subcommittee. Considering the minimum level of services needed, members suggested VRS and Captel be provided for 12 hours per day but services needed to accommodate different time zones across Australia.

ACMA closed-caption committee

Members discussed the progress of the ACMA closed-caption committee. It was noted that there has not been any ‘quality’ caption complaints made to the ACMA in the last reporting period. Members said consumers were confused about how to make a captioning complaint and which body to complain to. ACCAN will discuss TV captioning with Deaf Australia, Deafness Forum and, Media Access Australia to further develop strategies.