

10 February 2012

**Question from Senator Ludlam on responses to ACCAN's proposed Disability Telecommunications Service**

In ACCAN's September 2011 submission to the DBCDE's review of Access to Telecommunications by People with Disability, Older Australians and People Experiencing Illness one of the overarching recommendations we made was for the adoption of a Disability Telecommunications Service that would sit under contracts managed by TUSMA.

ACCAN sees such a disability telecommunications service as being necessary for the provision of functional equivalence in telecommunications for Australians with disability and a growing number of older Australians.

Over 20 submissions to the DBCDE's review supported ACCAN's recommendations, including the recommendation for an over-arching one-stop Disability Telecommunications Service.

There has to date been no report back from the review or any other response from the government on this or any other of the recommendations that ACCAN made in the submission.

**Question from Senator Birmingham on transition from copper in the 7 percent areas.**

If the NBN proceeds as forecast, there will be multiple service quality advantages to moving off copper.

Voice quality would be as good or better over the NBN than phone service over copper wires, presumably at the same or lower cost. Given that the internet is increasingly an essential service and has particular benefits for rural consumers in the areas of health and education, and given that NBN-based services will deliver internet to the 7 percent areas at a much higher quality than available over the copper network, it is likely to be sufficient incentive for most to take up an NBN-based service over the next two decades.

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