

PDF Accessibility Testing Consultation
Service Development and Strategy Team
Online Services Branch, AGIMO
Department of Finance and Deregulation
John Gorton Building
King Edward Terrace
Parkes ACT 2600

19th October 2009

Dear Sir/Madam,

The Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the PDF Accessibility Review.

Documents in PDF have been a great barrier to people who are blind or vision impaired for many years. The latest versions of screen-reading software and the recent accessibility features of Adobe products have made considerable improvements to the information needs of consumers who are blind or vision-impaired. However as outlined in the submissions by Blind Citizens Australia and Media Access Australia, there are still considerable problems when older versions are used.

Therefore, ACCAN recommends that Government documents in PDF are also made available in other formats such as HTML, MS Word or RTF. This will need to continue into the foreseeable future until the accessible features of Adobe software are used as a matter of course and until people who are blind or vision impaired have been able to afford updating to the latest versions of screen-reading software.

ACCAN supports the submissions made by Blind Citizens Australian and Media Access Australia and will be pleased to discuss this further with you.

About ACCAN

ACCAN is the peak body that represents all consumers on communications issues including telecommunications, broadband and emerging new services. ACCAN provides a strong unified voice to industry and government as consumers work towards availability, accessibility and affordability of communications services for all Australians. Consumers need ACCAN to promote better consumer protection outcomes ensuring speedy responses to complaints and issues. ACCAN aims to empower consumers so that they are well informed and can make good choices about products and services. As a peak body, ACCAN will activate its broad and diverse membership base to campaign to get a better deal for all communications consumers.

ACCAN Goals and Activities

1. Improved accessibility, affordability and availability of communications services to all consumers;
2. Better informed consumers with access to Australian information and communications technology resources;
3. A strong, co-ordinated voice which uses our diversity as a point of strength for communications consumers, nationally and internationally;
4. Effective advocacy for consumers to Government, regulators and the industry in the development of policy, legislation and industry practices;
5. Inclusive consultation with stakeholders to identify areas and priorities for industry and/or regulatory responses;
6. Robust research to support evidence based policy development and consumer education programs;
7. Meaningful participation in regulatory and co-regulatory activities including industry codes, standards and guidelines
8. Outreach, campaigns and activities that involve consumers in the communications arena
9. Enhanced capacity for consumer representatives through information seminars, training and international engagement
10. Openness, transparency and inclusion of all parties interested in representing consumers on communications issues

Yours sincerely,

Gunela Astbrink

Manager, Disability Policy and Research