JARGON-BUSTER 2020

There are a lot of acronyms and technical jargon you can encounter in the communications sector.

To combat the confusion, ACCAN has produced the Jargon Buster to help decode these terms. This handy glossary is a great resource when reading and researching communications issues.

Technical Glossary

4G	Current standard mobile internet speed in Australia. Up 10x faster than 3G, 4G allowed for the rise of streaming video, music and games on mobile phones.
5G	5G is the next generation of wireless connectivity. It will allow for faster network speeds, while also being able to support more devices at the same time. This will be particularly important in internet connected products (known as the Internet of Things or IOT devices) such as smart speakers, automated cars and wearables. While 5G will follow 4G, it will not fully replace it for some time. 5G works alongside 4G, so that a 5G device can automatically switch from one network to the other where it's available. Currently, only select mobile phone models can be used to access 5G. Read more about 5G and mobile phones here. See also – • ACCAN's submission to the Standing Committee on Communications and the Arts' Inquiry into 5G in Australia • EME
AVC	Access Virtual Circuit (AVC) is the first part of the NBN Co Wholesale pricing model. Telcos buy one AVC for each NBN customer they have. This is paid as a monthly fee. The cost differs depending on the speed tier on the NBN plan - 12/1, 25/5, 50/20, or 100/40.
Backhaul	The long distance telecommunications links connecting regional or interstate networks together.

CIS	Critical Information Summary The CIS helps you compare features and prices from different telcos. It also tells you what to expect, such as: • what is included in the product, service or plan, and what is limited or excluded • the fees and charges for the product or service, even if it is a 'free' offer • how long the minimum contract lasts • how much it costs to use national or international roaming (mobile only) • what to do if you have a complaint The TCP Code (see below) requires that this is provided to consumers.
CAN	Customer Access Network – a common industry term for the piece of the telecommunications network dedicated to connecting telcos to their consumers.
CapTel	Captioned Telephony service used by people with hearing difficulties. By connecting through the National Relay Service (NRS), CapTel users can speak their side of the conversation while an operator translates the other side of the spoken conversation and sends it back to the CapTel user as text. From 1 February 2020, the NRS will no longer support the CapTel handset. Alternative captioned services will be provided through the NRS.
CDR	Consumer Data Right The CDR refers to the right of consumers to safely access certain data about themselves that is held by businesses. This data will be provided to consumers in a practical form and in a timely manner. The CDR will also allow consumers to transfer their data to trusted third parties of their choice, and will require businesses to inform consumers about the disclosure of data to third parties. The CDR will first apply to the banking sector, followed by the energy sector. The telecommunications sector is currently proposed to follow. See also – • ACCAN submission to Treasury Amendment (Consumer Data Right) Bill 2018 Consultation and Treasury Amendment (Consumer Data Right) Bill 2018 further provisions consultation • ACCAN submission to Open Banking Final Report (Consumer Data Right) • ACCAN submission to ACCC Consumer Data Right Rules Framework Consultation

CVC	Connectivity Virtual Circuit (CVC) is the second part of the NBN Co Wholesale pricing model. The CVC is bought in mass by a telco from NBN Co and then divided up per NBN customer. NBN Co's newer bundled plans come with a set amount of CVC per user per month; telcos then often buy additional CVC. If a telco does not buy enough CVC, this results in under-provisioning. This means consumers get slower broadband speeds.
CSG	The Customer Service Guarantee (CSG) is a Standard that outlines how quickly your telco must connect or fix a landline phone service. Importantly, the CSG does not cover mobile phone or internet issues. See also – • ACCAN's policy position on customer service and reliability standard (updated CSG)
EME/EMR/EMF	Electromagnetic energy (EME), also known as electromagnetic radiation (EMR) or Electromagnetic Fields (EMF), is the energy stored in an electromagnetic field. Moving in waves, this energy can take the form of anything from TV and radio transmissions, to gamma radiation from space, to heat in the atmosphere. All forms of EME are collectively referred to as the electromagnetic spectrum. Many devices in the home use EME to operate including cordless phones, baby monitors, WiFi routers, and microwave ovens. Mobile phone towers and small cells also use EME. In Australia, ARPANSA is the regulatory body charged with setting standards around EME emissions to ensure that our mobile networks are safe. There is no evidence that exposure to low level EME is harmful to human health, according to the World Health Organisation.
FTTB	Fibre To The Building/Basement (FTTB) – a CAN technology To connect a user to the NBN, NBN Co will run a fibre optic line to the fibre node in the building's communications room. They then use the existing technology in the building (usually copper lines from traditional landline telephones) to connect to each apartment. Most FTTB connections connect apartment building to the NBN network. As of Oct 31 2019, 2.85 million out of 6.2 million active NBN services used FttB/FttN.
FTTC	Fibre To The Curb (FTTC) – a CAN technology NBN Co delivers fibre all the way to the telecom pit outside of a property. It then connects to the premises' copper network. As of Oct 31 2019, 353,000 out of 6.2 million active NBN services used FttC.

FTTN	Fibre To The Node (FTTN) – a CAN technology FTTN involves NBN Co running a line of fibre to a central location. This is known as a node and is often located at the end of a street or between a number of streets. FTTN uses copper lines to connect the node to the premises As of Oct 31 2019, 2.85 million out of 6.2 million active NBN services used FttB/FttN.
FTTP	Fibre To The Premises (FTTP) FTTP uses a fibre cable to connect premises directly to the NBN. It offers the fastest speeds in the NBN multi-technology mix. FTTP is typically used to connect homes or businesses in areas where there is no existing internet connection.
HFC	Hybrid Fibre Coaxial (HFC) To provide NBN broadband over HFC, NBN runs a fibre cable that runs to a node. Once at the node, NBN HFC uses the existing cables to make a connection to a premise. HFC uses the same technology as cable television services like Foxtel to deliver the NBN. HFC is primarily used in metro areas and MDUs.
IOT	Internet of Things (IOT) IOT devices connect to the internet, allowing them to collect and share data. IOT devices can include everything from lightbulbs to sensors in airplanes.
IPND	Integrated Public Number Database (IPND) The IPND is a secure database that stores all listed and unlisted public numbers assigned to communications services. These include numbers assigned to a telephone, fax machine, or connected device like a tablet or car that can make and receive calls via Bluetooth. The IPND includes information about the service, including the name of the customer, the telco that provides the number, and the where the 'service address' is (i.e. the street address where the customer lives or where telephone service is located). See also – • ACCAN submission on draft IPND code 2019
ISP/RSP	Internet Service Provider/Retail Service Provider Telcos that sell internet at a retail level to consumers and businesses e.g. Telstra, Optus, Vodafone, Aussie Broadband etc.
Latency	How long it takes for data to get from one point to another. The lower the latency, the faster the transfer of data.

LNP	Local Number Portability LNP is the ability to transfer your phone number to a different telco. This is known as "porting".
MDU	Multiple-Dwelling Units (MDU) is a term often used in relation to NBN. MDUs can include buildings such as apartments, town houses, student accommodation etc.
MNO	Mobile Network Operator - a telco that runs a network, e.g. Telstra, Optus, Vodafone
MTAS	Mobile Terminating Access Service - a wholesale charge between telco providers for any call made to a mobile phone. The MTAS is regulated by the ACCC who determine an efficient price for the provision of the MTAS. See also – • ACCAN submission on the ACCC MTAS FAD
MTM	Multi technology Mix – mix of FTTP, FTTN, FTTB & HFC
MVNO	Mobile Virtual Network Operator - a telco that offers a mobile service by on-selling MNO network services, e.g. Amaysim, Boost, Coles Mobile.
NRS	National Relay Service People who are Deaf, hearing-impaired or speech-impaired are unable to access telecommunications without specialised equipment and services. Since 1995, the Australian Government has overseen a National Relay Service (NRS) which enables people with these disabilities to conduct real-time conversations with other people. The funding for the NRS is provided by a levy on eligible telecommunications carriers. The NRS offers a number of different relay services allowing greater communication options for people who are Deaf, hearing impaired or speech impaired. These include: • Type and Read (for people who are Deaf and use a TTY) • Type and Listen (for people with speech impairment who use a TTY) • Speak and Read (for people who are hearing-impaired or Deaf and use a TTY) • Speak and Listen (for people with speech impairment who do not use a TTY) • Internet relay (a form of Type and Read which uses the internet rather than a TTY) • Video relay service (for people who prefer to use Auslan) • SMS relay (for people who are unable to make a voice call on a mobile)

PIP	Public Interest Premises are defined as sites or locations that are used on a continuing basis for a public interest purpose – e.g. schools, hospitals. Round 4 of the Federal Government's Mobile Black Spots Program included funding for 73 base stations to specifically target coverage issues at Public Interest Premises, such as tourist sites and emergency services facilities.
POI	Point of Interconnect The connection point that allows retail service providers (RSPs) and wholesale service providers (WSPs) to connect to NBN Co access capability.
POP	Point of Presence – a network connection point between competitive telecommunications infrastructure providers
RTIRC	Regional Telecommunications Independent Review Committee A Regional Telecommunications Independent Review Committee (RTIRC) is established every three years by Part 9B of the Telecommunications (Consumer Protection and Service Standards) Act 1999 (the Act) to conduct reviews into telecommunications services in regional, rural and remote parts of Australia.
RTR	Regional Telecommunications Review The RTR is a review of the adequacy of telecommunications services in regional, rural and remote parts of Australia. It is conducted every three years. The most recent RTR was undertaken in 2018. See also - • ACCAN's submission to the Regional Telecommunications Review 2018
SAU	Special Access Undertaking NBN Co's Special Access Undertaking (SAU) is an important document containing promises from NBN Co about how it will allow access to its network and what services it will offer to telecommunications providers. This document will set many of the wholesale rules for the industry for the next 30 years. It is up to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) to decide whether the SAU will keep the industry competitive and fair and whether or not to call for changes to the document. See also – • ACCAN's submission to the ACCC's NBN SAU expiry of non-price provisions consultation

SIP	Statutory Infrastructure Provider (SIP) The Statutory Infrastructure Provider (SIP) obligations ensure that all Australian premises are able to access superfast broadband services (25 Megabits per second (Mbps) or better). There will be a requirement on NBN Co Limited (NBN Co) to connect premises and supply wholesale broadband services on reasonable request. NBN Co will become the SIP for areas as it rolls out its network and it will be the default SIP for all of Australia after the NBN is declared built and fully operational.
STS	Standard Telephone Service The Standard Telephone Service (STS) is defined in Section 6 of the Telecommunications (Consumer Protection And Service Standards) Act 1999 and states (in part): '...a standard telephone service is a reference to a carriage service for each of the following purposes: (a) the purpose of voice telephony; (b) if: (i) voice telephony is not practical for a particular end-user with a disability (for example, because the user has a hearing impairment); and (ii) another form of communication that is equivalent to voice telephony (for example, communication by means of a teletypewriter) would be required to be supplied to the end-user in order to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 ; '
TCP	Telecommunications Consumer Protections (Code) The TCP Code is the main consumer safeguard for telco consumers in Australia.. It contains rules that govern the life cycle of the customer's relationship with their telco. From the telco's advertising, to sales and contract/service agreements, through to customer service and billing, and switching telcos. It also covers rules about what telcos have to do to if customers have difficulty paying their bills, how they handle credit and debt management, and financial hardship See also – • TCP Code update – Consumer safeguard remains flawed
TTY	Telephone typewriter -for communications by those with hearing and/or speech disabilities

USG	Universal Service Guarantee The Universal Service Guarantee (USG) updates the long standing Universal Service Obligation (USO), by providing all Australian homes and businesses with access to both broadband and voice services, regardless of their location. Although announced in 2018, the USG needs the Telecommunications Legislation Amendment (Competition and Consumer) Bill 2019 to pass in Parliament before it can be introduced. This is because the Bill enshrines NBN Co as the Statutory Infrastructure Provider (SIP) The USG will use the National Broadband Network (NBN) to deliver broadband services and will continue to use Telstra's existing copper and wireless networks in rural and remote Australia for the provision of voice services in nbn fixed wireless and satellite areas.
USO	Universal Service Obligation The USO refers to the obligation to ensure that all Australians can access a Standard Telephone Service, regardless of where they live or work. Telstra is currently contracted to deliver this obligation and uses a range of technologies to do so, including its fixed copper network, and radio and wireless services. The Federal Government has announced plans to replace the existing USO with a Universal Service Guarantee that embraces broadband, as well as the traditional phone services. See USG (above) for more information. See also – • ACCAN welcomes USO preservation, pushes for broadband inclusion through legislation
USP	Universal Service Provider The Telecommunications (Consumer Protection and Service Standards) Act 1999 gives the Minister for Communications the power to designate a universal service provider with primary responsibility for delivery of the USO (see above). The USP is currently Telstra.

Consumer Organisations and Industry Associations

ACCAN	The Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) is Australia's peak communications consumer organisation representing individuals, small businesses and not-for-profit groups as consumers of communications products and services. ACCAN provides media comment, undertakes research and submits to various relevant inquiries to make sure that the communications consumer voice is heard by government and the telco industry. ACCAN also administers a Grant Scheme that aims to support consumer research and representation in telecommunications. The operation of ACCAN is made possible by funding provided by the Commonwealth of Australia under section 593 of the Telecommunications Act 1997. This funding is recovered from charges on telecommunications carriers.
AMTA	The Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association (AMTA) is the peak industry body representing Australia's mobile telecommunications industry. AMTA engages with various government and industry bodies on behalf of their members (mobile network operators and service providers, mobile phone and device manufacturers, retail outlets, network equipment suppliers). Issues that AMTA is involved in include the safety of mobile phones and associated technology (such as 5G/EME), and spectrum reform.
CA	Communications Alliance (CA) is the peak body for the Australian communications industry. CA is responsible for developing Industry Codes, Standards and Supplementary Documents and the Establishment and Operation of Advisory Groups. See also: • ACCAN submission on draft Integrated Public Number Database (IPND) Code • Information on Accessible Features for Telephone Equipment Code
Commpete	Commpete represents challenger providers who are retailers and wholesalers of digital communication.

Government Bodies

ACMA	The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) is responsible for the regulation of broadcasting, radiocommunications, telecommunications and online content. The ACMA has the power to monitor and investigate telcos to ensure that they are abiding by the relevant rules (such as the TCP Code). If a telco is found to be breaching the rules, the ACMA can, issue a formal warning, direct them to change their behaviour, or take further action such as fines or court proceedings. See also – • ACCAN submission to proposed changes to international mobile roaming regulations • "Telco complaints falling, but serious issues remain" – ACCAN response to ACMA telecommunications complaints handling report 2018-19 • ACCAN submission to ACMA Caption Exemption Draft Orders
AHRC	The Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) is an independent third party which investigates complaints about discrimination and human rights breaches. One of the AHRC's areas of focus is how technology impacts human rights. This relationship is explored in their Human Rights and Technology Project. Led by Edward Santow, the Australian Human Rights Commissioner, the AHRC is in the process of undertaking public consultation to create a roadmap for reform – due to be released in 2020. See also - • 2019-2020 AHRC *Human Rights and Technology Discussion Paper* (ACCAN drafting submission) • 2018-2019 ACCAN submission to AHRC Human Rights and Technology Discussion Paper
ARPANSA	Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA) is the Australian Government's primary authority on radiation protection and nuclear safety. ARPANSA is the regulatory body responsible for setting standards around EME emissions to ensure that mobile networks are safe. They have been a leading voice in combatting misinformation about the health effects of 5G and EME. In December 2019, the Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts announced ARPANSA would receive additional funding for continued research on radio frequency safety.

OAIC	Office of the Australian Information Commissioner OAIC is an independent statutory agency in the Attorney-General's portfolio. They are responsible for handling matters related to privacy, freedom of information and government information policy. OAIC will have a strong role in advising on and enforcing the privacy safeguards for the CDR (see above). See also – • ACCAN submission on OAIC Draft CDR Privacy Safeguard Guidelines • ACCAN tip sheet on privacy complaints • Consumer Data Right – What Is It and What Does It Mean for Consumers?
TIO	Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman The TIO is a dispute resolution service for residential and small business telco consumers. See also – • How to make a complaint that gets heard