

A Fairer Future for Communications

Australia's economic, social and civic life is reliant on communications services. Mobile services, the internet and digital platforms are essential for basic wellbeing alongside national growth and productivity.

Key problems within the communications sector are holding back consumers and small businesses. With simple fixes, Australians can reap the benefits of greater competition, choice and affordability.

Prepared by

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Australians are paying too much for mobile and internet

The problem:

Australians are feeling the pressure of an increased cost-of-living and the price of mobile and internet services keeps rising. Increased costs are pushing Australians into financial hardship. Without an internet connection, children fall behind at school, job seekers struggle to find employment, and important healthcare services are out of reach.



More than 1/4 of Australians find phone and internet costs unaffordable



Over 25% of households spend over 5% of their income to stay connected



Major telcos dominate the mobile market and have lifted prices above inflation

The

Solution

-))) Introduce a concessional broadband product to ensure that low-income households can access the National Broadband Network.
-))) Develop an independent comparison tool for mobile and internet plans so that consumers can easily find the best deal for them.
-))) Establish a national free public Wi-Fi program to provide a safety net for the most vulnerable members of our communities.



Digital giants are undermining competition, productivity and choice

The problem:

Digital platforms have significant market power, which has seen limited competition, higher prices, and poor dispute resolution processes. Consumers currently have no funded representatives to advance their interests in digital platforms policy including competition reforms.



Large digital platforms are gatekeeping the market, driving up prices and reducing choice and competition



Australians pay \$3.7 billion per year for the cost of issues, complaints and disputes on digital platforms



There is no dedicated organisation representing Australian consumers or small businesses on digital platforms policy matters

The

Solution

-))) Introduce mandatory internal dispute resolution standards for digital platforms to ensure consumers are listened to.
-))) Establish a Digital Communications Industry Ombudsman so consumers and small businesses can seek cost-effective external dispute resolution.
-))) Fund ACCAN to represent consumers and small businesses on digital platforms policies to ensure effective consumer protections and competitive markets.

A sector overdue for reform

The laws governing Australian communications are not working well for consumers.

There have been countless examples of big telcos failing to prevent scams, data breaches, outages, and irresponsible sales to vulnerable consumers impacting the economy and causing significant harm to consumers.

The way Australians communicate has changed rapidly since fundamental laws were introduced in 1997. Telecommunications is now an essential part of every aspect of our lives. It's time legislation caught up to everyday life.

We're calling for a review of the Telecommunications Act 1997 and ACMA Act 2005 to ensure telcos are held to account and Australians are treated fairly in the communications market.

Agree? Have thoughts? Reach out to us today.



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