



# Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia (Inc)

## FEDERAL COUNCIL

*"Advocating for equitable access to education for students in rural and remote Australia"*

Federal Secretary  
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November 23, 2016

Dear Sir/Madam

It gives ICPA (Aust) great pleasure to contribute to the Submission: Consumer representation: Review of section 593 of the *Telecommunications Act 1997* Issues paper.

ACCAN is an extremely effective organisation in representing consumers in relation to telecommunications.

The Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia, ICPA (Aust), is a voluntary parent body, dedicated to ensuring all rural and remote students have equity of access to a continuing and appropriate education. This encompasses the education of children from early childhood through to tertiary. Many of our members live on isolated stations, great distances from their nearest community with their only access to education being via distance education programs. Many of these members conduct their business from these same rural and remote locations. For our members, communication is essential for both the delivery of education as well as enabling enterprises to conduct their business which includes engaging in competitive commercial activities and relying on ready access to communication tools to do so. Our members share a common goal of access to an appropriate education for their children and the provision of services required to achieve this.

Access, reliability and affordability of service are the most pressing communication issues for our families residing in rural and remote Australia. Like all Australians, our members desire equity of access as a basic requirement in the provision of telecommunication services.

ICPA (Aust) is an active member of ACCAN who have assisted with information, advocacy and opportunities to network with other communications' stakeholders.

ICPA (Aust) has been invited to participate in numerous members' advisory forums bringing together different and varied sections of the community to discuss current telecommunications issues. We have been introduced and kept informed of relevant telecommunications issues which is important for us as a group run entirely by volunteers. ACCAN have a proactive approach to the sharing of information and research. With a diverse membership body, they succeed in ensuring that everyone's voice is heard.

As a telecommunications specific consumer representative body, ACCAN delivers a much needed service to the industry. They are extremely knowledgeable in the telecommunications sphere and well respected throughout the telecommunications industry, as is shown by the range of guests at their annual conference.

With fast paced changes happening in the telecommunications industry it is imperative to have a professional organisation such as ACCAN undertaking research into current issues. ACCAN administers the Independent Grants Program well, to the best of our knowledge and the results always make interesting reading.

ICPA (Aust) believes that ACCAN's funding should be maintained so that they may continue the business of consumer representation, advocacy and research.

Yours sincerely

Jane Morton  
Federal Secretary  
ICPA (Aust)