



Submission to the Review of the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network

The Internet Society welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Review of the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN). The Internet Society is a global organization with more than 80,000 members and 116 chapters worldwide, including one in Australia. It is also the organizational home of the Internet Engineering Task Force. The global Internet Society is dedicated to ensuring the open development, evolution, and use of the Internet for the benefit of people throughout the world.

Consumer protection networks, like ACCAN, have become a significant part of every country's ecosystem in ensuring consumers are informed and that their rights are protected in the ever-changing technology environment. As a consumer advocacy organization, ACCAN's work is important in representing consumers in the telecommunications and Internet Australian market, through conducting research and working with industry, government and consumers to improve policy outcomes. Although funded by the Australian government, it should be noted that ACCAN carries a multistakeholder agenda, which is compatible with technology governance structures and we believe is the only way to achieve policy outcomes that are inclusive and informed.

In Australia, ACCAN's work is pivotal in raising awareness about Internet and technology policy issues, protecting the interests of consumers. These include, communications affordability, future consumer protections, broadband performance monitoring, accessible ICT procurement and accessible programming on TV.

At a regional level, ACCAN has also contributed to various policy processes, including APECTEL, ITU APT, Consumers International and many other bringing to the fore, amongst others, "the need for improvement on consumer safeguards to meet the needs of regional consumers".¹

Internationally, ACCAN is a well-established contributor and participants in fora such as the Internet Governance Forum, where last year it was the organizer of a workshop on Death and the Internet. The workshop, original in its kind, sought to expose the many legal and social questions around access to a person's digital life after death: what rights should heirs have and what rights do they have? The workshop highlighted the issues for legislators and consumers, and explored ways of assisting people in planning their digital legacy.²

¹ ACCAN ready to work for better regional telecommunications, <https://accan.org.au/files/Media%20Releases/151023%20ACCAN%20ready%20to%20work%20for%20better%20regional%20telecommunications%20%20FINAL.pdf>

² <http://www.intgovforum.org/cms/2015-igf-joao-pessoa/workshops/list-of-published-workshop-proposals>



At a more high level, ACCAN was tremendous in supporting the participation of Ms. Narelle Clark, at the time, an Internet Society Board Trustee, in the IANA Coordination Group (ICG). The ICG was a multistakeholder body tasked with reviewing and compiling the final proposal on IANA that was submitted to the United States government.

Given this important line of work, the Internet Society is supportive of ACCAN's work. In particular, we would like to note that:

- The Internet Society has found ACCAN a useful source of research for evidence based consumer representation;
- The ACCAN model for consumer representation (i.e. well resourced and reliably funded body) is a model other economies should emulate;
- The Internet Society is appreciative of ACCAN's effort and has found it useful across the region and more broadly;
- The Internet Society finds ACCAN's consumer education materials valuable.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathryn C. Brown". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Kathryn C. Brown
President and CEO