



Australian Communications  
Consumer Action Network

# USO Internationally

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Australia's peak communications consumer organisation

# Scope

- Social Inclusion
- No standard definition or agreed level of service
- Differing premise
  - Accessibility, affordability, availability, quality
  - E.g. Japan – indispensability, affordability, availability
- Differing services
  - Voice, payphone, emergency service, itemised billing etc.
  - E.g. USA – voice, emergency services, directory assistance etc.
  - E.g. Canada – telephone services, enhanced calling features, print copy of directory

# Review

- Proactively or reactively revise USO
- E.g.
  - Japan – legislation specifies services are indispensable - VoIP
  - USA – “an evolving level of telecommunication services that the FCC shall establish periodically...taking into account advances in telecommunications...”
  - Payphones withdrawn in Austria, Denmark and Netherlands

# Funding

- Net Cost – Unfair Burden to deliver the services
- Number of potential models
- In practice industry levy funded is most popular.
- Number of countries have no fund as obligation does not represent an unfair burden on a carrier e.g. UK
- Distribution of funds
- Different features, benefits and weaknesses

# Broadband and Mobile

- Included in USO obligation, e.g.
  - India (mobile & broadband), Switzerland (min broadband capacity and max price), Korea
- Developed strategies or plans to ensure access
  - National Broadband Plans
- No plans or obligations

# Other Initiatives

- USOs are broad mechanisms to address issues
- Countries also use targeted measure alongside USOs to address accessibility, affordability etc.
  - Subsidies for equipment
  - Education and training
  - Tax-free fringe benefits
- Corporate Social Responsibility

Thank you

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