

# General comments

OptiComm has worked cooperatively with ACCAN to provide consumers with information about Broadband services. ACCAN provides a very valuable public service that no other Government or Association provide in the Telecommunications industry.

# Response

## Has ACCAN effectively performed the role of representing the interests of consumers in relation to telecommunications?

Yes, ACCAN is a great consumer advocate and educator.

## 2. Does ACCAN effectively engage with a broad range of stakeholders, including industry, government agencies and other consumer groups?

Yes, ACCAN staff have always been available and approachable to all stakeholders and actively involved in industry events, seminars and workshops.

## 3. Considering the consumer representation role performed by ACCAN, has ACCAN adopted an appropriate balance between representation of general consumers and representation of those with particular needs?

Yes, I believe ACCAN has a balanced approach to all consumers.

## 4. Is a telecommunications specific consumer representative body funded by Government required or:

### a) Should Government fund representation only for a body or bodies representing consumers with particular needs?

No, it’s broader than that. General consumers also need education and advocacy.

### b) Could a telecommunications representation function be carried out by a general consumer body?

Possibly however specific knowledge of the industry is required, especially as this sector changes rapidly and often requires good technical knowledge from both the way consumers and carriers/carriage service providers operate.

### c) Could Government more directly measure consumer views by undertaking its own consumer research?

I do not think a Government Department would be as effective as ACCAN in this role.

## 5. Have you seen any examples of how research funded through the Independent Grants Program (IGP) has influenced Government policy or the behaviour of industry? Could changes be made to the IGP to make the funded research projects more influential?

No comment.

## 6. Do you believe research funded through the IGP is useful to consumers? Could changes be made to the IGP to make the funded research projects more useful to consumers?

Any funds to research specific telecommunications issues is welcome. In the post NBN Co world, there are still many issues that remain unresolved and consumers are still very confused by the changes brought about by the advent of NBN Co.

## 7. Is it appropriate for the Government to continue to provide grants to a consumer representative group (or any other non-government body) to undertake research into telecommunications issues?

Yes, any grants for this activity would help in consumer education.

## 8. If this is appropriate, what changes (if any) would you recommend to how the funding is provided and who it is provided to?

I would recommend no specific changes other than fund ACCAN at a level they can provide good consumer education and advocacy.

## 9. Should any other activities, other than consumer representation and research, be considered for funding under section 593 of the Telco Act? If so, what should these be and what would be the rationale for funding such activities be?

No comment.