Unsolicited calls in Australia
Consumer research

DECEMBER 2018
# Contents

Incidence of unsolicited calls
Consumer concern about unsolicited calls
Consumer awareness about consent
Consumer management of unsolicited calls

**Background**
ACMA research program
About the research

**Methodology**
Qualitative research
Quantitative research
Guidelines for reading this report
General notes

**Key findings**
Incidence of unsolicited calls
Incidence of unsolicited calls by phone type
Incidence of unsolicited call types
Frequency of unsolicited call types
Understanding of unsolicited calls and consent
Terminology and consent
Perceived control over personal information
Concern about unsolicited and scam calls
Concern about unsolicited calls
Attitudes towards unsolicited calls
Reasons for concern about unsolicited calls
Change in level of concern about unsolicited calls
Identifying attributes of a scam call
Confidence to detect and deal with scam calls
Managing unwanted calls
Behaviours adopted for managing unsolicited calls
Complaints
Regulation of unsolicited calls
Attitudes related to current regulations/safeguards
Contents (Continued)

Perceived responsibility for unsolicited calls 21
The Do Not Call Register 22
Awareness of the DNCR 22
Use of the DNCR 22
Barriers to using the DNCR 23

Appendix A—Methodology  25
Qualitative research  25
Discussion guide  25
Quantitative research  26
Sample design  26
Survey questionnaire  26
Weighting  27
Statistical significance  27
Privacy and ethics  27
Overview

This research was commissioned by the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) to update our understanding of the Australian consumer experience concerning unsolicited telemarketing calls.¹ The report will assist us to deliver regulatory, education, and compliance and enforcement activities.

Incidence of unsolicited calls

The research found that most Australian adults have been exposed to unsolicited calls in the past six months, with landline users (90 per cent) affected more than mobile phone users (79 per cent).

Scam calls and unsolicited telemarketing calls are the most common types. Among landline users, 72 per cent reported receiving scam calls and 71 per cent reported receiving unsolicited telemarketing calls during the six months prior to the survey. The equivalent for mobile phone users was 50 and 54 per cent, respectively. Unsolicited calls from charities also have a relatively high incidence for landline users (69 per cent had received them in the past six months).

The frequency of unsolicited calls received by Australian adults varied widely, with some reporting receiving several calls a day. Landline users reported receiving four unsolicited calls on average in the past week, while mobile phone users received an average of 2.3 unsolicited calls in the past week.

Consumer concern about unsolicited calls

A majority of Australian adults are more concerned with scam calls today compared with five years ago. The increased level of concern is similar across phone types—61 per cent of landline users and 60 per cent of mobile phone users were ‘a lot’ or ‘a little’ more concerned about them today compared to five years ago. The concern about scam calls is largely due to the belief they pose a significant threat to individuals, and to those who may be in vulnerable circumstances, such as older Australians.

For those who had received telemarketing calls, 40 per cent of landline users and 45 per cent of mobile phone users were ‘a lot’ or ‘a little’ more concerned today compared to five years ago.

The research suggests that negative attitudes towards unsolicited calls generally stem from the volume and frequency of calls and the inherent annoyance due to the calls being unwanted. One third (34 per cent) of Australian adults (who were moderately, very or extremely concerned or worried about the most recent unsolicited call they received), reported that the call was a nuisance/annoying. This was the most common reason given for concern.

¹ Previous ACMA research:
ACMA, Unsolicited telemarketing calls and spam—Consumer experiences, November 2013.
ACMA, Telemarketing calls in Australia: Consumer experience research, March 2017.
Consumer awareness about consent

The research suggests that Australian adults are confused about how or if their consent was obtained to receive telemarketing calls. Just over half of Australian adults (55 per cent) are not clear on the rules about who can and cannot call.

Around half (52 per cent) of Australian adults indicated they understood how callers can obtain their contact details. There was some awareness that certain unsolicited calls can be explained by some form of existing relationship with the caller or by some action taken (often indirect), which provided their consent for the call to be made.

However, nearly three quarters (73 per cent) of Australian adults did not believe they had an existing relationship with the caller in relation to their most recent unsolicited call. Of these, around half (49 per cent) did not know how the caller got their number. When prompted, three in five (62 per cent) thought it likely that their personal details had been sold to the caller.

The research revealed some interest in being able to withdraw consent. Much like the current ‘unsubscribe’ requirements for commercial electronic messages (email and SMS), there is a desire among some to be able to ask unsolicited callers to remove their contact details from contact lists.

Consumer management of unsolicited calls

The research suggests that most Australian adults are confident that they can detect and deal with scam calls.

Australian adults employed a wide range of behaviours to respond to or manage unsolicited calls. The main techniques included hanging up, explaining lack of interest to the caller and ignoring the call by not answering. The most common proactive approach identified was use of the Do Not Call Register (DNCR)—three quarters (77 per cent) of Australian adults were aware of the DNCR and two-thirds (66 per cent) of landline users and a quarter (23 per cent) of mobile users reported they had registered their number on the DNCR.

While a range of self-management behaviours have been adopted, there is agreement that more needs to be done—particularly to protect individuals from scam calls and by telecommunications providers to be more active in blocking numbers on behalf of subscribers. However, there is also a perception that it is a difficult area to regulate, given that much scam activity is criminal and originates overseas.

Ultimately, Australians believe that all parties have a degree of responsibility for managing unsolicited calls (of all types), agreeing that government (55 per cent ‘strongly’), phone providers (53 per cent ‘strongly’) and individuals themselves (42 per cent ‘strongly’) all have a role to play. However, the greatest responsibility is thought to lie with the telemarketing industry itself (63 per cent strongly agree).
Background

The unsolicited communications regulatory framework covers a range of functions administered by the ACMA, which fall into two broad categories—telemarketing/fax marketing and commercial electronic messages.

Broadly, telemarketing calls are made to offer, advertise or promote goods, services, land or investments, or to solicit donations. Unsolicited telemarketing calls are made from entities where there has been no previous relationship or agreement to receive calls—that is, calls made without the consent of the recipient.

The ACMA has responsibility for the operation of the DNCR under the Do Not Call Register Act 2006 (DNCR Act). It enables persons who do not wish to receive telemarketing calls to register their primarily private use number/s. In general, telemarketing must not be made to numbers listed on the DNCR without consent from either the account-holder or the account-holder’s nominee.

ACMA research program

Our research program—researchacma—makes an important contribution to our work as an evidence-informed regulator. It informs our strategic policy development, regulatory reviews and investigations, and provides a regulatory framework that anticipates change in dynamic communications and media markets.

About the research

In December 2017, the ACMA commissioned the Social Research Centre (SRC) to conduct qualitative and quantitative research to investigate Australian consumer experiences with unsolicited calls, including about the specific impacts involved, use and understanding of consent and behaviours being undertaken to manage the effect of calls.

This research focused on exploring:
- the incidence and frequency of various types of unsolicited calls
- consumers’ knowledge of unsolicited calls and consent
- attitudes and behaviours related to unsolicited calls
- consumers’ knowledge of regulation about telemarketing practices.

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2 See section 5 of the Do Not Call Register Act 2006.
3 Exemptions to this rule are provided to registered charities, registered political parties, independent members of federal and state parliaments and the legislative assemblies of the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory, independent local government representatives, election candidates, educational institutions (calling their current or former students), government bodies and researchers. Organisations that are exempt or not covered by the Act are still required to meet the requirements of the Telecommunications (Telemarketing and Research Calls) Industry Standard 2017 and the Fax Marketing Industry Standard 2011.
Methodology

Qualitative research
The first stage of the research involved eight qualitative focus group discussions with Australian residents aged 18 years and over who had access to a fixed line home phone (landline) and/or mobile phone. The groups mainly included participants who had experienced telemarketing calls recently (within the past six months); however, those who had received calls more than six months prior were also eligible.

The focus groups were conducted in Melbourne, Ballarat, Alice Springs and Adelaide between 6 and 15 February 2018. Each discussion was 90-minutes in duration and comprised six to eight participants, recruited by a professional research recruitment agency. Group discussions were facilitated by specialist qualitative researchers from the Social Research Centre.

Further detail on the methodology can be found in Appendix A—Methodology.

Quantitative research
The second stage of the research involved a quantitative telephone survey. A total of n=1,500 computer-assisted telephone interviews (CATI) were conducted with a representative sample of Australians aged 18 years and older who had a landline at home or a mobile phone for personal use.

Households were recruited through random-digit dialling using a dual-frame sample design (separate samples for landline and mobile phone numbers sourced from SamplePages) of n=1,022 respondents with a fixed-line home phone (landline users) and n=478 mobile-only respondents. From these samples, there were n=1,420 mobile phone users in total (some with a fixed-line home phone/landline as well and some who are mobile-only). A random selection procedure recruited eligible participants within households for the landline sample (next birthday). The mobile-only sample interviewed the main user of the mobile phone. The survey was conducted from 14 March to 4 April 2018.

Survey data was post-weighted so that the final sample matched ABS population estimates related to age, gender, geographic distribution, highest level of education achieved and use of languages other than English at home. Estimates relating to telephone status provided by the ACMA were also incorporated into the weighting design.

Further detail on the methodology can be found in Appendix A—Methodology.

Guidelines for reading this report
General notes
> The results presented are mainly from the quantitative survey—qualitative research findings are included where relevant.
> Unless otherwise stated, all percentages are based on weighted estimates.
> Base sizes are shown as the unweighted number of respondents.
> All percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number. As a result, there may be discrepancies between sums of the component items in a table or chart and the total.
> Some of the questions invited a multiple response, so the total responses sum to more than 100 per cent.
> Some questions have been filtered depending on the respondent’s previous response (for example, Figure 2). This is always shown as the ‘base’ on a chart or in a table. Care needs to be taken when interpreting the results, so that the data is read in the correct context.
> In some cases, ‘don’t know’ or other responses with only small levels of response are not shown—these are noted.
> All results shown have been tested for statistical significance at the 95 per cent confidence level.
Table 1: Terms used in this report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Terms used</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACMA – Australian Communications and Media Authority</td>
<td>Commonwealth regulatory authority for broadcasting, radiocommunications, telecommunications and some internet content, with responsibilities under the Broadcasting Services Act 1992, the Radiocommunications Act 1992, the Telecommunications Act 1997, the Do Not Call Register Act 2006, the Spam Act 2003 and related Acts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telemarketing call</td>
<td>An unsolicited voice call from an entity made to a telephone number to offer, supply, provide, advertise or promote goods or services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charity call</td>
<td>An unsolicited voice call made by a registered charity (defined in the DNCR Act as an entity that is registered under the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012) for fundraising purposes. They may also make calls about the sale of products for fundraising, such as raffle tickets, where they are the supplier of the products.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consent to receive calls</td>
<td>A person must not make, or cause to make, a telemarketing call to an Australian number if the number is registered on the DNCR (or is from an entity that is designated exempt). The prohibition does not apply if the relevant account-holder or their nominee consented to the making of the call. Express, or direct, permission is where the recipient agrees to receive marketing; for example, if they tick a checkbox in a form. Inferred, or indirect, permission is based on an existing business relationship; for example, if they have a bank credit card, that bank may contact them with related offers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNCR—Do Not Call Register</td>
<td>Established by the ACMA, the DNCR allows individuals to register their primarily private use landline and mobile numbers to opt out of receiving most unsolicited telemarketing calls and faxes, with limited exemptions for public interest organisations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five capital cities</td>
<td>The mainland state capital cities—Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth and Sydney.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landline user</td>
<td>A person that has at least one landline telephone inside their home that is used for making and receiving calls. This person can also be a mobile phone user.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile phone user</td>
<td>Someone that has a mobile phone that is used mainly by them for personal purposes. This person can also be a landline user.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of Australia</td>
<td>Area that is outside of the mainland state capital cities—Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth and Sydney.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scam call</td>
<td>An unsolicited voice call that usually involves the intent to defraud and/or obtain personal information for the purpose of financial gain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMS—short message service</td>
<td>Mobile telecommunications data transmission service that allows users to send short text messages to each other using a mobile handset.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsolicited calls</td>
<td>Unsolicited calls are calls that the recipient has not knowingly given permission (consent) to receive. Some of these calls may be wanted, others unwanted.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Key findings

Incidence of unsolicited calls

Incidence of unsolicited calls by phone type

The overall incidence of receiving unsolicited calls is high and similar across phone types—90 per cent of landline users and 79 per cent of mobile phone users received an unsolicited call in the past six months.

The frequency of unsolicited calls received is also high, with landline users (who received unsolicited calls in the past six months) reporting they received four unsolicited calls on average in the past week. Mobile phone users received 2.3 calls on average in the past week.

The qualitative research revealed that the frequency of unsolicited calls received varied widely from person to person, and over time. While some participants reported receiving what they believed to be unsolicited calls only rarely, others reported much more frequent calls, sometimes several a day.

Incidence of unsolicited call types

The most common types of unsolicited calls were telemarketing and scam calls—seven in 10 landline and around half of mobile phone users reported receiving these types of calls. Unsolicited calls from charities were also high for landline users (69 per cent) (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Incidence of unsolicited call types by phone type (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Landline (%)</th>
<th>Mobile (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scam</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telemarketing</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charities</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social or market research organisations</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political parties or candidates</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government agencies</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational institutions</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All landline users (n=1,022), All mobile users (n=1,420).

A1. In the last 6 months, have you received unsolicited calls on your landline phone from the following…?
A4. In the last 6 months, have you received unsolicited calls on your mobile phone from the following…?

On average, landline users received just over three (3.2) different types of unsolicited calls in the past six months, while mobile users received two different types of unsolicited calls.
Findings from the qualitative research suggest that unsolicited calls were received from a range of organisations. The most commonly mentioned unsolicited calls concerned some form of business promotion (telemarketing), typically solar power or energy suppliers, insurers and providers of other financial services, including banks (often the participant’s own bank). Calls involving scams were also common.

The two most commonly reported types of scam calls described were attempts to gain access to computers and calls from overseas that only rang for a brief period—the scam being to entice recipients to call back, at which point they would connect to a high-cost premium call line. Some qualitative group participants identified receiving these types of scam calls from places they identified as Morocco and Slovenia.

Frequency of unsolicited call types
The two most common types of unsolicited calls—telemarketing and scam calls—were also the most frequently received. Landline users reported a higher frequency for most types of unsolicited calls than mobile phone users.

Twenty-six per cent of all landline users reported receiving unsolicited calls at least daily, increasing to 63 per cent at least weekly. For all mobile phone users, 11 per cent reported receiving unsolicited calls at least daily and 36 per cent at least weekly.

Fifty-six per cent of landline users (Figure 2) and 34 per cent of mobile phone users (Figure 3) who received scam calls in the past six months reported receiving them at least weekly.

Similarly, 60 per cent of landline users (Figure 2), and 37 per cent of mobile phone users (Figure 3), who received unsolicited telemarketing calls in the past six months reported receiving them at least weekly.

I had one this morning for electricity. It’s constantly electricity with me, I probably get two or three a week.
18–34 years old, Melbourne

Thirty-three per cent of landline users who received unsolicited charity calls in the past six months reported receiving them at least weekly (Figure 2). Among mobile phone users who received unsolicited charity calls in the past six months, 17 per cent received them at least weekly (Figure 3).

Twenty-six per cent of landline users who reported receiving unsolicited calls from social or market research organisations in the past six months reported receiving them at least weekly (Figure 2).
Base: Those who received each type of unsolicited call in the past six months: Telemarketing (n=711), Charities (n=722), Education (n=49), Social or market research (n=539), Political (n=350), Government (n=139), Scam (n=738).

A2. How often do you typically receive these calls on your landline phone?

Note: Refused responses excluded from base for calculation. Don’t know responses not displayed (<5%) for each statement. Data may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.

Base: Those who received each type of unsolicited call in the past six months: Telemarketing (n=748), Charities (n=511), Education (n=73), Social or market research (n=413), Political (n=188), Government (n=119), Scam (n=677).

A5. How often do you typically receive these calls on your mobile phone?

Note: Refused responses excluded from base for calculation. Don’t know responses not displayed (<5%) for each statement. Data may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.
Understanding of unsolicited calls and consent

Terminology and consent
Findings from the qualitative research suggest participants had varying degrees of understanding about how their consent to be called may have been obtained, what constituted telemarketing and what qualified as an unsolicited call. The ACMA uses the definitions of unsolicited calls and consent provided in Table 1 of this report.

The qualitative research participants generally equated ‘unsolicited’ with ‘unwanted’ and, as such, grouped all telemarketing and other types of unsolicited calls together, with the common link being that the recipient had not requested or expected the call. Upon further consideration during the group discussions, participants developed and expressed a recognition that some calls, although unexpected and still generally unwanted, could be explained by some form of existing relationship with the caller (for example their bank, or a charity they had previously donated to) or by some action they had taken (often without realising), which provided consent for the call.

Understanding of the rules about when calls can be made to numbers on the DNCR and how callers obtain contact details were explored in the survey research. Thirty-nine per cent of Australian adults agreed (17 per cent ‘strongly’ and 22 per cent ‘somewhat’) they understood the rules about who can and cannot call (Figure 4).

Fifty-two per cent agreed (22 per cent ‘strongly’ and 30 per cent ‘somewhat’) they understood how callers can obtain their contact details (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Understanding consent in relation to unsolicited calls (%)

Base: Total sample (n=1,500).

C5. I will now read you some statements about managing unsolicited calls. Please tell me the extent to which you agree or disagree.

Note: Refused responses excluded from base for calculation. Don’t know responses not displayed (<5%) for each statement. Data may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.

About their most recent unsolicited call, most Australian adults did not believe they had an existing relationship with the caller—73 per cent for all unsolicited calls and 84 per cent for telemarketing calls. Just over half (54 per cent) of Australians whose most recent call was from a charity believed they had an existing relationship with the calling organisation (Figure 5).
Figure 5: Existing relationship prior to most recent unsolicited call received (%)

| Base: Those whose most recent unsolicited call was from: All (n=779), Telemarketing (n=483), Charity (n=183). |
| B3. Prior to receiving that call, did you have an existing relationship with the organisation? |
| Note: Political party or candidate (n=31), and Social or market research (n=31), not shown due to low base sizes. Data may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding. |

Perceived control over personal information

For those who reported they did not have or know if they had an existing relationship with the organisation that most recently called (scam calls excluded), around half (49 per cent) did not know how the caller got their number. A small proportion thought their personal details were sold by another organisation (16 per cent) and 12 per cent thought their number was randomly selected (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Perceptions of how number was obtained: Unprompted (%)

| Base: All who received unsolicited call, except scam calls, in the past six months and had no (or didn’t know if they had an) existing relationship with the caller (n=597). |
| B5. Do you think it could have been because of any of the following? |
| Note: Data does not add to 100 per cent due to multiple responses. Responses less than two per cent not shown. |

Those who did not know how the caller got their number were then prompted with a list of potential ways this could have occurred, with respondents able to select as many as they thought applied. Sixty-two per cent thought their personal details were sold by another organisation. Half thought their number was randomly selected and 44 per
cent thought the caller had obtained their personal information from when they supplied their details purchasing something online (Figure 7).

**Figure 7: Perceptions of how number was obtained: Prompted for those who don’t know (%)**

- My personal details were sold by another organisation: 62%
- My number was randomly selected: 50%
- Purchased something online: 44%
- Searched online and entered personal details: 36%
- Searched online, did not enter personal details: 33%
- Made a donation: 31%
- Entered my details in a competition/raffle: 27%
- Liked or commented on social media: 24%
- Joined a loyalty program: 23%
- Signed up to a mailing list: 22%
- Signed up to a new provider or service: 17%
- Don’t know: 6%
- Other reason: 3%

*Base: All who received unsolicited call, except scam calls, in the past six months and had no existing relationship with the caller. Of those, who said ‘Don’t know’ when asked unprompted (n=277).*

B5. Do you think it could have been because of any of the following?  
Note: Data does not add to 100 per cent due to multiple responses. Responses less than two per cent not shown.

Qualitative research participants indicated they may have inadvertently given consent (for example, ticking a checkbox) when filling out a web or hard copy form. Participants thought this may have occurred when making purchases online or entering competitions.

During group discussions, participants expressed concern about the source where callers had obtained their number and other details. Discussion also indicated it was widely understood that such details have a commercial value and may be traded. The existence of this information is also thought to be prevalent due to online retail activity and the use of social media.

> They’ve gotten my details from somewhere; I’ve put it down and maybe they’ve sold that information.  
> **18–34 years old, Alice Springs**

> I know in our house my wife goes on and does a lot of shopping and stuff on the internet and she gets a lot of calls on the phone whereas I don’t, and I get far fewer.  
> **35–54 years old, Ballarat**

The survey research revealed that 58 per cent of Australian adults disagreed, either ‘strongly’ (34 per cent) or ‘somewhat’ (24 per cent), that they have adequate control over who can access their contact details (Figure 8).
C5. I will now read you some statements about managing unsolicited calls. Please tell me the extent to which you agree or disagree.

Note: Refused responses excluded from base for calculation. Don’t know responses not displayed (<5%) for this statement). Data may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.

**Concern about unsolicited and scam calls**

**Concern about unsolicited calls**

Australians’ concern about unsolicited calls varies depending on the type of unsolicited call they receive. For Australians whose most recent unsolicited call was a:

- scam call—just over half (56 per cent) reported being either ‘extremely’, ‘very’ or ‘moderately’ concerned by the call
- telemarketing call—just under half (46 per cent) reported they were ‘extremely’, ‘very’ or ‘moderately’ concerned by the call
- charity call—one third (32 per cent) were ‘extremely’, ‘very’ or ‘moderately’ concerned by the call (Figure 9).

While many Australians were either ‘extremely’, ‘very’ or ‘moderately’ concerned or worried about their most recent unsolicited call in general, a significantly higher proportion were ‘extremely’ (23 per cent) concerned or worried about scam calls, compared to telemarketing calls (11 per cent) and charity calls (7 per cent).

**Figure 9: Concern about most recent unsolicited call received (%)**

Base: All who received an unsolicited call in the past 6 months, by most recent call type: Scam (n=391), Telemarketing (n=483), Charity (n=183).

B6. Still thinking about that most recent unsolicited call, to what extent did the call concern or worry you?

Note: Political party or candidate (n=31) and Social or market research (n=31) not shown due to low base sizes. Refused responses excluded from base for calculation. Don’t know responses not displayed (<5%) for each statement. Data may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.
Attitudes towards unsolicited calls

Qualitative research participants were negative in their attitude to unsolicited calls, initially describing them as entirely unwanted, without distinction. This negative attitude became more nuanced with further discussion, as participants acknowledged there were some types of calls, in some circumstances, that they would welcome or at least not view as intrusive and unwelcome.

Further discussion revealed that while participants were largely negative about unsolicited calls, the level of irritation was lower compared to scam calls. These were perceived to pose a significant threat both to the individual, and to others they knew, particularly older relatives, whom they felt to be particularly vulnerable. This predominant negativity towards unsolicited calls stemmed from the volume and frequency of calls that are experienced and the inherent annoyance due to unsolicited calls being mostly also unwanted.

Reasons for concern about unsolicited calls

For Australian adults who were ‘extremely’, ‘very’ or ‘moderately’ concerned or worried about the most recent unsolicited call they received, the main reason given was that the call was a nuisance/annoying (34 per cent). For around one in five, concern about how details were obtained (21 per cent), the volume of calls received (20 per cent) and feeling that the caller was trying to scam the recipient (18 per cent) were also reasons for being ‘extremely’, ‘very’ or ‘moderately’, concerned or worried. Australians were also concerned about the level of their information the caller had (14 per cent), the time of the call (11 per cent) and the risks involved, such as financial loss or data theft (10 per cent) (Figure 10).

I think the way that they approach [you] has changed a little bit. A lot of them now they try and, not trick you, but they try and misrepresent why they’re calling rather than do it like a flat-out cold call.

35–54 years old, Ballarat
Figure 10: Reasons for feeling concerned/worried about most recent unsolicited call received (%) of those extremely, very or moderately concerned/worried

The reasons for concern (among those who were ‘extremely’, ‘very’ or ‘moderately’, concerned or worried about their most recent unsolicited call) varied depending on the type of unsolicited call they received. For those whose most recent call was a telemarketing call, the main reason given was that the call was a nuisance/annoying (42 per cent), that they received repeated or too many calls in general (23 per cent), or they were concerned about how their contact details were obtained (22 per cent).

For those whose most recent call was from a charity, the main reason given for concern was that the call was a nuisance/annoying (44 per cent), that they received repeated or too many calls in general (33 per cent), or they were concerned about the time of day they called (22 per cent).

For those whose most recent call was a scam call, the main reason for concern given was that the caller was trying to scam them (40 per cent), or they were concerned about how they got their personal details (20 per cent) or that the calls were a nuisance/annoying (20 per cent).
Change in level of concern about unsolicited calls

Australian adults are more concerned with unsolicited calls today, compared with five years ago. The change in level of concern about scam calls was similar across phone types—those who received them via their landlines (61 per cent ‘a lot’ or ‘a little more’ concerned) compared to those who received via their mobile phones (60 per cent ‘a lot’ or ‘a little more’ concerned) (Figure 11).

Levels of concern were similar for those who had received telemarketing calls on their landline (40 per cent ‘a lot’ or ‘a little’ more concerned) or on their mobile (45 per cent ‘a lot’ or ‘a little’ more concerned) (Figure 11).

These results indicate that concern has increased more sharply for scam calls than for telemarketing calls, regardless of the type of phone used.

Figure 11: Perceived change in concern about unsolicited calls compared to five years ago (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A lot more concerned</th>
<th>A little more</th>
<th>About the same</th>
<th>A little less</th>
<th>A lot less concerned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scam calls on mobile</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landline</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scam calls on mobile</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telemarketing calls</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landline</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telemarketing calls</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: Those who received an unsolicited call in the past six months: Landline users (n=929), Mobile users (n=1,089).

A14. Compared to five years ago, are you more or less concerned about the following types of calls?

Note: ‘Don't know’ and ‘Refused’ responses removed from base for calculations.

The qualitative research participants felt they were receiving more unsolicited calls from overseas than they had ever before. This was largely attributed to the prevalence of scam calls from overseas numbers. Some group participants believed that many calls that displayed an Australian number on their calling number display were from overseas call centres. Many participants reported that they felt this approach was increasing in frequency.

Identifying attributes of a scam call

The qualitative research revealed that the attitude and approach of the caller was a source of annoyance, with concern expressed about callers who pressured participants, or who were aggressive or persistent. These characteristics were associated with scamming, as were calls where the caller had a strong accent/poor English.

The survey research also revealed a number of attributes for identifying scam calls—‘callers who seem implausible’ (41 per cent) and ‘callers with a heavy accent/poor English’ (29 per cent) were perceived to be the top recognisable attributes (Figure 12).
Figure 12: Attributes that identify a scam call (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caller seems implausible/story doesn't add up</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caller has heavy accent/poor English</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown number on call display (overseas number)</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pause/silence for a few seconds after answering</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caller asks to access my computer</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caller asks for sensitive information</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caller guessing/has incorrect or incomplete details</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous awareness of that type of scam call</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caller is pushy</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background noise/bad line/strange static or noises</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown number on call display (Australian number)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caller is threatening</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: Those who received a scam call in past six months, on landline or mobile (n=1,042).

A8. You mentioned you have received a scam call in the last six months. How do you recognise a scam call?

Note: Data does not add to 100 per cent due to multiple responses. Responses less than four per cent not shown.

Confidence to detect and deal with scam calls

Around four in five Australian adults felt confident in their ability to detect (46 per cent ‘strongly’ and 36 per cent ‘somewhat’ agree) and deal (53 per cent ‘strongly’ and 32 per cent ‘somewhat’ agree) with scam calls (Figure 13). While many Australians were confident in their own ability to detect and deal with scam calls, the qualitative research showed a level of concern about the threat scam calls posed to individuals, and to others who may be in vulnerable circumstances.

Figure 13: Confidence in detecting and dealing with scam calls (%)

| Confidence to detect scam calls | 46          |
| Confident to deal with scam calls | 53          |

Base: Total sample (n=1,500).

C5. I will now read you some statements about managing unsolicited calls. Please tell me the extent to which you agree or disagree.

Note: Refused responses excluded from base for calculation. Don’t know responses not displayed (<5%) for each statement. Data may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.
Managing unwanted calls

Behaviours adopted for managing unsolicited calls

The qualitative research showed that participants are using a range of strategies to manage unsolicited calls they receive to minimise their impact. These included:

> **Not answering the call at all**—with participants most commonly screening calls by use of caller number display and rejecting calls which: did not disclose the caller’s number, were from overseas or interstate (particularly if a participant felt that they did not know someone in that country or state), or were from an unrecognised number.

> **Hanging up very early in the call**—with typical cues for this being initial silence upon answering, background sounds of a call centre, a strong accent, over-familiar openings to calls (or sometimes initial approaches that indicated that the caller did not know the participant, such as getting the name wrong, or not knowing their name), and call opening statements that indicated to the caller that the call was likely to be unwanted. Sometimes participants would just hang up, others would speak to the caller and indicate a lack of interest and/or advise that they were ending the call.

> **Looking up unrecognised calls on the internet**—most felt that this was helpful in identifying whether a caller was legitimate or not. Search engines were the most typical online source used. Web-based reverse phone lookup services were also mentioned.

> **Use of call blocking features on mobile phones**—while many used features on mobile phones to block individual numbers (that they had determined were unwanted), none of the participants had used mobile phone apps or tools from their telecommunications provider to manage unwanted calls. Some noted that their mobile phone appeared to have features that automatically alerted them to suspect incoming numbers. Users who had this feature valued it, and others who heard about it were interested.

There was little mention from the qualitative research participants of responding to unwanted calls by challenging the basis for or explicitly withdrawing consent. However, some wanted the ability to have their contact details removed from contact lists and wanted the telephone equivalent of an ‘unsubscribe’ function (that applies to commercial contacts by email or SMS).

The qualitative research also showed that responses to unsolicited calls by participants tended to be reactive, since they involved a response to a specific call, either at the point of the call being received, or shortly afterwards. The most common proactive approach discussed was registering on the DNCR. The use of the DNCR was skewed toward older participants.

From the survey research, the most common way Australian adults manage unsolicited calls to landline phones is to hang up or tell the caller they are not interested, with the majority (85 per cent) adopting one or both measures. Sixty-five per cent of Australian adults reported limiting who they give their landline number to, with similar proportions ignoring calls or not answering (62 per cent). Six in 10 (61 per cent) indicate they ask callers to remove their details or stop calling them (Figure 14).

The most proactive way landline users managed unsolicited calls was to list their number on the DNCR (52 per cent). Conversely, mobile users were less likely to use the DNCR to manage unsolicited calls (21 per cent) (Figure 14). The top actions taken to manage unsolicited calls received to mobile phones are listed in Figure 15.
Figure 14: Top actions taken to manage unsolicited calls received to landlines (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hung up during the call</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Told them I wasn’t interested</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited who I give my number to</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ignored the call/did not answer</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asked to not call again/remove from list</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listed my number on the DNCR</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let call go to answering machine to identify caller</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screened calls using calling number display</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looked up the phone number online</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asked them how they got my number</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not answer as phone identified as a scam call</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Got a silent number</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All landline users who received an unsolicited call in the past six months (n=929).

C1. What have you done to manage the unsolicited calls you receive on your landline phone?

Note: Data does not add to 100 per cent due to multiple responses. Responses less than 22 per cent not shown.

Like landline users, hanging up or telling the caller they are not interested were also common ways those with mobile phones managed unsolicited calls (76 and 78 per cent respectively) — a similar proportion also ignored or did not answer the call (77 per cent) (Figure 15).

When I get a missed call, I put the number into Google and see if it’s a scam or whatever, I’ll just block it straight away on my phone.

18–34 years old, Melbourne

Figure 15: Top actions taken to manage unsolicited calls received to mobile phones (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Told them I wasn’t interested</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ignored the call/did not answer</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hung up during the call</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited who I give my number to</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screened calls using calling number display</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let call go to answering machine/voicemail</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asked not to call again/remove from list</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not answer as my phone identified as a scam call</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looked up the phone number online</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used the call blocking setting on my phone</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asked them how they got my number</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screened call using smartphone call alert display</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listed my number on the DNCR</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All mobile users who received an unsolicited call in the past six months (n=1,089).

C2. What have you done to manage the unsolicited calls you receive on your mobile phone?

Note: Data does not add to 100 per cent due to multiple responses. Responses less than 20 per cent not shown.
Complaints

The qualitative research revealed that only a few participants had made complaints about unsolicited calls. Where this had occurred, it was usually directed either to the company or organisation making the call, or to a phone service provider. There were mixed views about whether complaints had been effective—in some cases, it was felt the desired outcome had been achieved (usually to stop calls or be taken off call or customer lists). However, the belief that complaints would be ineffective seemed to dissuade many.

Beyond this, participants did not know who to complain to, or were unaware of the existence or roles of the various regulatory bodies regulating this area. Due to the perception that complaints might not lead to any change, many participants did not see them as a good use of time and had not thought further about the options available.

The survey research showed that a small proportion of Australian adults (who reported receiving unsolicited calls in the past six months) reported making a complaint about an unsolicited call—12 per cent of landline users and eight per cent of mobile users had complained about an unsolicited call. Those who complained did so to their phone provider or the organisation that made the call.

Regulation of unsolicited calls

Attitudes related to current regulations/safeguards

The qualitative research revealed a desire for greater regulation and stronger safeguards for unsolicited calls, though participants struggled to identify additional measures and were sceptical that they could address their most significant concern, scam calls. Scam calls were viewed as difficult to regulate, both because they were criminal activity, and because a great deal of scam activity was perceived to be based overseas, beyond the reach of Australian authorities.

The survey research shows that almost half (48 per cent) of Australian adults ‘strongly disagree’ enough is being done to protect individuals from scam calls, with a further 23 per cent reporting they ‘somewhat disagree’ (Figure 16).

Well it’s difficult because the government regulates for Australia, whereas the majority of the calls are emanating from overseas. So, they can’t control that, I don’t think.

18+ years old, mobile only, Melbourne

Figure 16: Perception of current safeguards against scam calls (%)

Base: Total sample (n=1,500).

C5. I will now read you some statements about managing unsolicited calls. Please tell me the extent to which you agree or disagree.

Note: Refused responses excluded from base for calculation. Don’t know responses not displayed (<5%). Data may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.
**Perceived responsibility for unsolicited calls**

The telemarketing industry (63 per cent ‘strongly’ agree), government (55 per cent ‘strongly’ agree), telecommunications providers (53 per cent ‘strongly’ agree), and individuals themselves (42 per cent ‘strongly’ agree), were all felt to have a role in managing unsolicited calls (Figure 17).

**Figure 17: Perception of having a role in managing unsolicited calls (%)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Telemarketing industry</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone providers</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(telecommunications)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals themselves</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Base: Total sample (n=1,500).*

**C6. We would like to know if you agree or disagree that the following have a role in managing unsolicited calls.**

*Note: Refused responses excluded from base for calculation. Don’t know responses not displayed (<5%). Data may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.*

The qualitative research revealed that there was little trust in the telemarketing industry to manage unsolicited calls without government oversight.

During group discussions, participants felt that the most significant steps for managing unsolicited calls could be taken by telephone service providers, particularly by being more active in blocking numbers on behalf of customers. Many also thought that governments could play a role but were unable to specify what steps they could take. There was some consensus that governments may have a role in educating the public, particularly about scams, which should be targeted at specific, vulnerable members of the community.

Participants also felt that individuals could do more to protect their personal information, such as listing their number on the DNCR, educating themselves about identifying and handling scam calls, and being more active in protecting those more vulnerable (such as, elderly parents).

*We’re all unhappy about receiving them but we don’t do anything about it, or it’s not important enough to do anything about it, so I feel like we have a level of personal responsibility.*

*18–34 years old, Melbourne*
The Do Not Call Register

Awareness of the DNCR

Around three-quarters (77 per cent) of Australian adults reported they were aware of the DNCR; however, awareness was significantly lower among younger age groups (18–24 years, 51 per cent and 25–34 years, 59 per cent) (Figure 18).

Figure 18: Awareness of the Do Not Call Register (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Awareness Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landline users</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile users</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18–24 years</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25–34 years</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35–44 years</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45–54 years</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55–64 years</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 plus years</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 capital cities</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of Australia</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: Total sample (n=1,500), All landline users (n=1,022), All mobile users (n=1,420), 18–24 years (n=104), 25–34 years (n=161), 35–44 years (n=210), 45–54 years (n=258), 55–64 years (n=310), 65 plus years (n=457), five capital cities (n=393), rest of Australia (n=561).

D1. Have you heard of the Do Not Call Register before today?

The qualitative research found that among those who were aware of the DNCR, knowledge of the nature of the DNCR and how it worked was limited, but most had some basic understanding. Looking more specifically at various aspects of the DNCR:

- While some participants understood that both mobile and landline numbers could be registered, others thought only landline numbers were eligible.
- There was a lack of certainty whether registration was time limited, usually to one or two years (despite this not being the case). Given this, many participants also wondered if their registration had lapsed, but few appeared to have taken any steps to check.
- There was a reasonable understanding that there were some types of organisations permitted to call participants, even when the recipient was registered with the DNCR. Most widely understood was the exemption related to charities (and that research calls are not covered by the DNCR Act).
- The DNCR was not associated strongly with the ACMA. Those who felt they knew enough about it to comment suggested that it was maintained by ‘the government’.

Use of the DNCR

Two-thirds (66 per cent) of landline users reported they had registered their number on the DNCR, with around a quarter (23 per cent) of mobile users having done so. A significantly higher proportion of female (70 per cent) landline users report having registered their landline on the DNCR compared to male (61 per cent) landline users (Figure 19).
Figure 19: Registered on the Do Not Call Register by phone type (%)

- **Landline users**: 66% (78% of those aware)
  - 61% ▼
  - 70% ▲

- **Mobile phone users**: 23% (50% of those aware)
  - 22%  ▼
  - 24%  ▲

*Base: All landline users (n=1,022), All mobile users (n=1,420).*

D2. Have you ever listed your landline phone on the Do Not Call Register?
D3. Have you ever listed your mobile phone on the Do Not Call Register?

The qualitative research revealed that the most significant factor determining DNCR registration appeared to be age. Older participants were more likely to be registered, while younger participants tended either not to be registered, or only registered because of their parents’ registration.

**Barriers to using the DNCR**

Findings from the qualitative research show that there were a range of reasons for not registering on the DNCR (where the participants had not done so), but the most common were either that participants felt that it was not effective, or that it was not necessary. In the latter case, participants were often annoyed by unsolicited calls, but were not sufficiently troubled to ‘get around to’ registering with the DNCR—it was not a great enough problem for them to go to what they perceived to be the effort of registering. Lack of knowledge did not tend to be a significant reason for many participants, with many knowing that if they were inclined, they could quickly find out how to register by searching online.

*It hadn’t occurred to me to do it, but I’ve also been able to block numbers on the phone anyway, so that’s sort of negated the need for it.*

18–34 years old, Alice Springs

*How do you get on it? You’ve got to go and research that. You don’t know about it. It’s not actively advertised.*

18–34 years old, Alice Springs

The survey research shows that the most common reasons given by Australian adults who were aware of the DNCR but had not registered were it was ‘not necessary’, they do not ‘receive enough unsolicited calls’ or it is ‘too much effort’—all at 16 per cent respectively (Figure 20).
Figure 20: Reasons for not registering on the Do Not Call Register (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I don't want to! It's not necessary/I don't feel the need</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't receive enough unsolicited calls</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too much effort</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's not effective in stopping or reducing unsolicited calls</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't know how to</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep forgetting to do it</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I manage unsolicited calls in other ways</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wasn't aware of it</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I thought it was only for landline numbers</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'm not able to (e.g., I'm not the account holder)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thought you had to pay to be put on the register</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All aware of DNCR but have not listed landline or mobile (n=377).

D4. Why haven't you listed any of your phone numbers on the Do Not Call Register?

Note: Data does not add to 100 per cent due to multiple responses. Responses less than one per cent not shown.
Appendix A—Methodology

Qualitative research
The focus groups were conducted to:
> explore current knowledge and attitudes towards unsolicited calls
> explore with consumers their perceived level of harm, the nature of their concerns, issues of consent, and behaviours they undertake to manage unsolicited calls
> ascertain their understanding and expectations regarding regulation of unsolicited calls.

The results of the focus groups helped to inform the development of the survey questionnaire.

Table 2 summarises the qualitative group discussions and includes the group locations, date, age group and their phone user profile.

Table 2: Group schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Phone user profile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Tuesday 6 February</td>
<td>18–34 years</td>
<td>Landline and/or mobile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Thursday 15 February</td>
<td>All ages</td>
<td>Mobile only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ballarat</td>
<td>Saturday 10 February</td>
<td>35–54 years</td>
<td>Landline and/or mobile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ballarat</td>
<td>Saturday 10 February</td>
<td>55 years and above</td>
<td>Landline and/or mobile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Adelaide</td>
<td>Thursday 15 February</td>
<td>All ages</td>
<td>Mobile only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Adelaide</td>
<td>Thursday 15 February</td>
<td>55 years and above</td>
<td>Landline and/or mobile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Alice Springs</td>
<td>Wednesday 14 February</td>
<td>18–34 years</td>
<td>Landline and/or mobile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Alice Springs</td>
<td>Wednesday 14 February</td>
<td>35–54 years</td>
<td>Landline and/or mobile</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion guide
The discussion guide was developed initially by the Social Research Centre (SRC) and refined to incorporate feedback from the ACMA. The guide comprised the following broad structure:
> introduction and warm-up
> incidence and nature of unsolicited calls
> response and attitude to unsolicited calls
> managing unwanted calls
> DNCR (awareness, understanding and usage/barriers to usage)
> regulation.
Quantitative research
A quantitative telephone survey was undertaken via Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI). The sample consisted of randomly selected persons aged 18 years and above who were residents of private households in Australia and had access to a fixed telephone line and/or mobile phone. The survey was conducted from 14 March to 4 April 2018.

Sample design
A dual-frame sample methodology was used involving two separate sample frames—one drawn from randomly generated landline telephone numbers and a second drawn from randomly generated mobile phone numbers.

A total of \( n=1,500 \) surveys were completed. Table 3 shows the breakdown of the final sample, by mode of data collection.

Table 3: Number of completed surveys, by data collection mode

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landline</td>
<td>491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile phone</td>
<td>1,009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For analysis purposes, respondents were classified into telephone status sub-groups according to their reported use of each phone type, as shown in Table 4. Throughout this report, results are presented for ‘All landline users’ and ‘All mobile phone users’.

Table 4: Telephone status of survey respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All landline users</td>
<td>1,022</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landline only users</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dual users</td>
<td>942</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile only users</td>
<td>478</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All mobile phone users</td>
<td>1,420</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey questionnaire
An initial questionnaire was developed by the ACMA. The SRC provided further input into the questionnaire design to incorporate findings from the focus group discussions. The survey comprised six sections:

1. introduction and screening
2. incidence and frequency (of unsolicited calls)
3. details of most recent unsolicited call
4. behaviour and attitudes related to management of unsolicited calls
5. Do Not Call Register (awareness and usage/barriers to usage)
6. demographics/profiling.
Respondents answered only the questions relevant to the type/s of phone they used.

The average survey length was 15.6 minutes overall.

Weighting
To ensure that results from the survey were as representative as possible of the population of Australian adults, and the latest research on telephone status of Australians aged 18 years and over, weights were calculated for each respondent and included in the final dataset.

Survey data was weighted so that the final sample matched ABS population estimates related to age, gender, geographic distribution, highest level of education achieved and use of languages other than English at home. Estimates provided by the ACMA relating to telephone status were also incorporated into the weighting design.

All survey results in this report are based on weighted data.

Statistical significance
Significance testing has been conducted at the 95 per cent confidence level. This means that, when a difference is described as ‘significant’, one can be 95 per cent confident that the difference is real and not due to random sampling variation. In Figure 19, arrows have been used to indicate statistically significant difference in the same way, with green arrows indicating a significantly higher estimate and red a significantly lower estimate.

Privacy and ethics
This research was undertaken in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988 and the Australian Privacy Principles contained therein, the Privacy (Market and Social Research) Code 2014, the Australian Market and Social Research Society’s Code of Professional Practice, and ISO 20252 standards.
Canberra
Red Building
Benjamin Offices
Chan Street
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 3010
T +61 3 9963 6800
F +61 3 9963 6899

Sydney
Level 5
The Bay Centre
65 Pirrama Road
Pyrmont NSW
PO Box Q500
Queen Victoria Building
NSW 1230
T +61 2 9334 7700
1800 226 667
F +61 2 9334 7799