



Standing Advisory Committee on Disability Issues

October 2011 Meeting Report

The Chair welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the 2011-2013 term for the Standing Advisory Committee on Disability Issues (SACDI) and acknowledged the traditional owners of the land. Four apologies were noted.

CEO welcome and discussion of Terms of Reference

ACCAN's CEO welcomed SACDI members and led a discussion about the Standing Advisory Committee's Terms of Reference, ACCAN's strategic plan and the history of ACCAN. SACDI members were encouraged to let ACCAN know when and where improvements could be made. SACDI members unanimously voted in the new Deputy Chair of the committee.

SACDI members wanted to know more about how the government planned Telecommunications Universal Service Management Agency (TUSMA) will operate and planned a formal discussion for the next meeting. SACDI members formally noted their concern that there are few public details about the mandate of the TUSMA and how it will operate.

Confirmation of minutes and action item round up

SACDI members reviewed the minutes from the May 2011 meeting. There were no comments and the minutes were accepted unanimously. SACDI members agreed they would like to share otherwise confidential meeting minutes with the Standing Advisory Committee on Consumer Issues.

SAC Review

ACCAN provided a summary of the review of 2009-2011 Standing Advisory Committees (SACs). The results were overwhelmingly positive with members indicating they enjoyed meetings and were able to engage with ACCAN's work. There were requests to clarify the purpose of the SACs and what percentage of the meeting was should be reporting, feedback and debate. A standing agenda item was added to future meetings to allow a board member to provide feedback to SACDI. SACDI members requested that ACCAN Disability Officers send committee members a monthly update on communications and disability issues. It was agreed that ACCAN will provide more reports in advance of SACDI meetings to facilitate discussion.

Member issues

The committee was provided with an update on the Media Access Australia (MAA) project on social media accessibility and the new Web Accessibility training course provided by the University of South Australia and MAA. There was a discussion about how SACDI and ACCAN could develop tools for small business owners to help them explain accessibility requirements to website designers. The committee considered how to encourage telecommunications companies to achieve higher accessibility ratings for their websites. There was a discussion about setting appropriate meeting dates for future SACDI meetings.

Disability Policy Advisers update

The committee discussed ACCAN's response to the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy's (DBCDE) Review of Access to Telecommunications and provided

recommendations on priority advocacy areas for ACCAN Disability Policy Advisers. The committee identified plain English contracts and product information as a priority area that sat outside of the Review of Access to Telecommunications. The committee was provided with updates on the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) captioning committee, the audio description trial and telecommunications consumer liaison committee meetings that ACCAN has attended.

As part of ACCAN's Disability Action Plan the committee provided suggestions on which documents should be provided in accessible formats (either in Auslan, audio version, Easy English or languages other than English). The committee was informed that ACCAN had released a tip sheet on making a complaint about TV captions and published a position statement on accessible ICT Public Procurement.

Grants and Research Projects

The committee was provided with an overview of the ACCAN grants program and encouraged to act as advisers for the current Grants Scheme projects. This would entail providing expertise and keeping up-to-date with project progress. The committee was given a briefing on ACCAN research activity plans, which will focus on national consumer communications trends and ICT affordability issues.

Emergency Services Application

Australian Communications Exchange (ACE) provided the committee with a summary of the emergency services smartphone application. The committee discussed the challenges of rolling out a smartphone application and SMS emergency services as well as the appropriateness of each service for their constituents. The committee raised concerns about the affordability of smartphones for many people with a disability. ACCAN has convened a meeting with key stakeholders to develop a unified consumer position on both emergency service options. SACDI members were encouraged to contribute to this process.

ACCAN Policy Update

The committee was informed of the DBCDE Regional Telecommunications Review. ACCAN is undertaking extensive community consultation and preparing a submission that will focus on telecommunications issues that have not been addressed in other reviews.

The committee discussed proposed government changes to the pre-paid phone identity verification process. Currently, identity verification for pre-paid services is required at both the point of sale and upon activation. The government is now proposing identity verification take place at the point of activation only and has created a list of ways people will be able to do this. SACDI members were asked to consider if any of the people they represent would not be able to meet identity requirements.

The committee was provided with an update on the Fair Calls For All campaign. The campaign has worked with many organisations and individuals to put in a final submission to the ACMA Numbering Plan Inquiry. An announcement from the ACMA is expected soon. Members were encouraged to endorse the Fair Calls For All campaign.

The ACCAN policy update was cut short due to meeting time, reports on unaddressed agenda items were provided by email.

Members were thanked by the Chair for their contributions.