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## Submission

3 November 2022

Communications Alliance Ltd.  
PO Box 444  
Milsons Point NSW 1565

### Re: C555:2020 Integrated Public Number Database (IPND)

The Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) thanks Communications Alliance for the opportunity to comment on the *C555:2020 Integrated Public Number Database (IPND)* Industry Code (the Code).

ACCAN is the peak body that represents consumers on communications issues including telecommunications, broadband, and emerging new services. ACCAN provides a strong unified voice to industry and government as we work towards communications services that are trusted, inclusive and available for all.

The IPND provides an important public asset for emergency calls, emergency warnings and law enforcement. Noting the critical role of the IPND, ACCAN continues to have concerns with respect to:

- Data accuracy for the purposes of emergency calls, emergency warnings and law enforcement.
- Consumer awareness of the IPND and making the IPND Code more understandable.

At present, there are ongoing issues with accuracy of Public Number Customer Data (PNCD), with several compliance issues compromising the accuracy of the PNCD in the IPND. ACCAN remains concerned by potential gaps in the IPND and the repeated failure by Carriage Service Providers (CSPs) to upload PNCD to the IPND. Since 2018, the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) has taken action against 30 CSPs for non-compliance with the IPND rules and has issued nearly four million dollars in penalties.<sup>1</sup> Issues of compliance compromise the accuracy of PNCD in the IPND and risk slowing or obstructing services that rely on the IPND.

There are also issues with the accuracy of data that is uploaded to the IPND. This can include issues where operators' details or customers' details are not properly recorded. For example, investigations by the ACMA have shown that an operator, Symbio Networks Pty Ltd, acting as a Data Provider, used an incorrect CSP code<sup>2</sup> for several years when uploading data to the IPND on behalf of

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<sup>1</sup> Talevski, J. 2022. "Software error sees Aussie Broadband fined \$213K for IPND breach". *ARN*. Available at: <https://www.arnnet.com.au/article/701251/software-error-sees-aussie-broadband-fined-213k-ipnd-breach/>

<sup>2</sup> A unique Data Provider Code and CSP code combination is required to identify the CSP responsible for ensuring accurate, complete and up to date PNCD and to also identify the Data Provider responsible for uploading the PNCD to the IPND Manager.

another CSP.<sup>3</sup> In another example, Lycamobile, paid an infringement notice for uploading inaccurate customer information including “keyboard smashes or fictional names”.<sup>4</sup>

The IPND must be complete, accurate and up to date to support emergency services. Incorrect CSP codes in the IPND may slow the ability of law enforcement to contact CSPs and stop spam activity. We encourage CSPs and Data Providers to prioritise processes to ensure the accuracy of IPND and meet their compliance responsibilities.

As noted in our previous submissions<sup>5</sup>, the Code needs to be made more understandable for the general consumer. Definitions and instructions should be communicated in plain English and simple sentences with as little jargon as possible. As such, we recommend that the definition of Reconciliation in clause 2.2 of the Code be simplified for clarity. Currently, the definition reads:

Reconciliation means the comparison and correction by a CSP, or Data Provider, of the PNCD held by the IPND Manager associated to that particular CSP, or Data Provider, with the CSP, or Data Providers own data for a Number...

We recommend this definition be changed to:

Reconciliation means the **mandatory** comparison and correction of PNCD held by the IPND Manager with PNCD held by the CSP or Data Provider. This reconciliation is undertaken by the CSP or Data Provider with their associated PNCD in the IPND, for a Number...

Furthermore, specific timeframes should be used to ensure that the Code is complied with in an appropriate amount of time. Clause 4.2.2 of the Code should specify the timeframe in which a CSP must register with the IPND Manager; currently, the Code states this must occur “in a timely manner”. We recommend that a CSP must register with the IPND manager within 10 business days to match the obligation in clause 4.2.8. A specific timeframe will ensure CSPs fulfil their obligation in clause 4.2.1 without undue delay.

We thank Communications Alliance for the opportunity to comment on the Code. Should you wish to discuss any of the issues raised in this submission further, please do not hesitate to contact me at 02 9288 4010.

Yours sincerely,  
Samuel Kininmonth  
Policy Adviser

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*The Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) is Australia's peak communication consumer organisation. The operation of ACCAN is made possible by funding provided by the Commonwealth of Australia under section 593 of the Telecommunications Act 1997. This funding is recovered from charges on telecommunications carriers.*

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<sup>3</sup> ACMA 2021. *Investigation Report*. Available at: <https://www.acma.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-11/Investigation%20Report%20-%20Symbio%20Networks%20Pty%20Ltd.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> ACMA. 2021. *Investigation report: Lycamobile May 2021*, p.5. Available at: <https://www.acma.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-05/Lycamobile-Investigation-Report-for-publishing.docx>

<sup>5</sup> ACCAN 2019. *Feedback on draft Integrated Public Number Database (IPND) Code*. Available at: <https://accan.org.au/accans-work/submissions/1677-feedback-on-draft-integrated-public-number-database-ipnd-code>