

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE - 16 APRIL HEARINGS

Government response to Joint Committee Second Report Recommendation 5

The government response to the Second Report recommendations was released immediately after our appearance at the Joint Committee's hearing on 16 April.

The government rejected the Joint Committee's recommendation 5 that a study be undertaken of methods to improve access for low income households and other disadvantaged groups to the NBN, including the recommendation to examine proposals for a broadband low income measures scheme.

ACCAN believes that the factors cited in the government response, such as increased retail competition generated by the NBN platform, may well be producing competitive retail prices compared with the current market. We also believe that the required special measures targeted at making internet access available to the lowest income and most disadvantaged people in the community is a distinct need that requires separate measures apart from improving the general competitiveness of the market.

Question from Senator Doug Cameron regarding pricing

We have reviewed the WhistleOut analysis on entry-level offer pricing and although we have not done in-depth independent analysis of pricing, it appears that entry-level offers are cheaper on the NBN compared with current combined ADSL2+ broadband and phone line rental. The same figures show those consumers wanting the much higher speeds on the NBN may need to pay a premium for those higher speeds.

Questions from The Hon Sussan Ley MP regarding Grants Scheme

Background

The ACCAN Grants Scheme (the Scheme) funds projects that work towards ACCAN's vision of available, accessible, and affordable communications for all Australians, with a focus on creating versatile resources for communications consumers and a strong evidence base for consumer advocacy. Please find attached the 2012 ACCAN Grants Scheme Guidelines for more information, or visit www.accan.org.au/grants.

A small round funding 3 projects was run in 2009, the first year of ACCAN's operation. Annual rounds have since been run in 2010, 2011, and now 2012. A total of 16 projects have so far received funding, with an estimated 5-7 projects to be selected for the 2012 round by the Independent Panel in May.

Please see the attached *Summary of ACCAN Grant Recipients* for further information, which we have provided along with hard copies of the relevant reports which are being posted to the Committee Secretariat.

Funds & Governance

Funding for the Grants Scheme is provided by the Department of Broadband Communications and the Digital Economy (DBCDE) as part of the ACCAN organisational funding agreement. The agreement stipulates that up to \$250,000 of ACCAN's budget be made available through an independent grants program for consumer representation or research projects in accordance with ACCAN's objectives. ACCAN allocates the full \$250,000 (excl.GST) directly to funded projects annually, and absorbs the costs of operating the Scheme within our organisational budget.

The Scheme is focused on achieving outcomes for consumers by funding projects that contribute to the goals outlined in ACCAN's Strategic Plan. The culture of the Scheme places value on relationships with grantees and reflects best practice in transparent and accountable grant-making by aligning with key guidelines such as the *Commonwealth Grant Guidelines: Policies and Principles for Grants Administration*, published by the Government Department of Finance and Deregulation, July 2009. ACCAN is also a member of the Australian Institute for Grants Management.

Promotion of the Funding Opportunity

The Scheme funds consumer research, representation, or education projects. Accordingly, it is a priority for ACCAN to ensure that the funding opportunity, as well as the outputs of the Scheme, are promoted to community groups, consumer advocates, academics and individual researchers. The number of annual applications we receive has been steadily increasing, with a record total of 76 applications for the 2012 round.

ACCAN makes information available widely through our network of member organisations. We also work to build the profile of the Scheme among our research contacts, in part by promoting the Scheme through presentations at the Communications Policy Research Forum and ACCAN's own National Conference. We maintain listings of the Scheme in prominent online grant databases such as Easy Grants, and take out advertisements in appropriate community newsletters such as the Koori Mail. Finally, we promote the Scheme in the mainstream media at key points in each annual round: when the round opens, to announce successfully funded applications, and when funded research reports are released.



**Australian Communications
Consumer Action Network**

GRANTS SCHEME

2012 GUIDELINES





CONTENTS

CONTACT ACCAN	1
INTRODUCTION	2
ABOUT THE ACCAN GRANTS SCHEME	2
ABOUT ACCAN	2
KEY DATES	2
THE BASICS	3
SCOPE	3
ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS	4
FUNDING AGREEMENTS	5
ASSESSMENT	6
HOW TO APPLY	7
DEVELOPING YOUR APPLICATION	7
APPLY ONLINE	7
WHAT TO EXPECT	7

CONTACT ACCAN

Contact: Robin McNaughton
Email: grants@accan.org.au
Phone: (02) 9288 4000 TTY: (02) 9281 5322
Web: www.accan.org.au/grants



INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THE ACCAN GRANTS SCHEME

Communications technologies are increasingly essential for participation in society, and the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) believes that people should have available, accessible and affordable communications. The ACCAN Grants Scheme funds projects that work towards this vision, focusing on creating versatile resources for consumers and a strong evidence base for consumer advocacy activities.

The Scheme carries an annual budget of \$250,000 and accepts applications during one round per year. Applicants are encouraged to apply for funding amounts appropriate to their project to a maximum of \$60,000.

ABOUT ACCAN

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

ACCAN'S strategic goals are to make the communications 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.

KEY DATES

Application round opens	20 February 2012
Application round closes	5pm AEST 2 April 2012
Applications reviewed by the Independent Panel	April – May 2012
All applicants notified of outcomes approved by the ACCAN Board	June 2012
Opportunity to seek feedback from ACCAN on unsuccessful applications	2 working weeks from the date of notification
Funded projects begin	1 July 2012
Funded projects completed	30 June 2013



Grants Scheme
2012 Guidelines

THE BASICS

Through the ACCAN Grants Scheme we seek to empower communities to act in their own interests; to enable consumers to navigate the communications market; and to establish a sound body of evidence for communications consumer advocacy.

SCOPE

The ACCAN Grants Scheme focuses on outcomes for consumers. We fund research, representation, or education projects that address issues for communications consumers in Australia. Communications can include telecommunications, the internet, broadcasting and new or emerging technologies.

ACCAN advocates on behalf of all consumers, small businesses and not-for-profit organisations. We also recognise the importance of advocating for the needs of potentially vulnerable consumers in the communications market. Projects may address the needs of large numbers of consumers, or significant needs of smaller numbers of consumers, or both.

Projects may produce outputs of different sorts in order to deliver outcomes for consumers. For example, your project may fit into one or more of these areas:

Research – into the social, economic, environmental or technological effects, experiences and implications of communications for consumers. These projects should use appropriate methodologies to document a particular communications consumer issue or explore 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 developing particular submissions, undertaking policy work, participating in regulatory reviews or knowledge sharing to develop your group's capacity to advocate on consumer issues.

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.

Visit www.accan.org.au/grants to for more information about previously funded projects.



ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

ACCAN funds projects undertaken by community organisations, small businesses, university researchers or individuals who satisfy the eligibility requirements. 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.

ACCAN accepts applications for both short term and longer term projects that run between 1 July and 30 June the following year.

In order to be eligible for assessment, applications must be complete, submitted prior to the advertised deadline and meet **all** eligibility criteria. Applications that are late, incomplete, or ineligible will **not** be assessed by the Panel.

Applications must:

- Be for a project that seeks to explore communications consumer issues in Australia and be consistent with ACCAN's scope (see ACCAN Strategic Plan 2010-2015).
- Provide a valid ABN or ACN.
- Not request funding of over \$60,000.
- Be for a project to be completed between 1st July 2012 and 30th June 2013.
- Provide details of Public Liability Insurance with coverage up to \$5 million, or agree to obtain this coverage before the project begins.
- Have successfully acquitted any previous funding under the ACCAN Grants Scheme.
- Not request funding for any of the ineligible activities listed below.

The ACCAN Grants Scheme does **not** provide funding for the following ineligible activities:

- Activities that contradict ACCAN's values
- Activities primarily related to commercial product or service development
- Projects that have already been completed
- Ongoing activities normally funded through other arrangements
- University administrative levies
- Travel costs (unless directly necessary for the project)
- General operating costs not directly necessary for the project (including salaries and equipment).



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 approximately halfway through the project.
- **Milestone Deliverables**
Depending on your funding agreement, these might be draft reports, minutes from a reference group meeting, or other checkpoints in the progress of your project.
- **Records clearly accounting for funding provided**
Records must be kept in such a way that they could be inspected and audited if necessary.
- **A Project Acquittal Form**
ACCAN will provide a form for you to complete, in order to evaluate the successes and document the financial details of your project after it is completed.

ACCAN takes a collaborative approach to grant project management and staff are available for regular support throughout the project. 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 DBCDE in supporting ACCAN).

ASSESSMENT

The ACCAN Grants Scheme assessment process is competitive, merit-based and guided by the Assessment Criteria. Eligible applications are assessed by an Independent Panel of external specialists, whose recommendations for funding must then be ratified by the ACCAN Board. There is a conflict of interest policy in place.

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

Successful applications are those that best satisfy the selection criteria, which are weighted to reflect the priorities of the ACCAN Grants Scheme. The ACCAN grants team can provide information about ACCAN's work and strategic goals to help you develop your application.

Assessment Criteria	Examples of considerations made by the Panel	Weighting
Benefit to consumers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the project seek to fill a gap and is the project an effective response to the gap? Which groups of consumers will benefit from the project? How many consumers will benefit from the project? What will the impact of the benefit be? When will consumers benefit from the project? 	30%
Community engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the motivation for the project? Have efforts been made to identify the key stakeholders in the issue? How will the project consult and engage with consumers, advocacy groups, and/or research communities? Are there strengths or assets (tangible and intangible) within the communities involved that can be built upon to provide even greater benefit? 	20%
Links to ACCAN's strategic goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent does the project address one or more of ACCAN's current strategic goals? 	20%
Technical strength of the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the project objectives, outputs, plan and timeline well considered and achievable? Does the project team have the appropriate skills and capacity to carry out the project? If a research project, is the chosen methodology valid and appropriate? Have ethics in relation to researching and working with people and partners been properly considered and addressed? 	15%
Value for money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the project budget appropriate in relation to the proposed project activities, outputs and outcomes? Would the project be able to proceed without this funding? If in-kind contributions are noted, are they well considered? 	15%



Grants Scheme
2012 Guidelines

HOW TO APPLY

DEVELOPING YOUR APPLICATION

- Visit www.accan.org.au/grants for a list of previously funded projects and information for applicants.
- Check your eligibility.
- Consider the Assessment Criteria and ACCAN's [Strategic Plan 2010-2015](#)
- We encourage applicants to get in touch with us before submitting an application. We are happy to discuss your idea and how it relates to the Grants Scheme and ACCAN's strategic goals.

APPLY ONLINE

The online application form is available at <http://accan.smartygrants.com.au/accan2012>

You will be asked to create a user name and password so that you can save and edit your application as many times as you wish before submitting it. Further instructions are available at the link above.

The online application form complies with WCAG 2.0 Level AA accessibility standards. You can also contact the ACCAN Grants Team for a Microsoft Word version or a printed copy. The ACCAN grants team can help with questions about the application form or the online application process.

All applications must be received by ACCAN by 5pm AEST on 2 April 2012. Late or incomplete applications will not be assessed.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- You will receive confirmation from ACCAN when we receive your application.
- All applicants will receive notification of the outcome of their application in June 2012.
- Your application will be kept confidential and will be accessed only by relevant ACCAN staff and members of the Independent Panel. The ACCAN Board will receive some information in their role as overseer of the assessment process.
- ACCAN may seek further information from applicants at any stage in the assessment process.
- Projects selected for funding will be listed on the ACCAN website.
- Unsuccessful applicants will have two weeks to seek further feedback from ACCAN.

ACCAN Grant Recipients 2010-2011

Completed Projects – 2009 and 2010 Funding Rounds

- **WA Deaf Society**

[Internet Scams: How to Protect Yourself](#) (\$49,600 Grant)

From workshops with members of the Deaf community, consultation with experts, and literature research, the WA Deaf Society created accessible videos showing people how to avoid romance scams, lottery scams, credit card scams, and other scams on the Internet and produced a short report. The videos are available on YouTube:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/internetcamsprotect>

- **Cyberspace Law and Policy Centre, University of New South Wales**

[Communications Privacy Complaints: In Search of the Right Path](#) (\$30,000 Grant)

A study of privacy complaint paths and outcomes by the Cyberspace Law and Policy Centre, University of New South Wales; The consumer research project used complaints data, case studies and interviews to examine common privacy complaint paths in the communications sector. The report was submitted as ACCAN's contribution to the Senate Inquiry to the Privacy of Australians Online.

- **National Ethnic Disability Alliance (NEDA)**

[Communicating Difference: Understanding Communications Consumers from Non English Speaking Backgrounds](#) (\$22,000 Grant)

The report aims to increase the understanding of the characteristics and needs of NESB communications consumers through an extensive review of Australian and international literature. The report focuses on developing an adequate conceptual framework for understanding NESB consumers and investigates literature on the use of telephone, internet and broadcast services, including the needs of NESB sub groups (women, young people and people with disability).

- **Brotherhood of St. Laurence**

[Mobile Matters: Youth Advocates Project](#) (\$58,000 Grant)

The *Mobile Matters* project developed a secondary education program that asked young people to research and critically analyse the financial consequences of youth mobile phone use. Students participated in research and consumer skills workshops before conducting peer surveys. Students presented final recommendations to peers, government regulators and industry representatives at an event held in Melbourne, and findings were published in a final report.

- **Dr. Linda Leung, University of Technology Sydney**

[Mind the Gap: Refugees and Communications Technology Literacy](#) (\$45,000 Grant)

The *Mind the Gap* report explores the experiences of refugees as communications consumers in Australia, and describes a trial education program aimed at developing higher level communications literacies during the settlement process. While refugees generally arrive with base level consumption literacy (which enable them to use at least one telecommunications device to primarily receive calls), living in Australia demands higher level literacy (such as owning and taking financial responsibility for a range of technology products).

- **Novita Children's Services**

[The Newell Network: Telecommunication Solutions for People with Complex Communication Needs](#) (\$50,000 Grant)

This project developed the Newell Network website www.newell.org.au, a growing community-based space that empowers individuals with complex communication needs and support organisations to share information about telecommunications products. The reflections on the project from Novita Children's Services and partners are a valuable record of the collaborative potential in a Web 2.0 approach to empowering people with disabilities, and are captured in a short report.

- **Swinburne University, Central Land Council and Centre for Appropriate Technology**

[Home Internet for Remote Indigenous Communities](#) (\$49,750 Grant)

The project provides a baseline study of communication use in three remote indigenous communities. Researchers engaged with residents in these communities in order to identify the potential of home internet access in their remote communities. With funding from the Australian Research Council and the Aboriginals Benefit Account, ACCAN will continue to partner with the project team to build on this report by trailing the installation of home internet access in Kwale Kwale, Munglawuru, and Ilangara through shared Wi-Fi networks with community level billing options.

- **Able Australia Services**

[*Telecommunications and Deafblind Australians*](#) (\$14,750 Grant)

The project seeks to address the lack of progress in the market for providing communications solutions for deafblind consumers. The first component of the project was a survey of 71 deafblind consumers on a national level. The second component involved the development of a web-based resource based on the research and on testing of devices, which can be viewed in beta at www.dbt.org.au.

- **Danielle Notara, Spiral Research and Consulting**

[*Another Barrier? Regional Consumers, non-profit organisations and the NBN in the Northern Rivers Region*](#) (\$12,500 Grant)

Using qualitative research methods, the report provides a snapshot of the challenges faced by not-for-profit organisations and the people they support in the Northern Rivers region of NSW. As Australia moves into the era of the digital economy and the National Broadband Network (NBN), not-for profits are increasingly finding themselves as brokers of phone and internet access for their clients who continue to struggle with the basics of availability, affordability, and accessibility of ICT.

- **Council on the Ageing WA**

[*Where do I start? Female Seniors and the Internet*](#) (\$20,000 Grant)

Through focus groups and interviews, the project investigated the knowledge gap between users and non-users specifically related to information and service provision. The final report is a rich account of the challenges that female seniors feel they face in going online. Though most of the women who are not already using the internet are reluctant to go online, many of them worry that they may be disadvantaged in future.

Projects in Progress – 2011 Funding Round

- **Australian Health Workforce Institute (Dr. Louise Greenstock)**

[*Connecting people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and General Practitioners through telecommunications*](#) (\$51,785 Grant)

The overarching goal of this project is to generate increased awareness about the role of telecommunications in health care as a bridge for consumers from CALD backgrounds and the health professionals interacting with them. The proposed outputs are a scoping document, non-technical report, and workshops to stimulate discussion, which will influence policy discussions around the needs of CALD communities in relation to access to health care information.

- **Footscray Community Legal Centre**

[Refugee Communities Telecommunications Education Program](#) (\$22,745 Grant)

The project is a community education program for refugee and new migrant consumers. Materials will be developed through consultation with key stakeholders, will directly address issues such as debt and accessing the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman scheme, and will be designed to enable participants to share information in their communities. The materials will be distributed widely through ACCAN and FCLC networks.

- **Media Access Australia**

[SociABILITY: Social media for people with a disability](#) (\$41,500 Grant)

The project has delivered to consumers with disabilities a collection of online and printed resources which provide insight and guidance into which social media tools can be used for a particular task and how the accessibility issues can be addressed to achieve the task. The materials have been positively received and public discussion has been generated through media engagements.

- **University of Melbourne (Dr. Rowan Wilken)**

[High-Speed Broadband and Household Media Ecologies](#) (\$45,934 Grant)

This project will be a quantitative study with qualitative follow up, researching the influence that High-Speed Broadband (HSB) has on domestic media and communications consumption patterns and costs in family households in Brunswick, an NBN first roll out area.

- **University of Wollongong (William Tibben)**

[Government ICT Purchasing: What differences do accessibility criteria make for people with disabilities?](#) (\$38,390 Grant)

The project seeks to produce a toolkit to be used for evidence-based advocacy by disability organisations. The background to the toolkit will be research into the most appropriate ways to consider accessibility criteria in public procurement as a method of improving accessibility of ICT products and services for people with disabilities in Australia.

- **Women's Legal Services NSW**

[Cyber Bullying: Untangling the Web, Think B4 U Click](#) (\$49,646 Grant)

This project aims to involve community members in designing and delivering culturally appropriate consumer education activities for young aboriginal women in secondary schools in rural and regional NSW. It seeks to inform participants of their legal rights with regards to cyber bullying, and to enable them to respond in their own interests.