ACCAN STRATEGIC PLAN JUNE 2021-24

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# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Communications are a modern-day essential service. From accessing government services and telehealth, to job seeking and studying, every part of our lives now requires communications services that are trusted, inclusive and available for all. However, many barriers remain that mean that Australians are being left disconnected from the digital world.

The most recent data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics shows that 2.5 million Australians are not online because of affordability issues, location, or lack of digital literacy. We must act to prevent Australians from becoming isolated and struggling in these circumstances due to barriers in accessing communications services and equipment.

There have been some significant steps forward for communications consumers in recent years. We have seen nbn Co invest $50 million to help households with school-aged children to get connected during the COVID-19 pandemic, with additional plans to explore a targeted service for low-income households. The continued growth of ACCAN’s Accessible Telecoms website and call centre has also been a positive result for People with Disability across the nation who need to find communications products and services to meet their needs. Despite this progress, there is still much to be done to protect the rights of communications consumers in Australia.

I am proud to present the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network’s response to this challenge in our three-year strategy for 20212024. This strategy focuses on how we will work to protect the interests of consumers in a growing and converged communications sector. It supports our long-term goal of ensuring that communications services are accessible and obtainable for all Australians.

This new strategy puts consumers at the heart of everything we do at ACCAN. We will pursue consumer-centric outcomes from the communications sector and work to ensure that communications and consumer regulatory frameworks operate in the interests of end users. As the way that Australians communicate continues to evolve, ACCAN will broaden our impact to include a greater focus on digital platforms and emerging communications consumer issues.

As we undertake this new strategic direction, we are dedicated to maintaining the cultural integrity of ACCAN to effectively adapt to an evolving business landscape. We hope that our members are inspired to join our staff and Board on this exciting and meaningful journey together towards a future where communications consumers are guaranteed services that are trusted, inclusive and available for all.

Deirdre O’Donnell – ACCAN Chair

# WHO IS ACCAN?

The Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) has been the voice for communications consumers for over a decade. Since its foundation, ACCAN has built a strong reputation for providing trusted insights in the arena of communications policy, research and information while working collaboratively with the telecommunications industry, regulators and the Government.

ACCAN recognises that the way consumers communicate continues to evolve with the convergence of telecommunications, the internet, and broadcasting, as well as the growth in digital platforms. As such, ACCAN is dedicated to reflecting the changing needs and concerns of communications consumers across the nation in our work.

# OUR CONTEXT

## Vision

Communications services that are trusted, inclusive, accessible, and available for all

## Values

* Act with courage
* Operate openly
* Be inclusive
* Build relationships
* Value people

Mission

* Represent consumers and the public interest, with particular attention to the needs of consumers for whom the market is not working;
* Inspire, inform, enable and equip consumers to act in their own interests; and
* Research emerging consumer communications issues to provide evidence-based policy advice.

# OUR STRATEGIC PILLARS

* Expanding Influence in an Evolving Communications Environment
* Leading Through Change and Reform
* Consumers at the Heart of Everything We Do
* Building Capability to Continually Enhance Our Impact

## Expanding Influence in an Evolving Communications Environment

### Aim

We work to broaden our impact and continue to serve as the voice on communications issues.

### Strategy

We do this by:

* being the consumer voice on communications issues including media and digital platforms;
* researching and defining communications consumer issues including emerging areas of detriment;
* effectively promoting communications consumer policy proposals, research and information; and
* being a leading provider of education materials for communications consumers.

## Leading Through Change and Reform

### Aim

We strive for effective policy and regulatory reform.

### Strategy

* We do this by:
* working to close the digital divide;
* holding communications suppliers accountable;
* promoting consumer rights, privacy protection, security and safety online; and
* advocating to industry and government to ensure communications and consumer regulatory frameworks deliver consumer-centric outcomes.

## Consumers at the Heart of Everything We Do

### Aim

We work with consumers to effectively identify and represent their interests to deliver significantly improved outcomes.

### Strategy

We do this by:

* representing a diverse group of stakeholders on communications issues;
* anticipating the future challenges of modern Australia through consumer consultation;
* advocating for communications services to satisfy evolving consumer needs; and
* ensuring consumers are represented at the table for all important policy debates.

## Building Capability to Continually Enhance Our Impact

### Aim

We continue to strengthen our organisation to effectively adapt to meet future needs.

### Strategy

We do this by:

* continually developing our people so they have the skills and competencies needed to deliver outcomes in an increasingly complex environment;
* supporting the participatory culture and upholding ACCAN’s values;
* regularly engaging with a representative membership base to inform ACCAN activities; and
* obtaining necessary resources to respond to a broadening and emerging remit.

# OUR PLAN FOR SUCCESS

## Expanding Influence in an Evolving Communications Environment

We work to broaden our impact and continue to serve as the voice on communications issues by:

* being the consumer voice on communications issues including media and digital platforms;
* researching and defining communications consumer issues including emerging areas of detriment;
* effectively promoting communications consumer policy proposals, research and information; and
* being a leading provider of education materials for communications consumers.

### Success Indicators 2024

* Year on year increase in publication of online consumer education materials.
* Year on year increase in engagement on media and digital platforms, resulting in better consumer outcomes.
* Consumer outcomes are directly correlated to ACCAN’s research.
* ACCAN is recognised by media and the general public as the leading and authoritative source of information

## Leading Through Change and Reform

We strive for effective policy and regulatory reform by:

* working to close the digital divide;
* holding communications suppliers accountable;
* promoting consumer rights, privacy protection, security and safety online; and
* advocating to industry and government to ensure communications and consumer regulatory frameworks deliver consumer-centric outcomes.

### Success Indicators 2024

* Demonstrable growth in available, affordable, and accessible communications services year on year in Australia.
* Consumer safeguard measures are in place and delivering for consumers and small businesses.
* ACCAN’s Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) and Disability Action Plan (DAP) are models for the sector and registered with Reconciliation Australia (RA) and Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) respectively.
* All policy and advocacy positions are highly visible through ACCAN’s industry engagement and events program.

## Consumers at the Heart of Everything We Do

We work with consumers to effectively identify and represent their interests to deliver significantly improved outcomes by:

* representing a diverse group of stakeholders on communications issues;
* anticipating the future challenges of modern Australia through consumer consultation;
* advocating for communications services to satisfy evolving consumer needs; and
* ensuring consumers are represented at the table for all important policy debates.

### Success Indicators 2024

* Engagement in an increasing number of policy issues informed by an effective consultation framework.
* Communications services acknowledged as an essential public utility.
* ACCAN’s in-depth understanding of consumer needs demonstrated by an increasing number of supporters.
* More effective customer service and complaint handling is in place for all communications services.

## Building Capability to Continually Enhance Our Impact

We continue to strengthen our organisation to effectively adapt to meet future needs by:

* continually developing our people so they have the skills and competencies needed to deliver outcomes in an increasingly complex environment;
* supporting the participatory culture and upholding ACCAN’s values;
* regularly engaging with a representative membership base to inform ACCAN activities; and
* obtaining necessary resources to respond to a broadening and emerging remit.

### Success Indicators 2024

* Fit for purpose model in place for funding all activities.
* Board and staff skills and competencies are commensurate with expanded remit.
* Organisational Development strategy ensures all ACCAN leaders are the custodians of our culture.
* ACCAN Membership base reflective of the diverse communities in Australia

# OUR MEMBERS

2508+Disconnected

Able Australia

AccessPlus WA Deaf

Achieve Australia

ACT Council of Social Service Inc

Adult Learning Australia

Association of Independent Retirees

Australian Council of Social Service

Australian Federation of Deaf Societies

Australian Federation of Disability Organisations

Australian Privacy Foundation

Australian Regional Business Development Specialists

Australian Seniors Computer Clubs Association

Better Hearing Australia

Better Internet for Rural, Regional & Remote Australia

Blind Citizens Australia

Broadband alliance Inc T/A Australian Smart Communities Assn

Broadband for the Bush Alliance

CARE Inc

Central Land Council

Centre For Accessibility Australia

Centre for Appropriate Technology

Centre for Inclusive Design

CHOICE

CITIES - Centre for Indigenous Technology Information and Engineering Solutions

Collective of Self Help Groups

Combined Pensioners & Superannuants Association of NSW Inc

Communication Rights Australia

Community Broadcasting Association of Australia

Community Legal Centres NSW

Consumer Action Law Centre

Consumer Credit Legal Service WA

Consumer Policy Research Centre

Consumers’ Association of South Australia

Consumers’ Federation of Australia

Cotton Australia

Council of Small Business Organisations of Australia

Council on the Ageing (WA) Inc

Council on the Ageing Australia

Country Women’s Association of Australia

Deaf Australia

Deaf Children Australia

Deafblind Australia

Deafness Forum of Australia

Desert Knowledge Australia

Differently Abled People Association Inc

Digital Gap Initiative Ltd (DGI)

Digital Tasmania

Electronic Frontiers Australia

Ethnic Communities Council of WA

Expression Australia (Formerly Tasmanian Deaf Society)

Family Drug Support

Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia

Financial Counselling Australia

Financial Counselling Victoria Inc

Financial Counsellors Association of Queensland

Financial Counsellors Association of Western Australia

Financial Rights Legal Centre

Health Consumers of Rural & Remote Australia

Hitne

HK Training & Consultancy P/L

IDEAS NSW

IEEE Society for the Social Implications of Technology (SSIT) – Australia Chapter

Illawarra Legal Centre Inc

Indigenous Consumer Assistance Network Ltd

Indigenous Remote Communication T/A First Nations Media Australia

Infoxchange

Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development

Internet Australia

Isolated Children’s Parents’ Association Australia

Isolated Children’s Parents’ Association NT

Isolated Children’s Parents’ Association of NSW

Isolated Children’s Parents’ Association QLD

Isolated Children’s Parents’ Association WA

itControl

Kaay Holdings Pty Ltd

Leep NGO Inc

MoneyMob Talkabout Ltd

National Association of Community Legal Centres

National Children’s and Youth Law Centre

National Council of Women of Australia

National Ethnic Disability Alliance

National Farmers Federation

NSW Council of Social Service (NCOSS)

NSW Farmers Association

People with Disabilities WA

People with Disability Australia

Physical Disability Australia

Physical Disability Council of NSW

Public Interest Advocacy Centre

Queensland Consumers Association

Queensland Council of Social Service Ltd

Redfern Legal Centre

Scope (Aust) Ltd

South Australian Financial Counsellors Association

Tasmanians with Disabilities Inc

Tenants Queensland Inc/NATO

The Benevolent Society

Think+ DO Tank Foundation Ltd

Uniting Care Wesley Bowden

Vision Australia

Wamboin Communications Action Group

Westjustice

Women with Disabilities Australia

Women’s Legal Service NSW

Women’s Legal Services Aust

Youth Affairs Network of Queensland

# Contact Us

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