

# Appendix 1

<b>ACCAN Organisational Members as at October 2011</b>	
Able Australia	Customer Underground
Achieve Australia	Cyberspace Law and Policy Centre
ACT for Kids	Deaf Australia
Australia For All Alliance Inc	Deaf Can Do
Australian Communication Exchange ACE	Deaf Children Australia
Australian Council of Social Service	Deaf NT
Australian Federation of Deaf Societies	Deaf Society of NSW
Australian Federation of Disability Organisations	Deafness Forum
Australian Library and Information Association	Digital Tasmania
Australian Pensioners & Superannuants' League QLD	Diversicare
Australian Pensioners and Superannuants Federation	Electronic Frontiers Australia
Australian Privacy Foundation	Ethnic Communities Council of WA
Australian Rehabilitation & Assistive Technology Association	Family Drug Support
Australian Seniors Computer Clubs Association	Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia
Australian Telecommunications User Group	Financial Counselling Australia
Better Hearing Australia	Financial Counsellors Association of Queensland
Blind Citizens Australia	Footscray Community Legal Centre
Brotherhood of St Laurence	Gateway Community Group Inc
BuildersNet Pty Ltd	Health Consumers of Rural & Remote Australia
CARE Inc	Illawarra Legal Centre Inc
Central Land Council	Indigenous Consumer Assistance Network Ltd
Centre for Appropriate Technology	Indigenous Remote Communications Association
Centre for eCommerce & Communications	Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development
Cerebral Palsy Alliance	Internet Society of Australia
CHOICE	Isolated Children's and Parents Association Australia
CICADA QLD	Isolated Children's Parents' Association Northern Territory State Council Inc.
CITIES - Centre for Indigenous Technology Information and Engineering Solution	Isolated Children's Parents' Association of NSW
Collective of Self Help Groups	Isolated Children's Parents' Association WA
Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association of Victoria CPA	Kingsford Legal Centre
Communications Law Centre	Macarthur Legal Centre
Communications Rights Australia	Media Access Australia
Community Broadcasting Association of Australia	National Association of Community Legal Centres
Community Legal Centres NSW	National Children's and Youth Law Centre
Connecting Up Australia	National Council of Women of Australia
Consumer Action Law Centre	National Ethnic Disability Alliance
Consumer Credit Legal Centre NSW	Novita Children's Services Inc
Consumer Utilities Advocacy Centre	NSW Council of Social Service
Consumers' Association of South Australia	NSW Farmers Association
Consumers' Federation of Australia	People with Disabilities WA
Council on the Ageing , Australia	People with Disability Australia Incorporated
Council on the Aging, Western Australia	Physical Disability Australia
Country Women's Association of Australia	Physical Disability Council of NSW
Redfern Legal Centre	Public Interest Advocacy Centre
Queensland Council of Social Service	Queensland Consumers Association
South Australian Financial Counsellors Association	The Settlement Neighbourhood Centre
Swinburne Institute for Social Research	Vision Australia Limited
Sydney Trade Point	Western Australian Deaf Society Inc.
Tasmanian Deaf Society	Westwood Spice
	Women with Disabilities Australia
	Women's Legal Services NSW

Tasmanians with Disabilities Inc.  
Telecommunications Consumer Group SA Inc  
Tenants Union of Queensland inc.  
The Australia Institute

Workventures  
Yirrkala Homelands Schools  
Youth Affairs Council of Victoria

## Appendix 2

# Talking Back: ACCAN Members Speak Out About Telco Customer Service

## ACCAN Members Survey

May 2010

### Background to the survey

Customer service is a hot issue at the moment, and it is hardly any great surprise to consumer advocates.

Customer service is the largest unresolved problem area in the communications sector. The statistics bear out what telco consumers already know: the customer experience of getting a complaint resolved, or even a query responded to, is often an unsatisfactory one. Around a third of complaints to the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman (TIO) are about customer service and complaint handling.<sup>1</sup>

Following two years of out-of-control growth in consumer complaints, last year the TIO embarked on a campaign aimed at encouraging the telecommunications industry to re-focus on customers and their experiences. The *connect.resolve* campaign, which ran from January to June 2009, resulted in an overall stabilisation of complaint numbers (although at unacceptably high numbers).

The second half of 2009 saw a drop of 7% in total complaint numbers, but customer service and complaint handling issues continued to make up about a third of TIO complaints. While these types of complaints are falling at a similar rate to overall complaint numbers, there is yet to be a significant reduction in these fundamental issues.<sup>2</sup>

In April, the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) announced it would be launching an inquiry into customer service in the telco industry. Shortly after, Communications Alliance commenced its review of the key self-regulatory consumer protection instrument, the Telecommunications Consumer Protection Code.

There is clearly a lot of interest in improving customer service – the question is what exactly needs to be fixed?

Whilst we know a lot about the complaint statistics and regularly see consumers venting about their experiences in online forums, we don't yet have meaningful information about what customer service issues are of the greatest concern to ACCAN members. The purpose of this survey was to engage our members directly on what is shaping up to be one of ACCAN's key work areas in the next year.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.tio.com.au/Members/connect-resolve/ConnectResolveUpdateReport.pdf> accessed 7 May 2010

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

## **About the survey**

We do not present this research as a statistically representative quantitative sample, but rather a qualitative window into our members' experiences and opinions to help shape our policy and campaigns regarding customer service. It is important to highlight, however, that our member respondents, in answering on behalf of their organisations and members, broadly represent Australian consumers.

We posed 11 substantive questions, which asked members to tell us what their key concerns were around customer service. We asked them to identify what areas they would like improvements in, and their ideas about how customer service can be improved. We sought additional comments for most questions, to encourage feedback and issues we hadn't already considered. Not all respondents answered all questions, and we have indicated the sample size pertaining to each question.

The survey tool we used was Survey Monkey, and members were given two weeks to complete the survey online.

## **About the participants**

All of ACCAN's 139 individual and organisational members were asked to complete the survey and there were 45 respondents in total. Of these, 23 answered on behalf of an organisation, and 22 answered in their individual capacity.

Respondents had to nominate whether they were answering as a representative of an organisation or as an individual, but could not do both. This is worth noting because many organisations' representatives are also individual members, but could not be nominated as such for the purposes of this survey.

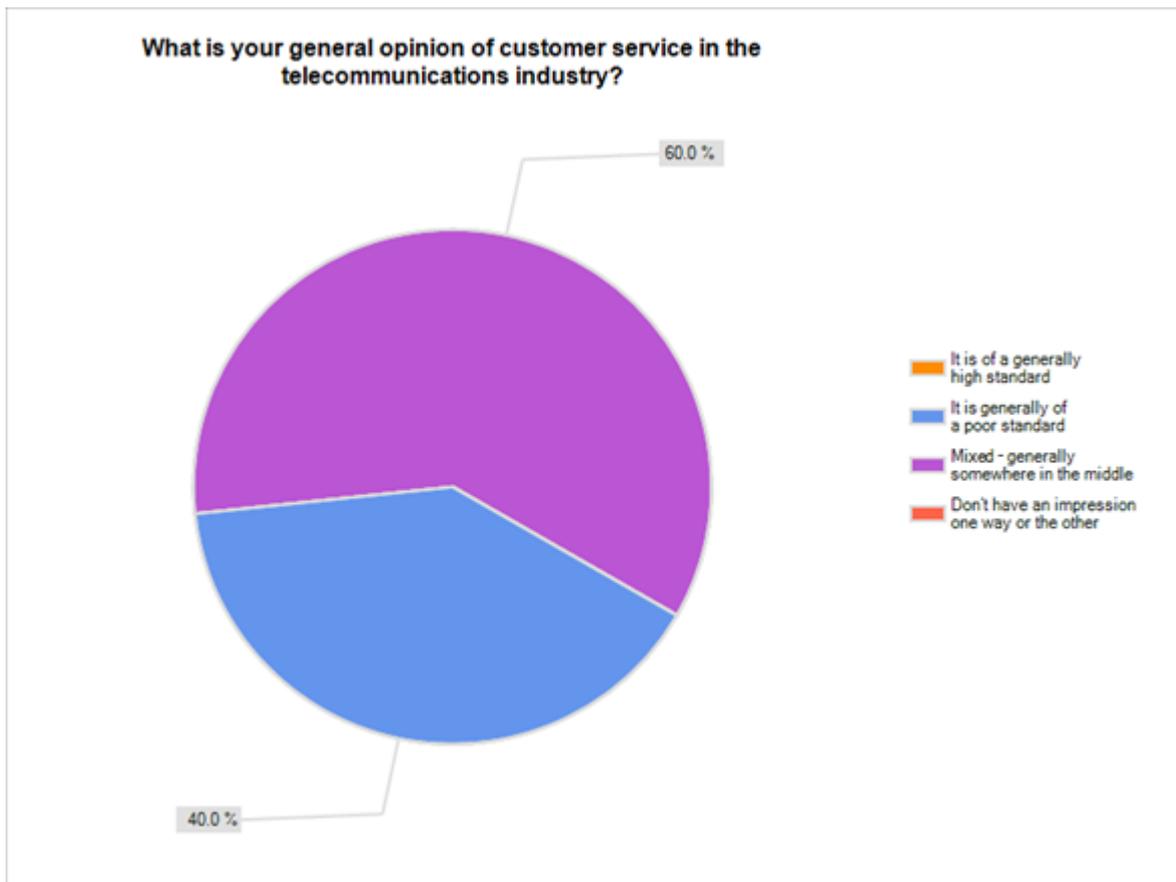
Respondents were asked to nominate which constituents they represented. This was a multiple choice answer based on broad characteristics such as rural and remote, Indigenous, people with disabilities, low income, seniors, etc, and people could nominate multiple sectors.

## **About this report**

This report analyses the views of ACCAN members on customer service issues. Wherever possible, we have included comments from members, to bring life to the broad range of themes that permeate the survey.

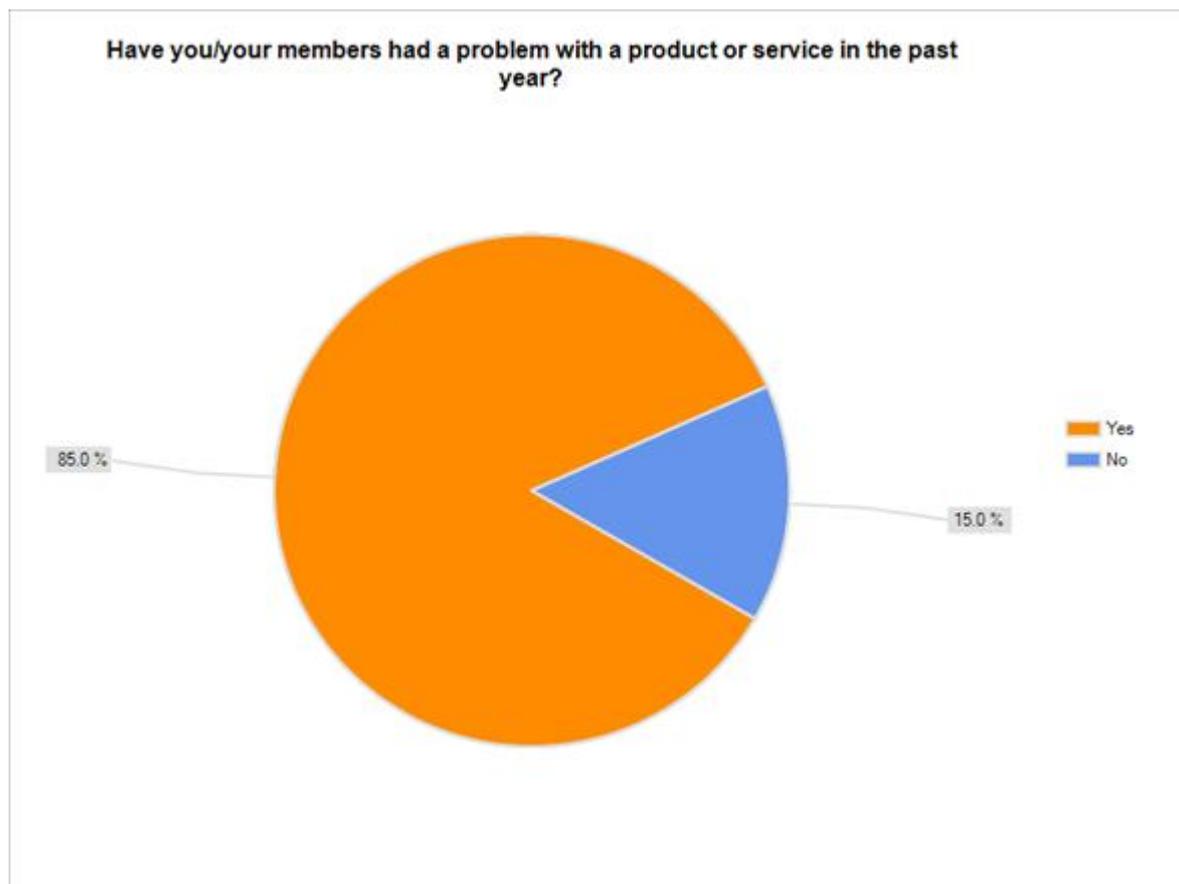
ACCAN is committed to working with our members to ensure the views we form and campaigns we pursue are aligned with member experience. So, a big thank you to ACCAN members for their participation in this project. Your feedback was invaluable and will help shape the work ACCAN does moving into the future.

## What is your general opinion of customer service in the telecommunications industry?



The first question we posed, "what is your general opinion of customer service in the telecommunications industry", was designed to gauge views at the highest level. 60% of respondents indicated that telco customer service is a bit of a mixed bag, and the remaining 40% consider it to be generally poor. None of the respondents answered that it was of a generally high standard, or that they didn't have an impression one way or the other. (Sample size: 20)

## Have you/your members had a problem with a product or service in the past year?

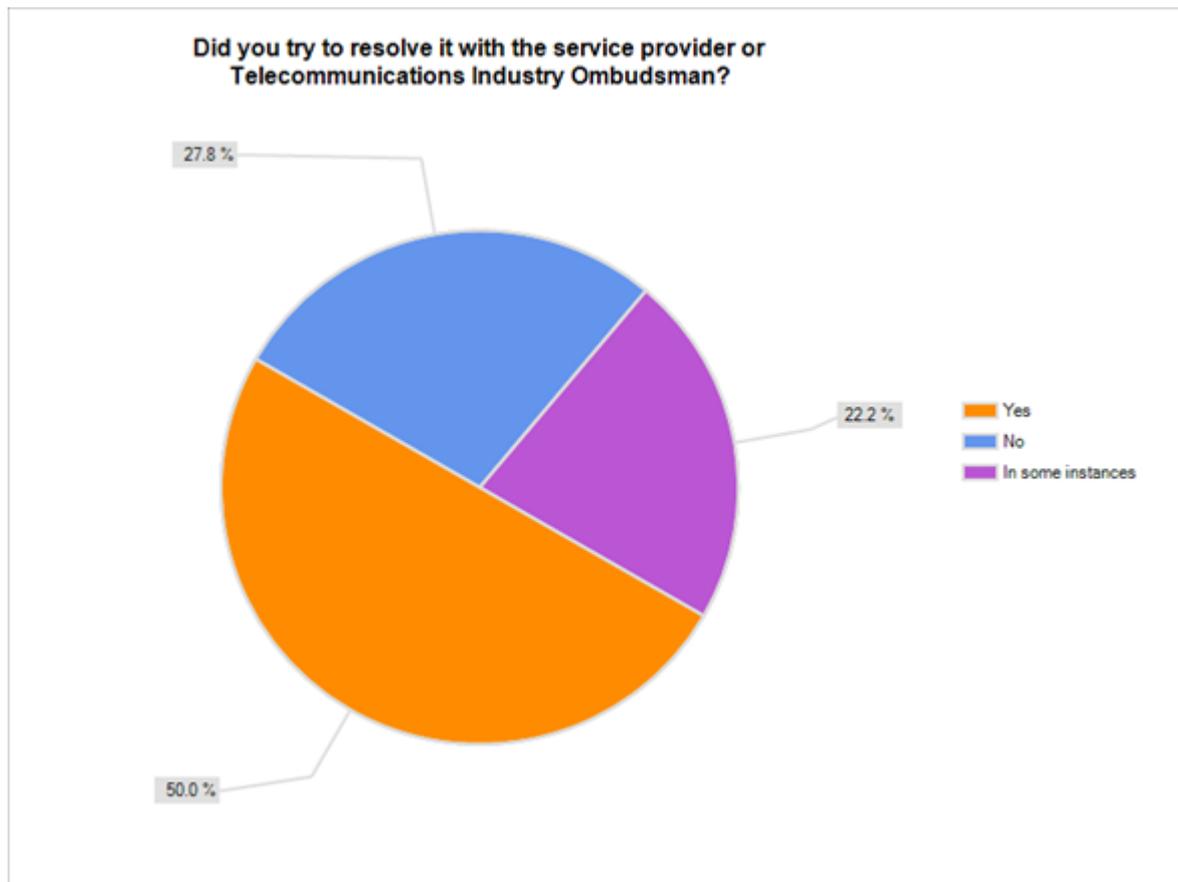


A whopping 85% of respondents indicated that they, or a member/client, had experienced a problem with a product or service in the last year. 15% answered no to this question.

Eighteen respondents provided additional information about the nature of their complaint, and the range of issues reported here was broad.

Issues included billing problems (most cited), problems switching Internet Service Provider; sales practices, debt collection issues, not honouring customer service commitments; line quality and faults more broadly; inability to get through to customer service; being sold inappropriate products the person couldn't afford; automated systems; limited range of services for people with a disability and assistive equipment needs; equipment failure; broadband and mobile coverage; repairs of public phones; captioning and cinemas; access to hardship assistance. (Sample size: 20)

## Did you try to resolve it with the service provider or Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman?



At least half the respondents indicated that the service provider or Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman (TIO) was contacted to help resolve a dispute, with 50% stating that yes they had tried to resolve a dispute. 22.2% percent of respondents stated that in some instances they had tried to sort out their problem, and the remaining 27.8% said they didn't try at all. We asked people to provide additional information in an additional section, particularly if they hadn't tried to resolve the dispute.

In the additional comments, many noted that dealing with service provider internal dispute resolution was a difficult process:

*Ultimately was resolved, but only after delays, by the Provider.*

*Just too difficult and involved. I'm already busy enough as it is.*

*Advise clients to go to TIO, but not sure if they did.*

*Financial counsellors would often use the TIO.*

*We encourage all consumers to go to the TIO and bypass Internal Dispute Resolution (because telco IDR is so hopeless).*

(Sample size: 18)

**What are the biggest problems with telco customer service? Please select all that apply and rank on a scale of 1 – 10**

Members were asked to tell us what the biggest problems with telco customer service are, and rank them on a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being “not a problem at all”, and 10 being a “massive problem”. There was also a ‘not applicable’ option.

The statements provided were:

- Too many options at start of a call (“press 1 for billing, 2 for sales”, etc)
- The cost of contacting customer service (e.g. when calling from a mobile)
- Problems don’t get solved
- Lack of opportunities to interact with the company in the preferred way (e.g. face to face)
- Poor accessibility of customer service for people with disabilities
- Multiple transfers to get to the right person to deal with your issue
- Wait times are too long
- Response times are too long
- Staff are rude or have an unhelpful attitude
- Being given the wrong information
- Not following through on promised action
- Getting ‘fobbed off’ when there’s a problem
- Failing to escalate to supervisor on request
- Information provided is unclear, confusing or incomplete
- Outsourcing of contact centres overseas

In developing this set of questions, we tried to describe the problems an ordinary consumer would have in dealing with customer service departments.

This was not a comparative question – respondents could choose to rank or not rank any of the items and also had the option of “not applicable”.

In many instances, answers clustered around the middle to lower range, and with few in the upper number range, which we have interpreted as meaning they are not of critical concern to our members.

The following analysis of the results is based on very high scoring (9/10) and very low (1/2/3).

*Least problematic*

By far the least supported statement was our contention that “Staff are rude or have a unhelpful attitude”. Respondents suggested that attitude is not necessarily a problem, but elsewhere in the survey, were strongly of the view that the number of staff needed to be improved, as indicated in this additional comment:

*Call centre staff have limited access to actual status information, and demonstrate lack of locally specific knowledge.*

“Failing to escalate to supervisor on request” was the second smallest issue, though not as emphatically as the question about staff rudeness and unhelpfulness.

*Most problematic*

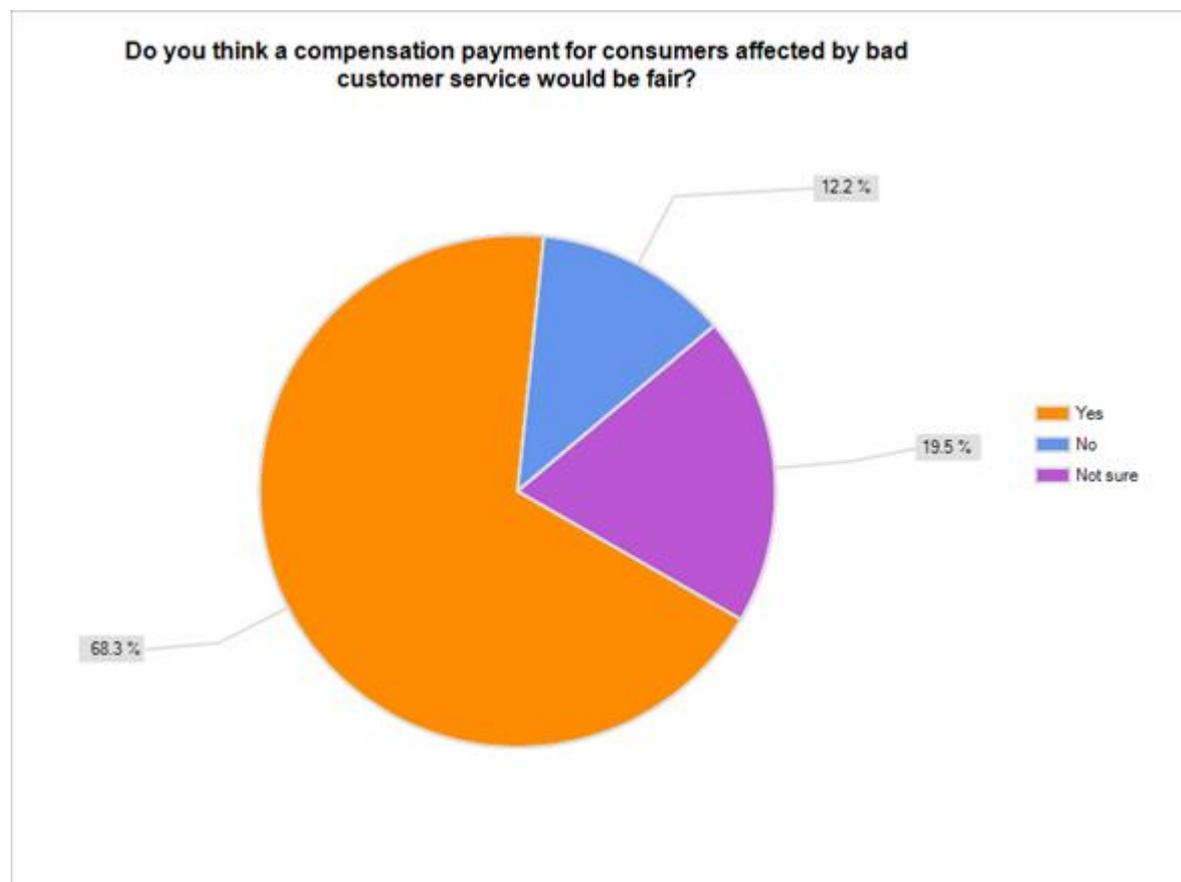
Turning now to the biggest problem areas of telco customer service, four statements attracted a significant proportion of very high ranking responses, namely:

- Multiple transfers to get to the right person to deal with your issue
- The cost of contacting customer service (e.g. when calling from a mobile)
- Poor access for people with disabilities
- Outsourcing of contact centres overseas

Very few members suggested that these issues were not a problem, or a low level problem.

(Sample size: 18)

## Do you think a compensation payment for consumers affected by bad customer service would be fair?



68.3% of respondents answered yes when asked whether a compensation payment for consumers affected by bad customer service would be fair. 19.5% of respondents were not sure, and the remaining 12.2% answered no.

Thirty-seven people offered additional comment on why they did or didn't support a consumer compensation regime for bad customer service. The vast majority of comments supported the concept of compensation, because it implicitly recognises that consumers pay for customer service as part of their contract with a provider, and that their time is valuable.

There was a widespread view that a financial obligation would result in better service:

*It would provide an incentive for the business to invest in this area as well as recognising customer time and frustration.*

*Many companies charge an administration or service fee to cover their costs. Why can't the same apply in reverse?*

*It encourages better service delivery.*

*Consumers are being disadvantaged regarding their lost time and difficulty to switch to a better telco; also such a payment would act as an incentive for the telco to lift their game.*

*A financial penalty seems to me to be the only things telcos respond to.*

*Cause we are paying for service.*

Some members were concerned that a compensation approach might be unwieldy, or inadvertently legitimise bad customer service:

*No- because it only admits bad service. It would be better to improve the service, because in the end, the customer still has the problem.*

*The complexity of a compensation payment system I would imagine could be a nightmare to administer. What penalties does a company receive for a rude employee, or a hold up in getting an answer or over charging you? It would be better if companies offered a discount of some sort or reward to the customer if there is a problem. Like \$50 credit on a phone card.*

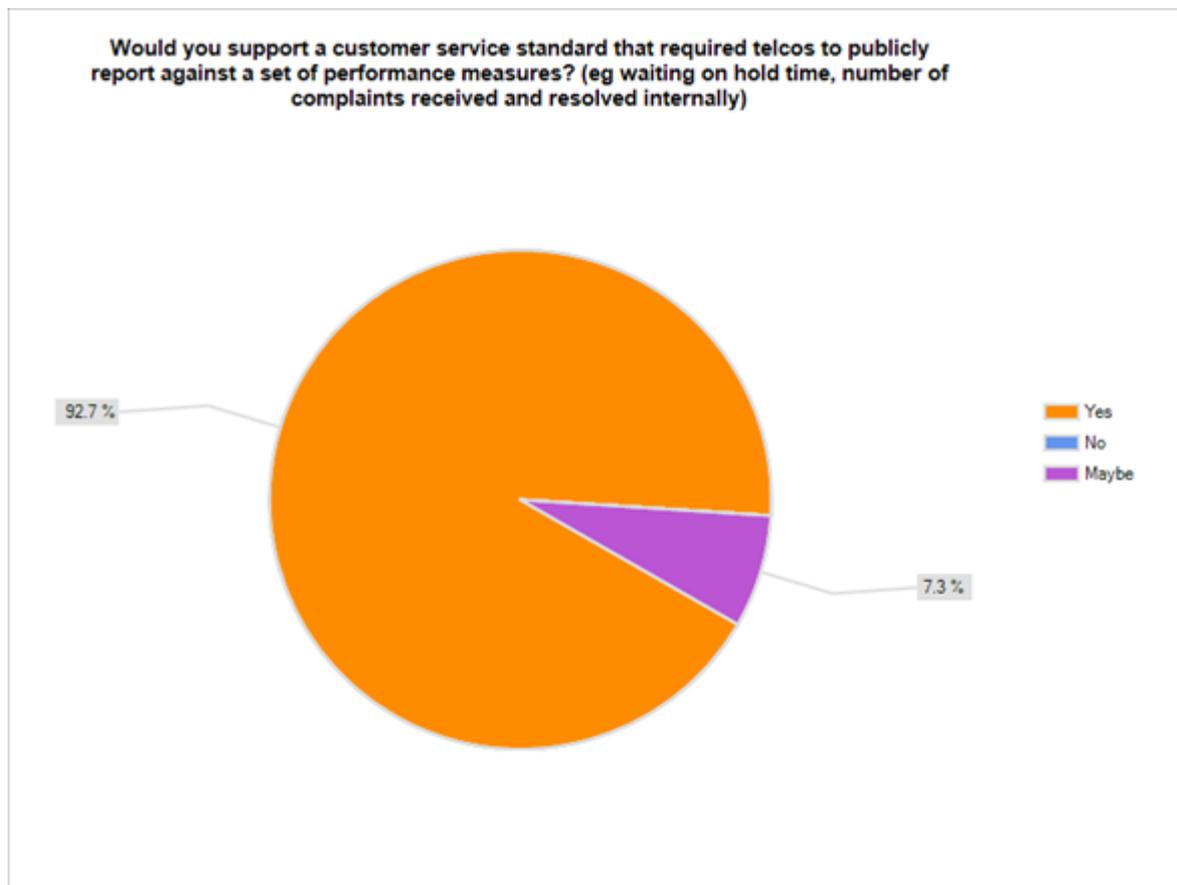
*Actually it depends. Any financial loss should be reimbursed, but compensation for loss of service or other failings is likely to be minor, and unlikely to satisfy. Payment tends to legitimise poor service.*

*Most members are interested in getting a problem solved quickly and easily rather than being compensated. However if compensation payments prompted telcos to improve service levels then they may be useful.*

*Not realistic until 'unacceptable customer service' is defined.*

(Sample size: 41)

**Would you support a customer service standard that required telcos to publicly report against a set of performance measures? (For example: waiting on hold time, number of complaints received and resolved internally.)**



An overwhelming 92.7% of respondents supported the concept of a customer service standard that required public reporting against a set of performance measures. The remaining 7.3% answered 'maybe'. No members answered no to this question.

Twenty-seven people provided additional comments, and nearly every one urged the need for independent monitoring and verification, accountability, and transparency of any standard that was created.

*But only if it was independently audited and the regulator could take action where there are serious or persistent breaches.*

*Without accountability there is no driver to improve.*

*The data would already be available internally. To be meaningful, the data would need to be externally verified.*

*As long as the performance indicators are expressed simply and clearly.*

*Better when it is public and accountable.*

*This would give a clear indication of the Telcos who are having problems with quality service, and if made public may assist in improving standards.*

*They should have some say in how to run their business and how they can do it effectively. I would hate for a 'big brother' to tell them how to do everything, without their input on the matter.*

*Most reporting is based on averages which are meaningless. I was once responsible for reporting. While these were "accurate" they managed to hide bad performance.*

*Reporting on complaints (totals and outcomes) may help.*

*It would be difficult to monitor veracity of data, statistical significance of data between large and small telcos could render it hard for consumers to interpret, deciding on length of reporting period could be problematic.*

*This mechanism would also help ensure better service and help consumers to more effectively choose which organisation they would join.*

A supplementary question asked specifically what sorts of performance areas members thought a customer service standard should cover. The following issues garnered the most support:

- **Complaint resolution**

In particular, the time taken to resolve a complaint, the proportion of first-call resolutions, and responsiveness of the service provider were cited over and over. Ultimately, members were asking for a measure of customer satisfaction for complaint handling.

- **On hold and wait times**

Members were very clear that time spent on hold, excessive wait times and multiple referrals within an organisation need to be improved.

- **Reporting about external *and* internal complaint volumes.**

ACCAN members were of the view that it's not just the calls going to the TIO that counted, it's the ones that were being resolved satisfactorily that also need to be measured.

- **Quality of service and repair times**

Related to this were suggestions around service connection times (particularly for broadband connections). Technical support standards were also suggested.

- **Staff communication**

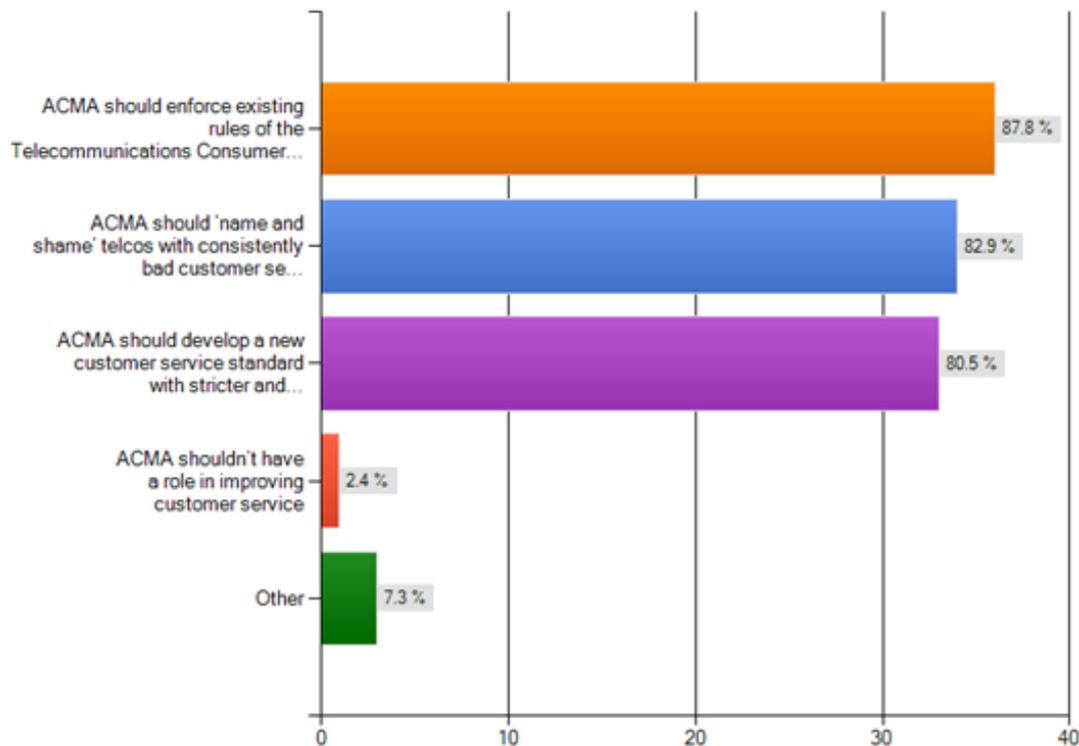
As was reflected elsewhere in the report, good overall communications skills and clear English language skills were identified as important to members.

- **High quality, correct information**

Information isn't the answer to all customer service issues but nonetheless is of great importance. It was noted that it may be difficult to set reliable measures in auditing against such a benchmark. (Sample size: 41)

**What role, if any, should the regulator the Australian Communications and Media Authority play in improving customer service? (Choose all that apply)**

**What role, if any, should the regulator the Australian Communications and Media Authority play in improving customer service? (Choose all that apply)**



ACCAN members clearly want ACMA to be an active and engaged regulator. There was unequivocal support for ACMA to take the following actions:

- enforce existing rules of the Telecommunications Consumer Protection Code;
- 'name and shame' telcos with consistently bad customer service; and
- develop a new customer service standard with stricter and enforceable rules.

Each of these points were reinforced in additional comments provided by members throughout the survey. Only one respondent thought the ACMA shouldn't have a role in improving customer service.

Additional comments reinforced the themes of providing about transparency about bad performers and better visibility about the effectiveness and viability of self-regulation:

*Self regulation has not worked from consumers' perspective. A Code enforced by the regulator is the way to go.*

*ACMA needs to act stronger. An investigation that takes a long time and ends with a statement like "we have investigated, they did the wrong thing but they said they won't do it again" gives the consumer no comfort at all.*

*Enforcement of the existing Code should precede development of a new CSS with stricter rules, and amendments to legislation as appropriate.*

*I'm not familiar with ACMA's current powers. I would have thought that a regulator should publish the data in a neutral fashion and leave the rest of us - particularly ACCAN - to interpret and comment on it. There are still too many codes and they are not enforced.*

*Whatever happens, it must be compulsory and enforceable.*

(Sample size: 41)

### **What three changes do you think could be made to improve telco customer service?**

Thirty-eight respondents offered their own ideas on how telco customer service could be improved in this open-answer question.

The diversity of responses suggests there is significant scope for service providers to make improvements that will have an impact on their customers. Several key recommendations can be derived from the respondents, based broadly on a desire to have more responsive, consumer-centric customer service.

- **Investment in staffing and staff training** was the most cited suggestion as a way to improve customer service.

*Improved level of staffing.*

*Staff need an incentive to help, not to handle as many customers in as short a time as possible.*

*Investment in staff.*

*Better customer assistance services through more direct access to suitably qualified and skilled CSOs [customer service officers].*

*Educate all staff including agents in face to face customer advice and service.*

*Better front of house service in shops.*

*Skills in customer service around cross cultural communication and particularly, working with Aboriginal people.*

- **There is demand for clear, comparable and complete information about products and services.** Consumers are asking for up-front clarity about service offering inclusions, exclusions, the benefits and disadvantages of various options. In a nutshell, the responses here could be summarised as 'less marketing, more useful information'.

*Simplifying comparative information between suppliers is key - the opportunity for obfuscation is too great e.g. broadband plans, mobile plans.*

*Clear and non deceptive advertising.*

*Clear and concise promotion of products or services- i.e. comparing apples and apples between telcos, not apples and oranges.*

*Greater understanding of the limitations of the product they are marketing e.g. service availability in remote areas, bandwidth, costs, etc.*

*Fairer prices in Australia and simple clear terms and conditions.*

*Clearer and accurate information regarding products and services - less hype.*

*A statement up front when a service is going to cost you extra or you incur a loss of service by what you opt for.*

*Easy English contracts and bills.*

*Greater clarity around pricing and exclusions.*

*More transparency in advice so client understands their choices.*

*Contracts, explanations etc in plain English.*

- Unsurprisingly, **complaint handling** was an area requiring improvement, with members asking for quick complaint resolution. The ability to speak to the same customer service person was suggested several times. Less internal transfers and a reduction in queue and wait times were repeatedly requested. The allocation of a complaint ID was suggested as a means of helping track the resolution of an issue. Internal complaint record keeping rules were marked as an area for improvement.

*Being able to speak quickly with a person from the telco co. and not put on hold.*

*Better record keeping of individual ongoing customer complaints.*

*Transparency & accountability in dealing with consumers.*

*Complaint identification number to be given and used throughout process.*

*Knowledge across the range of services by the agent and not transferred from dept. to dept.*

- **A greater emphasis on customer satisfaction and ongoing customer service**, particularly after a contract has been signed, is important. The implication here is that there is too much emphasis on getting a sale, with far less interest in looking after the customer after the sale.

*Telco staff need to listen to customer issues and not be so keen to tell the customer what they situation is - as they know it.*

*Care of ongoing customers NOT just wanting new ones.*

*An external independently audited star rating system against defined customer service standards that could be used by consumers when purchasing services would be a great help in the decision making process and I think would sharpen competition amongst telcos to improve customer service standards.*

- **Penalties and enforcement** are seen as important tools in improving customer service; compensation for bad customer service was suggested in this question too. Some also suggested better regulation and standards were part of the solution, such as a customer service standard. Benchmarks and public reporting were also nominated elsewhere in the survey responses.

*Make them legally accountable for their regulatory obligations.*

*Significant financial penalties related to the time taken to get the problem/issue resolved.*

*Receiving a bill rebate if the telco has failed a certain standard.*

*Fines for telcos who do not abide by the codes etc.*

*Increase again TIO fine limitations.*

- **Ensuring the needs of people with disabilities are met** was also identified as an unmet need. Calls for an independent disability equipment plan, online information for people with disabilities, audio loops in stores and less noise in stores were cited as potential areas of improvement.

*Independent disability equipment program, cause the telcos don't understand disability issues.*

*All retail stores should have an audio loop counter for the many hearing-impaired customers.*

*Clear responsibility applied to all telcos to find effective telecommunication solutions for all Australian's i.e. including those with disabilities.*

- Many members feel strongly that **call centres** should be based in Australia and that levels of English can be improved, to ensure that customer service is accessible in all senses. The ability to speak to a person and avoid automated services was also nominated several times.

*It is really difficult for people with hearing loss to understand an accent over the phone – it adds to the difficulties posed by the hearing loss, and a time delay makes it more difficult too.*

*Ban overseas call centres.*

*Answer all calls with an individual not a machine.*

*Return call centres to Australia.*

*Call centre time reduced - fewer transfers and on-holds.*

*Not using VoIP/poor quality transmission lines to & from the call centre.*

*Operators who have clear diction and English pronunciation.*

- Respondent indicated that **customer service was a consideration in their purchasing decisions**, and suggested they would use this ranking and performance information were it available. For example, reporting on independent measures of customer satisfaction, and naming and shaming of poor performers were seen as useful consumer empowerment tools.

*Shaming for telcos who do not abide by the codes etc.*

*A clearly defined set of customer standards that set a good bench mark for both consumers and telcos.*

*Name and shame for positive feedback loop.*

*Someone holding telcos accountable.*

- **Credit management issues** featured in responses to this question; better preventative measures for bill shock, and improved financial hardship policies (and access to them) were also nominated as key issues.

*More responsive hardship policies - too much is having to be referred to the TIO.*

*Pre-emptive action to prevent bill-shock (e.g. warnings).*

- And finally, **other general suggestions** to improve customer service included

*Advice about best product e.g. if your bill has gone up dramatically for some reason, contact the customer and advise them of a better plan.*

*Constant media attention.*

*Improved communications with alternatives to phone contact: such as fax or email.*

*Put all the telecoms infrastructure into the National Broadband Network.*

## **Additional comments**

We offered members the opportunity to raise any other customer service issues. Detailed below are issues that weren't covered elsewhere in the survey responses.

*Not happy about charging for paper copy of bills - I do research with seniors - only 18% of Australians over 65 access the Internet (ABS census 2006) and they can least afford it.*

*Complexity of products and services and rates is a key source of confusion.*

*Marketing strategies often lead people into contracts without them understanding that they are 'signing' a contract (especially if over the phone) or what the product is that they are purchasing.*

*People who are obviously on low income and from disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g. does not speak English well, income is from Centrelink) are being sold multiple products e.g. multiple mobile phone contracts or products, that might not be suitable for their use.*

*Telcos (and banks too) use privacy legislation to hide behind to avoid resolving issues. I have many examples but one, my daughter living in a shared house, could not get Optus to fix internet access because she was not the account holder.*

*It appears to me that dispute resolution both internal and external are dealt with by units which carry the cost. Those costs should be reimposed internally on those business units which generate the complaints.*

*Products that are 'disability friendly' are not always on display – i.e. landline handsets and mobile phones that are helpful for people with a hearing loss and who wear hearing-aids/cochlear implants. Retail staff should know more about these products that assist people with disabilities.*

*I am often so scared to hang up as if it is not fixed you have to go through the whole process again.*

*More info and assistance with how to reduce bills if needed and clearer understanding of the cost of 19 (premium) calls.*

*In general members are unhappy with customer service relations and constant line faults.*

*Unfair contracts are virtually universal in all telcos. Every family I talk to has had a shock bill into the hundreds or thousands or has known someone who has. Most just accept the bill and pay it!*

*Privacy issues are ever-present.*

*Telcos should be forced under the law to clarify and improve services.*

## Priority areas for reform

In early May, ACCAN was approached by Communications Alliance and asked to identify the highest priority issues to be considered as part of the Telecommunications Consumer Protection Code (TCPC) review.

We used this survey to ask our members which areas were in most urgent need of review. The five broad areas we asked them to rank in order of priority correspond generally to five of the six chapters of the TCPC (with the exception of Customer Transfer chapter), namely:

- Improving information about the prices, terms and conditions of telco products and services;
- Credit management issues (e.g. preventing 'bill shock', financial hardship);
- Billing issues (e.g. clarity of summary bills, fees/charges for hard copy bills);
- Contract issues (e.g. fair use policies, bundling problems);
- Customer service and complaint handling problems (e.g. not getting problems solved quickly, not following through with action promised).

Forty-one people responded to this question. The survey tool we used allowed respondents to rank items as number 1 more than once. A number of respondents ranked multiple items as 1 (the most important). As a result, the rankings aren't valid and we can't draw any definitive conclusions from these responses.

Despite the inaccuracy of the rankings, it is worthwhile noting that customer service and complaint handling issues, as well as the need for improved information about prices terms and conditions, ranked very highly.

Fifteen people provided additional comments, and the key message was that all these areas were important and that it was extremely difficult to say one area was more important than another – particularly because of the interdependencies and flow on effects of problem areas.

One respondent captured this in a nutshell:

*In an ideal world, if prices terms and conditions were clearer, and as part of this, contracts were fairer, then as part of this, Bills would need to be more understandable. This would mean that bill shock would automatically be minimised. However because some people would continue to make poor decisions, then credit management would remain an issue needing to be addressed. If the priorities 1-4 are addressed then the customer service and complaint handling could be a category of reduced importance.*

Another key message that came out was the need for fairness:

*All are important, unfair contracts even if well explained (which they usually aren't) are still unfair.  
Information is not the answer - enforcement of 'fair' practices is essential.*

# Appendix 3

## **ACCAN Standing Advisory Committees 2009 to 2011**

Standing Advisory Committee on Consumer Affairs representatives:

- Jo Benvenuti (Consumer Utilities Advocacy Centre)
- Ian Butterworth (Telecommunications Consumers Group SA)
- Andrew Crouch (Centre for Appropriate Technology)
- Loretta Kreet
- Rachael Milfull (Australian Financial Counsellors & Credit Reform Association)
- Holly Raiche (Internet Society Australia)
- Victoria Rubensohn
- John Wood
- David Lawson (Australian Financial Counsellors & Credit Reform Association)
- Heather Wieland (Country Womens' Association)
- Paul Harrison (Deakin University)

Standing Advisory Committee on Disability Issues representatives:

- Kim Curtis (Aboriginal Disability Network)
- Lachlan Hazelton (Physical Disability Council NSW)
- Scott Hollier (Media Access Australia)
- David Parker (Deaf Australia)
- Nick Rushworth (Brain Injury Australia)
- Andrew Stewart (Deafness Forum Australia)
- Denise Wood (University South Australia)
- Hank Wyllie
- Andrew Wiltshire (Deaf Australia)
- Lynnden Beaumont (Deafness Forum Australia)
- Zel Iscel (National Ethnic Disability Alliance)
- Jan Ashford (Communications Rights Australia)
- Leah Hobson (Australian Federation of Disability Organisation)

## Appendix 4

### **Standing Advisory Committee on Consumer Affairs June 2011 Meeting Report**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Standing Advisory Committee on Consumer Affairs (SACCA) and acknowledged the traditional owners of the land.

#### **Discussion of Member Issues**

The meeting was informed about a recent Consumers Utilities Advocacy Centre project that CUAC had been involved in. The study was conducted amongst Aboriginal communities in Gippsland and Mildura. Results demonstrated the large scale of mobile phone use and the cost of trying to resolve consumers' mobile phone issues. The part of the study relating to businesses revealed a lack of awareness about the experiences and needs of aboriginal customers. The meeting then discussed the issue of steel framed houses in South Australia interfering with reception from the base station and with mobile reception from the closest towers. This was causing limited use of hands-free home phones and some mobiles.

#### **ACCC presentation on telco advertising**

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission then made a presentation about its new powers in relation to poor telco advertising. The ACCC uses a number of enforcement tools to address poor telco practice. This includes taking court action in consumer interest, engaging in regulatory reviews, substantiation notices, public warning and infringement notices. These new powers are used in relation to consumer protection but not in competition.

#### **ACMA 'Reconnecting the Customer' consultation**

The meeting then discussed the 'Reconnecting the Customer' report. The report is the result of an extensive inquiry into telco customer service and is a six-point plan which follows the life cycle of a customer buying a product. It was noted that ACCAN was very encouraged that the report generally agrees with ACCAN's views and extensively refers to ACCAN submissions.

#### **Telecommunications Consumer Protection Code review**

It was noted that ACCAN does not support the current Telecommunications Consumer Protections (TCP) Code and had suggested that the TCP Code be based on outcomes of the 'Reconnecting the Customer' report. ACCAN reported that a Standard is necessary and that the compliance model in the Code is inadequate.

#### **General ACCAN update**

The meeting noted that a number of successes for ACCAN in the preceding months. ACCAN had a very successful launch of the NBN Guide and there was an enormous amount of website traffic that day. ACCAN also ran a successful event for Cyber-Security Awareness Week and has also adopted a Disability Action Plan. Upcoming events were then discussed. The 2011 National ACCAN Conference will occur on 7 and 8 September. The meeting also noted that the TIO will support ACCAN in co-ordinating a roundtable on financial hardship where financial counsellors can meet and share hardship issues with industry.

Outgoing SACCA members were then thanked for all their work during their term.

# **Standing Advisory Committee on Disability Issues**

## **May 2011 Meeting Report**

The SACDI Chair welcomed everyone to the seventh meeting of the Standing Advisory Committee on Disability Issues (SACDI) and acknowledged the traditional owners of the land. Three apologies were noted.

### **Discussion of member issues**

The committee discussed emergency service access, approaches to the Hearing Health Review, captioning, training for people with a disability, upcoming research projects and the audio description trial. The committee welcomed the government set top box assistance program, commenting on the quality of the set top box model chosen for distribution. The committee expressed concern at the eligibility criteria, hoping that more people could be included as digital TVs don't have include a screen to speech feature.

### **Disability Policy Advisers' update**

Community and business feedback for the Disability Action Plan has been positive and the document is being considered for approval by the ACCAN Board. As part of the Inclusive Communications campaign ACCAN is compiling a compendium of current gaps in equipment provision. This will show that a wider service and an independent disability equipment provision service is needed. ACCAN will continue to lobby the ACMA and the DBCDE for measurable captioning benchmarks, pushing for 98% accuracy, a maximum 3 second lag and live captions only for live events. It was agreed that channel seven, in particular the Sunrise program, is setting a high bar that the rest of industry should follow. The committee commended their mix of pre-prepared and live captions only as required. Members were thanked for their feedback on the ICT procurement policy.

### **Grants and Research Projects**

The committee was provided with an update of the ACCAN grants and research programs. ACCAN's 2011 grants program received a record 71 applications, a 300% increase on previous years. An independent panel has assessed the applications and their recommendations are being taken to the Board. 2010 grant programs are nearing completion and member feedback for all projects was welcomed. SACDI members were invited to assist with ACCAN's latest research project on consumer decision making in the telecommunications market. Several committee members volunteered to be part of an ethics committee to review projects like this.

### **ACCAN Policy Update**

The committee was provided with a brief report on ACCAN policy and campaigns achievements. Highlights included the launch of the NBN Guide, the Fair Calls For All campaign, a submission to the TIO governance review and a smartphone safety roundtable event as part of Cyber Security Awareness Week.

### **Industry course on web accessibility**

The committee was briefed about the new Graduate Certificate in Web Accessibility developed by the University of South Australia and the MEAA. This is the first course of its kind in Australia and one of the first in the world. It will be delivered online over six weeks with three assessments. It will cover policy, usability, WC3, authoring tools, video captioning and future technologies.

### **National Public Inclusive Infrastructure (NPII)**

The committee was keen for Australia to engage with the NPII project as discussed in the October 2010 SACDI meeting. The project has been allocated funding in the US budget. SACDI and ACCAN agreed to encourage awareness in the DBCDE of the initiative.

### **Access to emergency services**

The committee discussed the status of emergency SMS services for the Deaf and hearing-impaired communities in Australia. ACE have developed an iPhone application for emergency services. The app allows users to set up a detailed profile and connect to the NRS. It provides the NRS with the user's location information using GPS. The committee was very interested in the smartphone emergency

service developments but stressed that emergency SMS services were still needed as not all consumers had access to or could afford a smartphone.

### **ACCAN outreach and advocacy**

The committee discussed how ACCAN distributes policy information and communicates with members. Appropriate staff members discussed ACCAN's social media strategy and email systems. Staff also briefed the committee on how ACCAN deals with individual consumer inquiries as ACCAN's remit is to address systemic rather than individual issues. Individuals who contact ACCAN are provided with information and referred to the appropriate body for assistance. Sometimes this requires follow-up investigation by ACCAN staff. Individual contacts are asked if they consent to being used as anonymous case studies in ACCAN's policy work.

### **Other business**

The committee was introduced to the Universal Communications Symbol, developed by Scope. This symbol, much like the universal wheelchair symbol which lets people know if a building is accessible, will let people with complex communication needs know that a business is trained to communicate with them. Members were thanked for their feedback on the Reconciliation Action Plan and reminded to complete the Standing Advisory Committee review questions.

This was the last time the 2010-11 term of SACDI met. Members were thanked by the chair for their contributions. The committee thanked the Disability Policy Advisors and all ACCAN staff for their work.

# Appendix 5

## ACCAN Conference 2011 - Organisations in Attendance

ABC  
AC Grant & Associates  
ACCC  
ACE  
The ACMA  
ACOSS  
Alltel  
Amaysim  
Australian Council of Social Services  
Australian Financial Review  
Australian Human Rights Commission  
Baljurda Comprehensive Consulting Pty Ltd  
Brain Injury Australia  
Brotherhood of St Laurence  
Burdon  
CBAA  
Centre for Appropriate Technology  
CHOICE  
CITIES  
Commonwealth Ombudsman  
CommsDay  
Communications Alliance  
Community Legal Centres NSW  
Consumer Law Centre of the ACT  
Consumers Health Forum of Australia  
COSBOA  
CUAC  
Cyberspace Law and Policy Centre  
Deaf Australia  
Deafness Forum  
Deakin University  
Department of Broadband, Communications & the Digital Economy  
Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (Queensland)  
Department of Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government  
DigEcon Research  
Electronic Frontiers Australia  
Enegetica  
Fear  
FECCA  
Financial Counsellors Australia  
Fujitsu Australia  
Google  
Hitchens  
Human Rights Policy Branch, Attorney-General's Department  
ICPA (Aust)  
IDG Communications  
iiNet Limited

IMW Media Service Pty Ltd  
Independent Living Centre NSW  
Indigenous Remote Communications Association  
Information & Privacy Commission NSW  
Institute for a Broadband-Enabled Society (IBES)  
Internode  
IT Wire  
Legal Aid Queensland  
Macquarie Telecom  
Macquarie University  
Maddocks  
Make Believe Pty Ltd  
Media Access Australia  
National Children's and Youth Law Centre  
National Ethnic Disability Alliance  
National Union of Student  
NBN Co  
Ninti One Ltd  
NSW Aboriginal Land Councils  
NSW Farmers  
Office of Rural Affairs, NSW  
Optus  
Outreach, National Relay Service  
Physical Disabilities Australia  
Physical Disability Council of NSW  
Pro Bono Australia  
Red Bee Media Australia  
Redfern Legal Centre  
Regional Telecommunications Independent Review Committee  
Relationships Australia  
Research & Innovation  
Royal Society for the Blind SA Inc.  
SACCA  
Sainty Law  
Schonberg  
Sydney Morning Herald  
Sophos  
Swinburne Institute of Social Research  
Telecommunications Consumer Group SA Inc  
Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman  
Telstra  
The Australian  
The Australian Institute  
The Shiny Shiny World  
TISSC  
University of Ballarat  
University of Technology Sydney  
University of Wollongong  
UTS Law Faculty  
Vodafail.com  
Vodafone  
Women With Disabilities Australia  
Women's Legal Services NSW  
WorkVentures

ZDNet  
Zulfacar  
Zurich Financial Services

# Appendix 6

## **ACCAN 2011 National Conference Sponsors**

- Red Bee Media
- Pro Bono Australia
- Australian Communications Exchange
- Google
- Amaysim
- Telstra
- Vodafone
- CHOICE
- Vastpark

# Appendix 7

## Comparative Analysis of ACCAN current level of activities and CTN in its final year

Activities	ACCAN 2010-11	CTN 2008-2009
Members	107 Organisations  84 Individuals  Total: 191	64 Organisations  40 Individuals  Total: 104
Staff	14.8 FTE	4.2 FTE
Volunteers	30	12
Submissions	Tracked 93 policy issues and made 27 submissions	Tracked 25 policy issues and made 8 submissions
Consultation	2 Standing Advisory Committees – meeting 3 times face to face each per year as well as special consultations on some issues	Consultation specific to current issues – all by email and telephone
Events	1 National Conference (200 + attendees) , 1 seminar (80 attendees) and multiple roundtables	1 National conference (100 attendees)
Committees	17	22
Website	Average 5100 visitors per month	Average 1100 visitors per month
Media Profile	Full-time Media and Communications Manager  Average 60 interviews per month – incl. regular television appearances  38 media releases – 2 in Auslan	No Media Officer on staff  43 interviews in entire year with 4 television appearances  5 media releases
Social Media	Active Twitter account – over 750 followers  You Tube Channel –incl. some videos in Auslan  Basic face book page  Use of Tumblr for Number Woman campaign	No social media presence
Research Projects	4 ACCAN Initiated and funded	none

Funded Grants Projects	6 Awarded - 71 applications	none
Publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NBN Guide</li> <li>• Weekly web news</li> <li>• Quarterly magazine</li> <li>• Regular Members emails</li> <li>• Suite of Tip Sheets</li> <li>• 16 Research &amp; Grants Reports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No Guides</li> <li>• On-line weekly web news</li> <li>• Quarterly electronic News</li> <li>• Quarterly Members News</li> <li>• Suite of Tip Sheets</li> <li>• No Research Reports</li> </ul>

# Appendix 8

## **Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN)**

### **Strategic Plan 2010-2015 (Version 1.0 Nov 09)**

#### **ACCAN's Vision**

Available, accessible and affordable communications that enhance the lives of consumers.

#### **ACCAN's Mission**

Communications are increasingly essential to participation in society, and we believe that communications consumers are entitled to rights drawn from the principles of consumer and human rights. ACCAN is Australia's peak body for consumer representation and advocacy in communications, and we will improve consumers' experiences with communications by:

- Campaigning for consumers and the public interest.
- Placing emphasis on the needs of consumers for whom the market is not working.
- Inspiring, informing, enabling and equipping consumers to act in their own interests.
- Researching consumer issues to produce sound information and evidence.
- Building partnerships and working across jurisdictions to optimise positive outcomes.

#### **ACCAN's Values**

As an organisation we will:

- Act with courage, integrity and honesty.
- Operate efficiently, effectively and ethically.
- Value diversity and demonstrate best practice in inclusion and accessibility in our work.
- Value volunteers, staff and members for their crucial role in our work.
- Recognise that building constructive relationships with members, our community, industry, regulators, and government is critical to achieving our vision.

#### **ACCAN's Scope**

- We will represent consumers using communications for personal purposes. This includes aspects of communications use by small businesses and not-for-profit organisations.
- We will focus on goods and services encompassed by converging areas of telecommunications, the Internet and broadcasting, including both current and emerging technologies.

#### **Strategic goal 1: Make the communications market work for consumers.**

- 1.1 Campaign to entrench consumer rights and positive outcomes at the centre of communications policy.
- 1.2 Hold service providers accountable for their standards of customer service.
- 1.3 Work for all consumers to be properly skilled and informed in communications.
- 1.4 Campaign for fair and reliable communications goods and services.

**Strategic goal 2: Fight for availability, accessibility and affordability**

- 2.1 Intervene for consumers where there are market, technical, or regulatory gaps or failures.
- 2.2 Lobby for the long term interests of consumers to be embodied in the policy of the National Broadband Network.
- 2.3 Work towards guaranteed access to and awareness of emergency management communications.
- 2.4 Campaign for the right of consumers to choose when and how they use communications.

**Strategic goal 3: Protect and promote security, privacy and fair use.**

- 3.1 Campaign for consumer rights to privacy and security to be met and extended.
- 3.2 Campaign for clear and fair arrangements for consumers in relation to digital content.
- 3.3 Lobby for adoption of principles of open access, net neutrality and interoperability.

**Strategic goal 4: Support responsible consumption.**

- 4.1 Campaign for reliable information, and appropriate measures, around the environmental and health impacts of communications.

**Strategic goal 5: Sound governance**

- 5.1 Ensure our organisational values are embodied in our internal structures and processes.
- 5.2 Strive to maintain the human and financial resources to deliver and develop our work.
- 5.3 Expand our existing membership base to achieve greater representation and participation of consumers.
- 5.4 Build effective consultation mechanisms with our members and standing advisory committees.
- 5.5 Engage key external stakeholders to form mutually beneficial partnerships.
- 5.6 Manage an independent community grants scheme to help us achieve our vision and goals.
- 5.7 Build our profile as the leading consumer voice in communications.
- 5.8 Maintain flexibility to be proactive with current, emerging and unforeseen consumer issues.

# Appendix 9

## Recipients through the ACCAN Grants Scheme

<u>Grant Recipient</u>	<u>Project Name</u>	<u>Grant total</u>	<u>Status</u>
National Ethnic Disability Alliance	Communicating Difference	\$22,000.00	Completed, Acquitted in full
WA Deaf Society	Internet Scams: How to Protect Yourself	\$49,600.00	Completed, Acquitted in full
Cyberspace Law and Policy Centre, University of New South Wales	Communications Privacy Complaints: In Search of the Right Path	\$30,000.00	Completed, Acquitted in full
Council on the Ageing WA	Where Do I Start? Female Seniors and the Internet	\$20,000.00	Completed, Acquitted in full
Novita Children's Services	The Newell Network	\$50,000.00	Completed, Acquitted in full
Able Australia Services	Telecommunications and Deafblind Australians	\$14,750.00	Completed, Acquitted in full
Spiral Research & Consulting, Danielle Notara	Another Barrier? Regional consumers, non-profit organisations, and the NBN in the Northern Rivers Region	\$12,500.00	Completed, Acquitted in full
Swinburne University, Institute for Social Research	Home internet for Remote Indigenous Communities	\$49,750.00	Completed, Acquitted in full
University of Technology Sydney, Institute for Interactive Media and Learning	Mind the Gap: refugees and communications technology literacy	\$45,000.00	Completed, Acquitted in full
Brotherhood of St Laurence	Youth Advocates	\$58,000.00	In progress
Woman's Legal Services NSW	Cyber Bullying: Untangling the Web	\$49,646.00	In progress

University of Wollongong	Government ICT Purchasing – what differences do accessibility criteria make for people with disabilities?	\$38,390.00	In progress
University of Melbourne	High-Speed Broadband and Household Media Ecologies	\$45,934.00	In progress
Media Access Australia	Social Media Accessibility: Resources supporting consumers with disabilities	\$41,500.00	In progress
Footscray Community Legal Centre	Refugee Communities Telecommunications Education Program	\$22,745.00	In progress
The Australian Health Workforce Institute	Connecting people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and general practitioners through telecommunications	\$51,785.00	In progress

# Appendix 10

## ACCAN Grants Scheme Guidelines 2011

### INTRODUCTION

#### About the ACCAN Grants Scheme

Communications technologies are increasingly essential to participation in society, and we believe that people should have available, accessible and affordable communications that enhance their lives. Through the ACCAN Grants Scheme, the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network seeks to help empower communities of consumers to act in their own interests; to enable consumers to navigate the challenges of the communications market; and to establish a sound body of evidence to be used in advocacy.

#### About ACCAN

ACCAN is a not-for-profit community organisation and Australia's peak body for consumer representation and advocacy in communications. ACCAN's Grants Scheme is administered as part of our funding agreement with the Commonwealth Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, to fund projects that help achieve our vision.

ACCAN'S main strategic goals are to make the market work for consumers; to fight for availability, accessibility and affordability; to protect and promote security, privacy and fair use; and to support responsible consumption.

### THE BASICS

The ACCAN Grants Scheme focuses on outcomes for consumers. We fund consumer research, representation, or education projects in relation to communications issues in Australia. Communications can include telecommunications, the Internet, broadcasting, and emerging new technologies. Your project may fit into one of these areas or more:

**Research** – into the social, economic, environmental or technological implications of developments relating to consumers and communications. These projects could use various methodologies to document a particular communications issue or the experience of a group of consumers.

**Representation** – of the interests of consumers in relation to communications issues. These projects might involve action such as knowledge sharing to develop your group's capacity to advocate, or involve particular submissions, policy work and participation in regulatory reviews.

**Education** – that empowers consumers and communities to act in their own interests. These projects might include developing consumer education tools, workshops, or peer education initiatives.

Projects may produce outputs of different sorts in order to deliver outcomes for consumers. Examples of outputs that have been funded in the past include reports, papers, multimedia, education materials, and workshops.

ACCAN advocates on behalf of all consumers. We also place emphasis on the needs and experiences of vulnerable consumers. Consumers on low incomes, consumers with disabilities, consumers living in rural and remote areas, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander consumers, consumers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, seniors, or minors, may all be considered vulnerable.

### Key Timeframes

Application round opens	17 March 2011
Application round closes	20 April 2011 5pm AEST
Applications reviewed by the Independent Panel	April – May 2011
Applicants notified of final decisions approved by the ACCAN Board	June 2011
Opportunity to seek feedback from ACCAN on unsuccessful applications	2 working weeks from the date of notification
Funded projects begin from	1 July 2011
Funded projects completed	30 June 2012

### Funding Levels

The Scheme carries an annual budget of \$250,000. Applicants are encouraged to apply for funding amounts appropriate to their project, from small to large, to a maximum of \$60,000.

ACCAN accepts applications for short term (less than 6 month) or long term (6-12 month) projects.

### Eligibility Requirements

ACCAN funds individuals or groups. We also accept applications from individuals or groups that have formed partnerships: in these applications one party is nominated as the applicant and auspicing body.

To be eligible to apply for funding under the ACCAN Grants Scheme an application must meet all of the following criteria:

- Applicants must provide an ABN.
- Applicants must provide details of Public Liability Insurance with coverage up to \$5million, or agree to obtain this coverage before the project begins.
- Applicants must have successfully acquitted any previous funding supplied by the ACCAN Grants Scheme.
- Applications must comply with the information provided in these Guidelines.

The ACCAN Grants Scheme does not provide funding for:

- Activities primarily related to commercial product or commercial service development.
- Projects that have already been completed or proposals to repeat completed projects.
- Regular or ongoing activities normally funded through other arrangements.
- General organisational operating costs such as permanent staff salaries (other than those contracted specifically for the project), or the purchase of equipment (unless specifically required for the project).

- Travel costs (unless directly necessary for the project).
- Activities that contradict ACCAN's mission, values and scope as an organisation (as set out in ACCAN's Strategic Plan).

Lower priority will be given to groups who have received funding from the ACCAN Grants Scheme in the past 12 months.

### Funding Agreements

If your project is selected to receive a grant you will enter into a funding agreement with ACCAN. Funding payments are structured around the delivery of agreed project milestones. Over the course of the project you will need to provide the following to ACCAN at a time specified in the funding agreement, or when requested:

- **A Project Progress Report**  
*(ACCAN will provide a form for you to complete, usually halfway through the project)*
- **Milestone Deliverables**  
*(depending on your funding agreement, these might be draft reports, or individual components of a project)*
- **Records clearly accounting for funding provided**  
*(records need to be kept in such a way that they could be inspected)*
- **A Project Acquittal Form**  
*(ACCAN will provide a format for you to follow, to evaluate and document the successes and financial details of your project when it is complete)*

ACCAN takes a collaborative approach to grants project management and are available for regular support and ongoing dialogue throughout the project. To ACCAN, grants projects are the beginning of valuable community relationships. All materials created during the project will remain the intellectual property of you or your organisation, and by entering into a funding agreement you agree to:

- Grant ACCAN permanent license to all materials created during the project, including the right to sub-license.
- Acknowledge ACCAN's support of the project in all public materials, and the support of the Commonwealth Government of Australia through its support of ACCAN.

## **ASSESSMENT**

### The Process

The ACCAN Grants Scheme selection process is competitive and merit-based. The steps of the assessment process are:

- Applications that fulfill the Eligibility Requirements are assessed by an Independent Panel, which is made up of external specialists.
- The Panel submits formal recommendations to the ACCAN Board for approval.
- All applicants will receive notification of the outcome of their application.
- Unsuccessful applicants will have two weeks to seek further feedback from ACCAN staff.
- Projects selected for funding will be listed on the ACCAN website.
- ACCAN may seek further information from applicants at any stage in the assessment process.

- There is a conflict of interest policy in place for all members of ACCAN staff and for the Panel involved in assessing applications.

Assessment Criteria:

The Independent Panel will assess applications based on a set of selection criteria. Criteria are weighted to reflect the priorities of the ACCAN Grants Scheme. The information you provide in your application should describe how your project addresses the assessment criteria and paint a full picture of the project's activities.

Criteria	Example of considerations made in assessment	Weighting
Benefit to Consumers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How many consumers will benefit from the project?</li> <li>• Will the project benefit vulnerable consumers?</li> <li>• What will the impact of the benefit be?</li> <li>• When will consumers benefit from the project?</li> </ul>	30%
Community Need & Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What was the inspiration for the project?</li> <li>• Does the project fill a gap and is the project an effective response to the gap?</li> <li>• How will the project engage with consumers and communities?</li> <li>• Are there strengths or assets within the communities involved that can be built upon to provide even greater benefit?</li> </ul>	20%
Links to ACCAN's Strategic Directions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the project directly address one or more of ACCAN's strategic goals?</li> </ul> <p>1) Make the market work for consumers  2) Fight for availability, accessibility, and affordability  3) Protect and promote security, privacy, and fair use  4) Support responsible consumption</p> <p><i>( As set out in ACCAN's Strategic Plan)</i></p>	20%
Technical Strength of the Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are the project objectives, plan and timeline well considered and achievable?</li> <li>• Does the project team have the appropriate capacity to carry out the project?</li> <li>• Have ethics in relation to researching and working with people and partners been considered and addressed?</li> </ul>	15%
Value for Money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the project budget appropriate in relation to the proposed project activities, outputs and outcomes?</li> <li>• Would the project be able to proceed without this funding?</li> </ul>	15%

# Appendix 11

## ACCAN submissions July 2009 – June 2011

- ACMA, Review of Shared Numbers, 3 July 2009
- Productivity Commission, Review of Regulatory Burdens: Social and Economic Infrastructure Services, 10 August 2009
- Communications Alliance, Information Accessibility Code, 10 August 2009
- Commonwealth Treasury, Consumer Voices: Sustaining Advocacy and Research, 10 August 2009
- House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communications, Cyber Crime, 17 August 2009
- Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts, Telecommunications Legislation Amendment (Competition and Consumer Safeguards) Bill, 13 October 2009
- Department of Finance and Deregulation, PDF Accessibility Review, 19 October 2009
- ACMA, Premium SMS/MMS Barring, 30 October 2009
- DBCDE, Do Not Call Register Statutory Review, 3 November 2009
- Internet Industry Association, Draft E-Security Code, 10 November 2009
- Department of Finance and Deregulation, Gov 2.0 Taskforce, 16 November 2009
- Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts, Do Not Call Register Amendment Bill 2009, 22 January 2010
- DBCDE, Mandatory Internet Service (ISP) Filtering, 12 February 2010
- DBCDE, Digital Dividend Green Paper, 8 March 2010
- NSW Parliament, Standing Committee on Broadband in Rural and Regional Services, Are you connected? Telecommunications availability in Rural and Regional Communities, 18 March 2010
- NSW Parliament Standing Committee on Broadband in Rural and Regional Services, Transforming Life Outside Cities: The Potential of Broadband Services, 18 March 2010
- DBCDE, National Broadband Network Companies and Access Arrangements Bills, 30 March 2010
- ACMA, Telecommunications Service Provider (MPS) Determination 2010 (no.2), 16 April 2010
- Senate Economics Committee, Trade Practices Amendment (Australian Consumer Law) Bill (No. 2) 2010, 27 April 2010
- Joint Select Committee on Cyber-Safety, 28 April 2010
- DBCDE, NBN Implementation Study, 31 May 2010
- ACMA, Geographic Numbering Amendments, 1 June 2010
- ACMA, Telecommunications (Emergency Call Service) Determination 2009, 28 June 2010
- DBCDE, Trans-Tasman Mobile Roaming, 8 July 2010
- *Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts*, Privacy of Australians Online, 23 July 2010
- Communications Alliance, Mobile Premium Services Code Review, 6 August 2010
- Productivity Commission, Disability Care and Support Inquiry, 16 August 2010
- ACMA, Reconnecting the Customer, 14 September 2010
- ACMA, Supplementary submission to Telecommunications (Emergency Call Service) Determination, 22 September 2010
- Victorian Department of Justice, Australian Consumer Law Guides, 15 October 2010
- Federal Treasury, Draft Australian Consumer Law regulations, 22 October 2010 (joint submission with Australian Financial Counselling and Credit Reform Association, Consumer Utilities Advocacy, Consumer Action Law Centre, Consumer Credit Legal Centre NSW and Consumer Law Centre ACT)
- Communications Alliance, Accessibility features for telephone equipment, 29 October 2010
- DBCDE, Implementation of Universal Service Policy Discussion Paper - 10 November 2010
- ACMA, Response to the draft Telecommunications (Emergency Call Service) Amendment Determination - 26 November 2010
- ACMA, Structure of Australia's telephone numbering plan - 10 January 2011
- DBCDA, Submission on Convergence Review Terms of Reference - 28 January 2011

- Telephone Information Services Standards Council (TISSC), Code of Practice Remedies Review, 03 February 2011
- Senate Committee Inquiry, NBN Companies and Access Bills 2010 - 24 February 2011
- House of Representatives Standing Committee on Infrastructure and Communication, Inquiry into the role and potential of the National Broadband Network, 25 February 2011
- ACMA, Customer location information and numbering data, 30 March 2011
- Attorney General's Department, Universal Periodic Review, 4 April 2011
- DBCDE, Modernising the TIO, 5 April 2011
- Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications, The capacity of communication networks and emergency warning systems to deal with emergencies and natural disasters, 15 April 2011
- Communications Alliance, Disability Care and Support - Emergency Call Service Requirements, 20 April 2011
- Productivity Commission, Disability Care and Support Inquiry, 28 April 2011
- Joint Committee on NBN, Telecommunications Legislation Amendment (Fibre Deployment) Bill, 21 May 2011
- ACMA, Numbering Paper 3 - Allocation and charging of numbers, 26 May 2011
- DBCDE, Telecommunications (Customer Service Guarantee – Retail Performance Benchmarks) Instrument (No.1) 2011 Exposure Draft ,3 June 2011
- DBCDE, Convergence Review Framing Document, 10 June 2011
- DBCDE, Telecommunications (Acceptance of Undertaking about Structural Separation Matters) Instrument 2011, 15 June 2011

# Appendix 12

## ACCAN Research Bibliography

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**All reports available at [www.accan.org.au/research](http://www.accan.org.au/research)**

# Appendix 13

## **ACCAN Representation on External Bodies**

- Australian Communications and Media Authority – Closed Captioning Committee
- Australian Communications and Media Authority – Consumer Consultative Forum
- Australian Communications and Media Authority – Emergency Call Service Advisory Committee
- Australian Communications and Media Authority – Numbering Advisory Committee
- Australian Competition and Consumer Commission – Consumer Consultative Committee
- Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA) – Electromagnetic Energy Reference Group
- Communications Alliance – Accessibility Features Information Code Working Committee
- Communications Alliance – Emergency Call Service Requirements Code Revision Committee
- Communications Alliance – Mobile Premium Services Code Working Committee
- Communications Alliance – NBN Consumer Education Group
- Communications Alliance – Telecommunications Consumer Protection Code Steering Group
- Communications Alliance – Telecommunications Consumer Protection Code Working Groups
- Digital Switchover Taskforce – Consumer Expert Group
- Optus – Consumer Liaison Forum
- Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman – Council
- Telstra – Disability Forum (observer status only)

## Appendix 14

### Tip Sheet

# Don't let global roaming ruin your holiday

International roaming charges are very high and many people suffer a nasty surprise when they return home to a phone bill in the thousands. Roaming charges are usually excluded from any “included value” in your plan, so here are some simple steps to help avoid massive smartphone bills.

- Check your provider's roaming charges carefully on their website or over the phone. You'll be charged higher rates to make and receive calls, send SMS and MMS (picture messages) and access email and the web. Prices will differ according to the country you are visiting and will also differ if you are on pre-paid or on a contract.
- To avoid excess data charges on your smart phone, make sure you switch off the “Data Roaming” Setting which can usually be found under the Network menu. If you don't, you'll incur expensive roaming charges when using email, MMS, web browsing and other data services.
- You need to stop emails automatically downloading to your phone by switching to your phone's manual mode. For Blackberry®: Select "No" under 'Send Email To Handheld'. For Apple® iPhone™ make sure you are in 'Fetch Mode'. If you need more help, ask your provider.
- Use wireless hotspots where available in the country you are visiting. Wireless hotspots are places you can access the internet for free – often in libraries and other public spaces. Fast-food chains like McDonalds and Starbucks typically provide free internet services. Buy a drink and stay a while.
- Check if your provider has discounted roaming rates for the country you are visiting. These offers are generally “opt-in” only and need to be selected before you travel.
- Use your phone mainly for SMS. Let friends and family know that receiving calls will cost you. It's a good idea, if you are worried about running up huge bills, to divert all your calls to voicemail and record a message asking callers to send an SMS instead.
- If you do need to make phone calls, it is usually cheaper to buy a local pre-paid SIM card in the country you are visiting, especially if most of your calls are going to be local.
- Consider making international calls with cheap or free online applications like Skype from a hotel or internet cafe. Skype enables you to make very cheap calls over the internet to landlines and mobiles, and you can even make free video calls to anywhere in the world with other Skype users.

**Note:** if you want to use international roaming, you will need to call your provider before you leave to set it up first. If you want to use a SIM card purchased in the country you are visiting, check first to see if your handset is or can be “unlocked”, meaning you can then use it with any network.

## Appendix 15



### **A fair go for all (that means ye)**



Everyone wants to be treated fairly. That's why when Virgin Mobile launched back in 2000 we made it our mission to bring our customers a fair deal. And now we've found someone who we believe mirrors our values. Someone who represents the people's champion. Someone who stands for a fair go for all. That man is [Robin da Hood](#), a modern day version of the 15th Century hero.

His charter is to replace unfairness with choice. Where's there's unhappiness he'll bring merriness (with a little help from us, naturally).

Of course, you already know we like to be fair, which is why you're with us. All our members automatically receive Free Voicemail, [97% Coverage](#) and access to our [Member's Lounge](#) with loads of great monthly offers and prizes. As a Virgin Mobile member you can also benefit from [Virgin Family Perks](#) which are discounts or offers through our other Virgin companies, like Virgin Wines, Virgin Australia, Virgin Money and Virgin Active. Fly with [Virgin Australia](#) and get 10% credited back to your mobile\*. And rest assured, we'll continue to be the fairest and most innovative telco in Australia.

#### **It's what we call A Fair Go For All.**

The Fine Print: \*Offer can be withdrawn at any time. 10% bonus credit is calculated on the base internet fare before GST and all applicable taxes. Standard Virgin Australia, Pacific Blue and Polynesian Blue terms & conditions apply. This offer is valid only for Virgin Mobile mobile customers (excludes Mobile Broadband and Broadband at Home) and is not available in conjunction with any other offer. Prepaid customers, bonus credit expires when your current voucher expires. Offer only available via My Account on the Virgin Mobile website. The credit will be applied after your flight date. Bonus credit may take up to 2 months to be applied to your account. Not transferrable or redeemable for cash.

# Appendix 16

## **Organisation objectives from ACCAN Constitution**

The objects of ACCAN are all or any of the following:

1. to be a peak body in Australia representing the interests of consumers in relation to communications and telecommunications issues;
2. to promote the telecommunications consumer objectives of accessibility, affordability and availability to all consumers;
3. to promote the development of Australian information and communications technology resources;
4. to develop a strong, coordinated voice for consumers and to represent and advocate on behalf of consumers to Government, regulators and the telecommunications industry;
5. to undertake research, policy development and education on consumer telecommunications issues;
6. to facilitate access to and dissemination of information to consumers, consumer representatives and consumer organisations;
7. to advocate on behalf of consumers on telecommunications laws affecting consumers, law reform, policy development and in relation to industry practices;
8. to participate in regulatory and co-regulatory activities; and
9. to contribute to the development of Government telecommunications policy

## **Organisation Overview & Activities**

The activities ACCAN will engage in order to implements its objectives are all or any of the following:

1. advocating on behalf of consumers to the Government, regulators, and industry nationally and internationally;
2. consulting with Members and undertaking outreach programs as necessary;
3. providing policy advice to Government on telecommunications issues affecting consumers;
4. contributing to the development of and compliance with industry codes, standards and guidelines for the telecommunications industry; and to identify areas where industry and/or regulatory response is necessary;
5. facilitating forums and meeting structures to promote engagement and priority setting with consumer groups and representatives;
6. supporting, training and enhancing the capacity and effectiveness of consumer representatives;
7. adopting open and transparent procedures which are inclusive of all parties having an interest in representing the interests of consumers in relation to telecommunications issues.

# Appendix 17

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## AUSTRALIAN COMMUNICATIONS CONSUMER ACTION NETWORK (ACCAN)

### RECOMMENDATION FROM CONSUMER REPRESENTATION WORKING GROUP TO THE FOUNDATION BOARD

#### STATEMENT OF INTENT

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#### 1. Introduction

This Statement of Intent is recommended to the ACCAN Founding Board (the Board) to consider adopting at its first meeting. It has been developed by the Consumer Representation Working Group (the Working Group) to reflect the intent of their deliberations and propose that there is a mechanism to demonstrate ACCAN's commitment to the values of integrity, democracy, inclusion and good governance.

#### 2. Background

As a peak consumer advocacy body for telecommunications ACCAN is an important voice promoting accessibility, quality of service, affordability and availability of communications services for all Australian consumers including:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders,
- Deaf consumers,
- low income consumers,
- people with disabilities,
- people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds,
- youth,
- seniors,
- small business in their capacity as consumers, and
- those in regional, rural and remote areas of Australia.

The Board will be responsible for the management of the company. The Board will provide leadership and input to the formulation of the strategic direction for this new organisation. The Board will be responsible for governing the new body and overseeing the establishment of key legal, fiduciary and operational policies. They will also be integrally involved in the development of an on-going core funding base and the employment of a CEO.

#### 3. Purpose

A key part of the success of ACCAN lies in the diversity of its membership and it is therefore vital that the Board develops a framework that ensures this diversity is adequately reflected in its activities and operation. To assist with this objective, the Board recognises the importance of establishing some guiding principles.

The purpose of this document is to summarise proposed guiding principles and propose they be implemented in relevant ACCAN policies, representations, committee appointments, funding allocations

and activities. The Statement of Intent seeks to build on the directions already outlined in the ACCAN Constitution.

#### **4. ACCAN Guiding Principles**

ACCAN operates with integrity, using an ethical framework and democratic principles, inclusive of all and accountable for its actions.

ACCAN values consumer participation and will work with interested parties to ensure best outcomes for consumers. Consumers are entitled to have their needs represented in the development of communications services and policy in Australia through well-resourced consumer consultation and representative processes.

The principle embodied by “*nothing about us without us*”, (as first articulated by the Disability Rights Movement) indicates ACCAN's commitment to the rights of consumers to contribute to the decision making process.

ACCAN will promote universal accessibility, affordability, availability of communications including telecommunications and Internet services for all Australians.

ACCAN believes that consumers are entitled to mandatory consumer protections of their communications services, including the right to be given the facts needed to make an informed choice, the right to education resources, the right to fair contracts, the right to privacy, and the right to security and guaranteed quality of communications services.

A cornerstone of this consumer protection regime includes providing an appropriate form of redress if a breach of their communication rights occurs, including access to an independent dispute resolution body.

#### **5. Implementation of Guiding Principles**

##### **5.1 Board Selection and Composition**

The Board will consist of nine Directors (with the power to co-opt 3 others) who will be broadly representative of consumers and particular consumer sectors and/or have expertise in areas of company governance.

These consumer sectors include, but are not limited to:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders;
- Deaf consumers;
- low income consumers;
- people with disabilities;
- people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds;
- youth;
- seniors;
- women;
- small business in their capacity as consumers;
- those in regional, rural and remote areas of Australia, and;
- general consumers.

The importance of ensuring a strong representation of disability groups and expertise from a range of perspectives is acknowledged. Without being prescriptive, three representatives on the Board from disability groups is considered to be necessary. It is also considered to be appropriate that a standing expert policy committee on disability matters be appointed to assist with policy development and ensure the diversity of interests.

It is important that Board membership has expertise in good governance, strategic planning, management practices, accounting and legal skills, and Internet and emerging technologies.

The Board acknowledges that, in the selection of additional co-opted Directors, the Board will ensure that these consumer sectors and skills sets are as well represented as possible using the selection criteria below.

When nominating for elected Board positions, nominees will also be asked to address these selection criteria in their nomination statements. Members will be encouraged to vote with these criteria in mind.

## **5.2 Board Selection Criteria.**

- Knowledge of/interest in major communications issues for consumers in Australia
- Advocacy skills/experience especially for key ACCAN constituencies including people with disabilities
- Strategic planning and policy development skills
- Management of a not for profit companies limited by guarantee
- Best practice governance especially for community sector Boards
- Legal skills, accounting, public relations and/or management
- Links with government, community, research and industry groups

## **5.3 Developing the Mission, Vision, and Strategic Plan**

The Working Group recommends that the Board has regard to the above guiding principles in the development of the ACCAN Mission, Vision and Strategic Plan. The CEO will be directed to apply these principles in the development of the work plans and on-going implementation of the Strategic Plan.

## **5.4 Financial Arrangements**

It is agreed that, of funds received by ACCAN under section 593 of the Telecommunications Act 1997 (s. 593 funds) there is no diminution of funding allocated for the representation of people with disabilities.

The Working Group agree that this funding should ensure at least that there be a staff position managing disability issues at ACCAN, and that an Expert Advisory Committee on Disability is set up and maintained.

In addition, if additional funds are obtained, the representation of people with disabilities will share in those additional funds, including (if sufficient funds are obtained) a staff position for a disability policy officer will be established. This is in recognition of the need to address the many pressing accessibility issues for people with disabilities where the market is not delivering. The Working Group acknowledge however that all financial arrangements under section 593 of the Telecommunications Act must be negotiated with the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy ( DBCDE) and will depend upon the availability of funds.

The Working Group noted that, if ACCAN receives other funding for specific projects or purposes, ACCAN will allocate those funds in accordance with the terms under which those funds were made available,

## **5.5 Independent Grants Panel**

ACCAN Board will establish operational procedures including grant guidelines that reflect the ACCAN Guiding Principles.

### **5.5.1 Transitional Arrangements**

Reflecting the desire of the DBCDE and the Working Group, funding permitting the Board will ensure that Deaf Australia, Deafness Forum, Communications Rights Australia (CAUS) and the Internet Society of Australia will be granted an equivalent amount for 2009-2010 as they have been funded in 2008-2009. These transitional arrangements will help to provide a level of stability for the groups and employees and

allow for forward work programs. These groups will then be invited to make an application for a grant from the ACCAN Independent Grants Panel for the period 2010-2012, funding permitting.

The liaison and employment of current and contract staff and their linkage with ACCAN is currently being explored to ensure better coordination and effectiveness.

## **5.6 Appointment of Staff**

On the proviso that ACCAN receives an offer of funding from the DBCDE, the Board will:

- a) make an offer to the Board of the Consumers' Telecommunications Network (CTN) that, should CTN agree to the transfer its property and assets to ACCAN, then CTN staff will be offered employment with ACCAN, on equivalent terms and conditions and have their leave entitlements transferred to ACCAN.
- b) make an offer to the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO) to transfer the any property of TEDICORE to ACCAN and offer of for the National Co-ordinator of TEDCIORRE to become an ACCAN employee.

# Appendix 18

## Australian Communications Consumer Action Network

### LEGAL COMPLIANCE REPORT

Compliance Activity Description	J U L	A U G	S E P	O C T	N O V	D E C	J A N	F E B	M A R	A P R	M A Y	J U N
<b>Governance, Company Secretary and Legal:</b>												
1. Board of Directors Consent forms & declarations of interests register												
2. ASIC Form 388 submitted with Audited Accounts												
3. ASIC Annual Statement received, corrected, lodged, fee paid and sent to ASIC												
4. Change in Officeholders - Directors details notified ASIC Form 484 submitted												
5. Board minutes completed, signed and filed in minute book												
6. Membership register up to date												
7. Annual General meeting held												
8. Auditor appointed at AGM												
9. DBCDE Funding Deed Report Submitted												
<b>Financial operations:</b>												
10. Workers Compensation Insurance paid with certificate of currency on file												
11. Property Insurance premiums paid with certificate of currency on file (theft/burglary/fire/glass)												
12. Public Liability Insurance premiums paid with certificate of currency on file (\$20,000,000)												
13. Voluntary Workers Personal Accident Insurance premiums paid with certificate of currency on file (30 Volunteers)												
14. Professional Indemnity Insurance premiums paid with certificate of currency on file												
15. Monthly Financial Statements												
16. Monthly Financial Statements approved by Board												
17. Complete Qtrly BAS												
18. Ensure Audit completed												
19. Audited Acquittal provided to DBCDE												

**NOTES:**

**Any exceptions to be noted here.**

KEY: Grey indicates a deadline for requirement

Green = completed no follow-up needed \ Yellow = not completed but in progress no follow-up by Board required \ Red = not completed follow-up by the Board required

# Appendix 19

## ACCAN Staff Travel Policy & Procedures

Please note that this policy and procedures are supplement to the ACCAN Travel Policy

### 1. Application

The Staff Travel Request Form (together with attending event information) must be completed and submitted for approval by your supervisor and Business Manager prior to bookings, and this process should be completed within a minimum of 2 weeks before the event. Travel applications submitted less than 2 weeks before the date of departure may not be approved.

### 2. Travel Arrangement

Once your application has been approved, please arrange your travel immediately in order to secure discounted airfare and accommodation, especially if you are traveling to Canberra during parliamentary sittings or a remote area of the country.

### 3. Travel Agent

All air fares and accommodation must only be booked through the ACCAN approved travel agent below, otherwise you must seek an approval to use other sources/supplier from Business Manager.

Happy Holiday & Travel Centre

David Seaman

PH: 4341-7966

[david@happyholiday.com.au](mailto:david@happyholiday.com.au)

### 4. Insurance

All overseas travel must be covered by comprehensive insurance policies (CCI) to ensure that staff and the company are not at risk of any loss occurring before or during travel. Domestic travel insurance policies will be in place and are available from 1 July 2011. All travelling staff are covered by an annual domestic policy and it'll be renewed every 12 months. Otherwise you need to request travel insurance policy to our travel agent for each interstate trip. This policy only covers a 4 day trip. It is the individual's responsibility to ensure that their travel insurance policy is extended by our travel agent if their journey exceeds 4 days.

### 5. Claiming Travel Allowances or Reimbursement of Expenses

Please note that the employee is required to maintain a travel record and to keep receipts or other documentary evidence to substantiate their expenses.

The following is information for domestic travel allowance for ACCAN staff.

Please note that this is only applicable for overnight trips.

The rates will only apply to meals that fall within the period from the commencement of travel by employee to the end of travel covered by the allowance.

- Breakfast \$ 15 (max)
- Lunch \$ 20 (max)
- Dinner \$ 30 (max)

Travel allowance can be provided as a Cash Advance if you make a request by completing the form (Application for a Travel Cash Advance), but you will need to be fully acquitted on a form (Cash Advance Travel Record). When you return from your trip please submit the completed form along with receipts to Business Manager. The Business Manager will check that the expenses are reasonable and will advise staff if they need to repay some of their cash advance back to the company.

Otherwise travel expenses will be payable when you submit Expense Reimbursement Form along receipts to finance. Receipts must be submitted for all claims for reimbursements of actual expenses involving items of expenditure in excess of \$2.

The Business Manager may elect to reimburse the staff member for actual reasonable expenses incurred. This requires the production of receipts in lieu of paying the amounts prescribed above, if your request for Cash Advance with a short notice.

## **Travel Policy** **- FOR INFORMATION -**

### **Policy**

Board Members are volunteers and should not be out of pocket for travel on ACCAN business. Also, it is understood that in order to ensure participation at ACCAN Board meetings, flexible travel arrangements may need to be made in some instances. Both of these principles should be applied, while keeping in mind that where cheaper options are possible they could be used to make savings, allowing for ACCAN budget constraints. Therefore, the following Travel and Accommodation Policy shall apply.

#### *Travel and Accommodation*

For travel to ACCAN face-to-face Board meetings or when travelling for agreed ACCAN business, ACCAN will pay for:

- Board members' travel including airflights, taxis, mileage or parking;
- Accommodation for Board members;
- Breakfast, lunch and dinner for Board members while they are away from home

### **Procedure**

#### **Reminders**

It is the role of the Secretariat to co-ordinate travel arrangements so prior to every Board meeting a reminder will be sent from the Secretariat about an upcoming meeting, requesting the members to be in contact about their requirements and preferences.

#### *Booking Airfares*

ACCAN Board members should let the Secretariat know if they are making their own booking or if they would prefer to the arrangements to be made for them by a Travel Agent. If arrangements are to be made on the Board member's behalf then the Secretariat will consult with the Board member for their travel preferences, then try for the cheapest fare with as much flexibility as possible, unless otherwise advised. Where Board members have booked their own travel they can send the **tax invoices** through to the Secretariat for reimbursement.

It would be preferable that unless you need to have a fully flexible booking that you try to save money by requesting or choosing cheaper flights with less flexibility. However, this is at your discretion, based on your needs, to make it easiest for you to attend the ACCAN Board meeting.

If Board members need to vary their travel once bookings have been made, it is possible, but in most circumstances ACCAN will incur additional charges for changes.

#### **Booking Accommodation**

The Secretariat will book accommodation based on criteria of cost, convenience for attending the Board meeting or the ACCAN meeting, accessible rooms for people with a disability, or with text phone options, if requested, and the comfort of Board. Where possible, all Board members will be booked into the same accommodation venue.

### **Cabcharge Vouchers, Taxi fares and booked Cars**

Once again, the approach is ease of participation for ACCAN Board members. There are three options:

1. Cabcharge vouchers can be supplied to Board members for travel to and from the airport. It is intended that Board members would make savings wherever possible, for example, by sharing cabs.
2. The Travel agent can book cars at either end of your journey.
3. For some of Board members it is still easier to use their own method of payment for taxis and send the invoice through to the Secretariat for reimbursement by ACCAN.

### **Parking**

If the Board member prefers parking at the airport or at the meeting venue – once again invoice ACCAN or send the receipt via the Secretariat for reimbursement.

### **Support Services**

Should Board members require personal care, childcare or any other support services in order to participate in ACCAN Board Business/meeting, ACCAN will help organise and pay for such care.

### **Personal expenses**

ACCAN does not pay for:

- Use of the mini-bar (except for water)
- Pay-per-view movies
- Pre- or post-dinner drinks
- Room service, except in circumstances where it is required
- Accommodation or meal costs of Board members' companions

Board members should take care of their personal expenses when checking out. If this is not done then ACCAN Secretariat will need to take additional time to calculate & invoice individual Board members. It would be preferable to avoid this. Important telephone calls especially to family will be accommodated and funded by ACCAN within reason.