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Submission

21st December 2022

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Re: Telecommunications Legislation Amendment (Information Disclosure, National Interest and Other Measures) Bill 2022

Dear Secretariat,

The Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) thanks the Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications (the Committee) for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Telecommunications Legislation Amendment (Information Disclosure, National Interest and Other Measures) Bill 2022 (the Bill).

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

ACCAN supports the proposed amendments set out in the Bill. In particular, we support:

- The removal of the 'imminence' qualifier when determining whether to approve a triangulation request to locate individuals at risk of harm;
- Amendments to allow for the use and disclosure of information obtained from the Integrated Public Number Database when the information is connected to a call to an emergency number; and
- The increase in record-keeping requirements to facilitate oversight of disclosures by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner.

The timely provision of information to law enforcement is critical to ensuring the safety of vulnerable and at-risk individuals. Accordingly, notwithstanding the need to protect the privacy of consumers, we consider the proposed reforms strike an appropriate balance. ACCAN supports the proposed increase in record-keeping requirements for disclosures as an important enhancement to existing oversight arrangements. Requiring the recording of the provision under which a warrant for disclosure is issued, the issuer of the warrant and the date of issuance is necessary to ensure appropriate scrutiny of disclosure.

ACCAN once again thanks the Committee for the opportunity to comment on the Bill. If you have any further questions regarding our response, please do not hesitate to contact me at 02 9288 4000.

Your sincerely,

Gareth Downing
Deputy Chief Executive Officer

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