

Australian Government Productivity Commission  
Inquiry: Telecommunications Universal Service Obligation

Lodged online

Dear sir/madam

## Universal Service Obligation

The Disability Council NSW was established under the *Community Welfare Act 1987* (NSW), and was transferred under the *Disability Inclusion Act 2014* (NSW) on 3 December 2014. Council's main responsibilities under the Act are to:

- Monitor the implementation of Government policy;
- Advise the Minister on emerging issues relating to people with disability, and about the content and implementation of the NSW State Disability Inclusion Plan and disability inclusion action plans;
- Advise public authorities about the content and implementation of disability inclusion action plans;
- Promote the inclusion of people with disability in the community and promote community awareness of matters concerning the interests of people with disability and their families;
- Consult with similar councils and bodies, and people with disability; and
- Conduct research about matters relating to people with disability.

On behalf of the Disability Council NSW, I am writing to support section 4.2 of the submission of the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) provided to the Productivity Commission, which reiterates ACCAN's initial submission in responding to the needs of people with disability in relation to the Universal Service Obligation (USO).

Specifically, the Disability Council draws the Commission's attention to:

- The Government's National Disability Strategy<sup>1</sup>, and particularly Direction 5, which commits the Government to facilitating "Communication and information systems that are accessible, reliable and responsive to the needs of people with disability, their families and carers"

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/05\\_2012/national\\_disability\\_strategy\\_2010\\_2020.pdf](https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/05_2012/national_disability_strategy_2010_2020.pdf)

- The need for a robust, appropriately funded, responsive and innovative National Relay Service, including both:
  - A Relay arm which provides real-time and SMS call types for people who are Deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing or speech-impaired, and extends the service to assist any other persons whose disability is a barrier to accessing telecommunications services directly
  - An Outreach arm which markets the service to the general and disability communities, and provides training and technical support to users
- The need for a 'one-stop' Disability Telecommunication Service, which provides communications information, equipment provision, training and support, both for NDIS participants and others.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide input to the inquiry. The Disability Council looks forward to the Commission's recommendations, and trusts that a new USO will provide greater

Yours sincerely,

(Jason Kara, on behalf of) **Mark Tonga**  
**Chair, Disability Council NSW**

30 January 2017