



Australian Government

**Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts**

Funding of telecommunications consumer representation grants

Annual Report 2024-25

December 2025



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Purpose of Section 593 of the Telecommunications Act

Section 593 of the *Telecommunications Act 1997* (Telecommunications Act) provides for the Minister for Communications to make grants of financial assistance to:

- consumer bodies for purposes in connection with the representation of the interests of consumers in relation to telecommunications issues; and
- persons or bodies for purposes in connection with research into social, economic, environmental or technological implications of developments relating to telecommunications.

Funding provided 2024-25

In 2024-25, funding under section 593 of the Telecommunications Act was provided only to the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN). The funding was provided under contract (Funding Agreement) to ACCAN by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts (department). ACCAN was provided with \$2,721,000 (excluding GST) for the 2024-25 financial year. The department administers section 593 grants.

Each of five agreed payment instalments made to ACCAN in 2024-25 under the Funding Agreement were subject to assessment of the six Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and related activities set out in the Funding Agreement.

The funding provided to ACCAN under section 593 of the Act is recovered from the annual carrier licence charge imposed on eligible carrier licences under the *Telecommunications (Carrier Licence Charges) Act 1997*.

Assessment of ACCAN's general performance

Quarterly progress reports provided to the department in 2024-25 demonstrated that ACCAN satisfactorily met its KPIs and Funding Agreement milestones.

ACCAN's 2024-25 Annual Report showed that during the financial year, ACCAN:

- Represented consumer interests to several parliamentary inquiries in the areas of misinformation and disinformation, the Scams Protection Framework, and cybersecurity,
- Made 62 policy submissions to government, regulatory and other inquiries, including to the Roadmap for First Nations digital inclusion and the 2024 Regional Telecommunications Review. Most ACCAN submissions are available at <https://www.accan.org.au/policysubmissions>,
- Addressed the 2024 CommsDay Regional, Rural, Remote Forum on the future of universal services.
- Participated in the Regulatory Proposal Forum (RPF) expert and consumer panel convened by NBN Co.
- Provided 172 interviews or commentary to television, radio, print, and online media platforms, and raised significant public awareness, with ACCAN mentioned 1664 times in the press,
- Commissioned research covering consumer concerns, accessibility of online content, digital literacy, first nations digital inclusion, cyber security, affordability and automated decision-making,
- Developed and launched the first wave of the Consumer Sentiment Tracker (CST), which is designed to provide a twice-yearly measure of consumer sentiment in the Australian communications market.
- Issued 49 media releases across the year, covering various campaigns, research findings, policy reform calls, digital competition and consumer protections, including domestic and family violence, data breaches and miscellaneous industry misconduct responses, and
- Engaged directly with industry peak bodies, Australian Telecommunications Alliance (ATA) and the Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association (AMTA), as well as Telstra, Optus, TPG and NBN.

ACCAN reported 102 organisational members in 2024-25. Organisational membership comprised groups from disability advocacy, remote and rural consumers, indigenous organisations, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) groups, and others from across Australia.

Financial accounts

There were no significant changes in the nature of ACCAN’s activities during the financial year. The independent auditor of ACCAN’s financial accounts found its accounts were prepared in accordance with the *Corporations Act 2001* and:

- gave a true and fair view of ACCAN’s financial position at 30 June 2025 and its performance for the year ended on that date; and
- complied with Australian Accounting Standards—Simplified Disclosures, and Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Regulation 2022.

Independent Grants Program

ACCAN administers a competitive Independent Grants Program (IGP) in accordance with its Funding Agreement. Two new projects received funding through the IGP in the 2024-25 Financial Year.

Table 1: New grants round projects funded in 2024-25

Recipient	Grant amount (ex-GST)
University of Tasmania: Flags and Fibre - Australia’s communication policy in practice as experienced by a regional community	\$18,500
University of Queensland: Consumer Protection in Digital Competition Regimes	\$36,248

Table 2: Ongoing grants round projects funded in 2024-25

Recipient	Grant amount (ex-GST)	Amount paid in FY 2024-25 (ex-GST)
RMIT: Social infrastructure for digital skills development	\$38,404	\$20,404
RMIT: Online safety - Developing design strategies and policies to protect women and gender-diverse people from technology-facilitated abuse on social media	\$78,045	\$38,045
WorkVentures Ltd: Enabling First Nations digital citizens through a National Device Bank	\$85,000	\$45,000

Four projects were completed in 2024-25: Deaf Australia, Fortifying the 2015 Auslan Translation Guidelines, and new guidelines for Auslan translation; Deakin University, Defining Communication in a Digital Era: What Best Protects Diverse Consumers; Western Sydney University, First Nations Digital Inclusion in Western Sydney; and Griffith University, Smartphone sharing with intimate partners: Implications for telecommunications consumer cybersecurity.