

RETHINKING THE USO

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RETHINKING THE USO

Ensuring the provision of at least a minimum standard of communications services to all Australians (particularly in rural and remote Australia) has been a cornerstone of Australian Government policy since 1975 – in recognition of both its social and commercial importance to the lives of all Australians.

The mechanism: what is now called the universal service obligation – USO - places obligations on a universal service provider (either as the provider of the USO or the former incumbent provider).

In the new regulatory environment, the challenge is to ensure similar outcomes.

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Provision of 'basic' service

Under existing USO

- *service for voice telephony*

Since 2009 - NBN policy and MTM policy

- *arguably could move to minimum broadband capacity*

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Provision of infrastructure and service

Under existing USO

- *USO is provider of both infrastructure and services*

Under NBN/MTM

- *Provider of infrastructure to the premises CANNOT retail services*
- *Split USO in two – provider of infrastructure (NBNCo +++) and service provider of last resort – or not?*

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Quality of USO Service (the STS)

Under existing USO

- *Communications Alliance Code on technical standards for the STS*

Under NBN/MTM

- *CA Code does not apply to IP based services*
- *Performance standards on retail and wholesale providers under the T(CPSS)A ??*

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Meeting Communications Special Needs

Under existing USO

- *USO Requirement for voice telephony or its equivalent*
- *Provision of special equipment – Telstra regulations*

Under NBN/MTM

- *Separate agency for provision of disability equipment?*

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Affordability of services

Under existing USO

- *Price caps on Telstra and licence condition on Telstra to provide low income measures*

Under NBN/MTM

- *Price caps on NBN/MTM?*
- *Licence condition/Code for low income measures for retail products?*

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Transparency and Accountability

Under existing USO

- *USP provider marketing plan*
- *ACMA reports*

Under NBN/MTM

- *NBN Co reporting on roll out*
- *Compliance with USO contracts/agreements by Dept. Communications? ACMA?*

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THANK YOU