



**Australian
Communications
and Media Authority**

Consumer Consultative Forum Terms of Reference

JULY 2024

Canberra

Level 3
40 Cameron Avenue
Belconnen ACT

PO Box 78
Belconnen ACT 2616

T +61 2 6219 5555
F +61 2 6219 5353

Melbourne

Level 32
Melbourne Central Tower
360 Elizabeth Street
Melbourne VIC

PO Box 13112
Law Courts
Melbourne VIC 8010

T +61 3 9963 6800
F +61 3 9963 6899

Sydney

Level 5
The Bay Centre
65 Pirrama Road
Pymont NSW

PO Box Q500
Queen Victoria Building
NSW 1230

T +61 2 9334 7700
F +61 2 9334 7799

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Scope

The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) convenes the Consumer Consultative Forum (CCF), established under subsection 59(1) of the *Australian Communications and Media Authority Act 2005* (ACMA Act).

The CCF's function is to assist the ACMA to perform the ACMA's functions in relation to matters affecting consumers.

Aims of the forum

The aims of the CCF are to:

- engage with consumer representatives and advocates on policy and regulatory interests on communications consumer issues
- give the ACMA access to representative perspectives on issues affecting consumers, including disadvantaged consumers
- give the ACMA access to networks for disseminating information to consumers about regulatory safeguards and initiatives.

To achieve these aims, the CCF will draw together participants that represent a broad range of consumers and encourage active and open discussion.

Terms of reference

The CCF will provide information and advice to the ACMA on matters affecting consumers of communications services, including:

- current and future demand for communications services by consumers
- priority issues affecting the use of communications services by consumers in the short, medium and longer term
- appropriate ways to address these issues, having regard to the current regulatory framework
- effective methods of informing consumers on issues affecting them
- specific advice on issues being considered in reviews, projects and other activities undertaken by the ACMA that may affect consumers.

Members may disseminate information, advice and updates from CCF meetings, teleconferences and correspondence within their organisations and/or through their networks, unless advised that a matter is confidential. This could include topics that may be of concern to particular groups of consumers and other relevant matters as requested by the ACMA.

Membership

Composition of the CCF

Subsection 59(3) of the ACMA Act empowers the ACMA to appoint persons as members of the CCF. Persons are appointed to the CCF by a letter or instrument of appointment signed by the ACMA. CCF members will be organisations that are in a position to represent the views or interests of consumers in the communications sector.

CCF membership comprises the following:

- ACMA, which will provide the Chair of the CCF
- set-term members which are consumer organisations in a position to represent the views of consumers in the communications sector, as appointed by the ACMA from time to time
- ongoing members:
 - Australian Communications Consumer Action Network Limited, ACN 133 719 678 (ACCAN)
 - Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman Limited, ACN 057 634 787 (TIO).

The members are to nominate a representative to attend CCF meetings, The representative must be the head of the organisation or a senior officeholder in the organisation with responsibility for telecommunications and/or consumer issues. ACCAN and the TIO are to be represented by their respective Chief Executive Officer.

Process for selecting and appointing set term members

When a set term membership expires, the ACMA will undertake a public selection process for consumer organisations to be appointed or reappointed as members.

Selection will be based on the following criteria:

- expertise and experience in representing Australian consumers and their interests
- ability to identify and prioritise issues affecting Australian consumers
- ability to actively represent views through the CCF and other ACMA consultative processes
- knowledge of, and experience with, regulatory processes
- ability to provide information, evidence and advice about regulatory issues to Australian consumers
- the diversity of perspectives and interests represented across the CCF membership as a whole.

The ACMA may also appoint additional set term members directly where it has identified gaps in consumer representation to access a broader and more complete understanding of disparate consumer perspectives.

Consumer organisations and their representatives must declare any potential conflict of interest in relation to matters within the scope of the CCF upon nominating to become a consumer member.

Term of appointments to the CCF

ACCAN, and the TIO are each appointed as a member of the CCF on an ongoing basis.

Set term members are appointed to the CCF for a term of three years, unless otherwise agree by the Authority. Such organisations may be reappointed for further terms.

Under subsection 59(4) of the ACMA Act, the ACMA may, at any time, revoke a member's appointment to the CCF.

Meetings

The CCF will meet three times a year with at least one in person/hybrid meeting and the rest online meetings.

Proxies

CCF meetings will be attended by the nominated representative of each member of the CCF. Should the nominated representative of a CCF member be unable to attend a meeting, the member may, with the permission of the Secretariat, select a suitable replacement representative to attend the meeting.

Attendance by non-members

The Chair or Secretariat of the CCF may also agree to other persons attending a meeting or part of a meeting for the purpose of canvassing particular issues. This may include additional representatives from members, non-members consumer organisations, industry representatives, subject matters experts and guests.

Observers

CCF meetings will also be attended by a representative of each of the following government agencies:

- Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
- Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts.

The representative of each of the government agencies will be nominated by the relevant government agency. The government agencies are to attend the CCF meetings to provide information relevant to telecommunications consumer issues. These attendees, where appropriate, will provide the CCF with an update of policy or programs developed, implemented or administered by them. The government agencies are observers on the CCF.

Chairing meetings

An ACMA full-time Member will chair the CCF meetings. Where a full-time member is unavailable, the CCF will be Chaired by a Senior Executive Officer.

Operational arrangements

Work plan

The ACMA will develop, in consultation with CCF members, a work plan for the CCF. The work plan will prioritise issues in line with the aims of the CCF and ACMA corporate objectives. The CCF will review progress against that work plan at least annually.

Referral of issues

The CCF principally provides an avenue for consultation. As such, the CCF may identify and analyse issues without resolving them. However, the CCF may refer issues to an appropriate body with a view to further consideration and/or resolution.

Costs

Consumer members may apply to the ACMA for reimbursement of their reasonable travel costs for attending in-person a CCF meeting. Reasonable travel costs are ordinarily assessed in accordance with government travel rates for non-SES officers.