

## Chair and Agency Head

The Hon Jim Chalmers MP  
Treasurer  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher  
Minister for Finance  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Treasurer and Minister

### **ACMA actions to bolster productivity growth**

In response to your joint letter of 4 July 2025, I am pleased to provide a summary of actions the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) will take to support the government's priority to improve productivity, investment and growth.

Communications networks, products and services are increasingly vital to Australia's economic performance. Our reliance on communications products and infrastructure only continues to grow, with ACMA research indicating that mobile phone use is now almost ubiquitous – 95% of us use them to go online, 98% to make calls and 96% to send texts.

Our appetite for data also continues to rise, with Australians using an average of 10% more data in 2024 than in 2023 to support business and consumer needs. Recent research by auDA found that 64% of working Australians and 51 % of small business can't do their job without the internet.

Access to reliable, contemporary and efficient communications networks, products and services increasingly underpins productivity and growth across almost every industry sector.

As Australia's radiocommunications spectrum manager, the ACMA has a range of levers it can use to assist industry make new and innovative communications services available at the national and local level. These include the ability to make spectrum available as quickly as possible and ensure licensing and technical frameworks are effective and flexible with minimal compliance burden.

In its broader regulatory role, the ACMA is able, within legislative parameters, to streamline processes, improve transparency and, exercise forbearance where it is appropriate and pragmatic to do so while ensuring important protections for consumers and business are maintained.

In response to your request, the ACMA has identified a range of new objectives and will:

- take actions to reduce the time to market of new and innovative telecommunications products and services that will benefit consumers and industry
- support telecommunications industry growth and sustained private sector investment given the importance of communications services to the economic and social lives of Australians
- take actions to help improve trust and confidence in telecommunications networks, services and markets as drivers of economic growth
- streamline regulatory approaches and, where feasible, reduce timeframes for its regulatory decision-making and approvals
- take actions to improve industry understanding of its obligations and transparency of the ACMA's priorities and work program
- support industry innovation with fit-for-purpose and contemporary technical and regulatory frameworks
- seek out and take up opportunities for greater coordination with domestic and international regulators where interests align.

Attachment A identifies what we have already done to contribute to meeting these objectives, what we will do next and by when, and the outcomes that we seek to achieve. In implementing actions,

the ACMA will, where possible, gather quantitative metrics on the impact of its actions, i.e. actual time reductions in licensing approvals and investigations.

As requested, I can also confirm that these actions are within the ACMA's regulatory remit and will be delivered within our existing resources and legislative frameworks.

Much of the primary legislation that the ACMA administers is out-of-date, complex and inflexible. There were a range of important reforms achieved or progressed in the government's first term. There is the potential to build on these in the medium-term which will require legislative change. We will work with the Minister for Communications, the Hon Anika Wells MP on possible options to further improve regulatory arrangements and bolster innovation and growth.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if further advice or information is required on [REDACTED] and at [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]  
Nerida O'Loughlin PSM  
31 July 2025

Attachment A: Summary of ACMA Actions to support productivity growth

Cc: The Hon Anika Wells MP, Minister for Communications

<b>Objective: The ACMA will take actions to reduce the time to market of new and innovative communications products and services that will benefit consumers and industry</b>	
<b>ACMA Actions to date</b>	<p>In September 2024, we issued regulatory advice confirming that our flexible technology-neutral spectrum licences allow new services such as satellite direct-to-mobile services to operate in Australia without the need for additional regulatory approval.</p> <p>As a result, Australia was among the first jurisdictions globally to authorise operation of these services. Comparable jurisdictions require each service operator to obtain regulatory approval.</p> <p>The ACMA has also developed new licensing approaches to encourage business/enterprise level investment using 3.4-4GHz Area Wide Licences. The OECD has recognised AWLs as a good example of innovative spectrum management.</p> <p>The ACMA has allocated 157 AWLs across metropolitan, regional and remote areas. These support a range of use cases, including in the resources sector, the provision of public and private radiocommunications services, local councils, government agencies and airports and ports.</p>
<b>New ACMA commitments</b>	<p>The ACMA will accelerate the allocation of and deployment in 2GHz MMS spectrum (involving investment in the broadband satcom sector) while promoting competition.</p> <p>Consultation on allocative design started in Q1 2025-26 with an aim to commence the allocation process for the spectrum in Q4 2025-26 and services deployed as soon as possible thereafter.</p> <p>The ACMA will undertake public consultation and provide advice to government on the outcomes and broad design on a place-based licensing framework. Advice will be provided in Q2 2025-26.</p> <p>These arrangements would further encourage new products and services to be developed by potential new players to address localised issues using existing spectrum held, but not fully utilised, by incumbent mobile network operators.</p>
<b>Outcome: New and innovative communications products and services are rolled out in Australia in line with or faster than in like international markets.</b>	

<b>Objective: The ACMA will support telecommunications industry growth and sustained private sector investment given the importance of communications services to the economic and social lives of Australians</b>	
<b>ACMA Actions to date</b>	The ACMA has developed preliminary views on the future of expiring spectrum licenses that underpin around 90 per cent of mobile services. This has included determining the economic value of the spectrum to encourage investment, provide certainty and allow for flexible use. Views also take into account minimising disruption for consumers and business in accessing communications services.
<b>New ACMA commitments</b>	<p>The ACMA will publish a finalised policy and decision-making framework on expiring spectrum licences in Q4 2025 to provide certainty to industry well in advance of the first renewal application period opening in mid-2026.</p> <p>ACMA's preliminary view estimated a fair price to be paid to the government for spectrum subject to renewal of \$5.0–6.2 billion.</p>
<b>Outcome: The Australian telecommunications industry maintains growth and investment at comparable levels to international counterparts.</b>	

<b>Objective: The ACMA will take actions to help improve trust and confidence in telecommunications networks, services and markets as drivers of economic growth</b>	
<b>ACMA Actions to date</b>	The ACMA has established a pilot SMS sender ID Register which will protect legitimate business and government brands in their engagement with consumer via SMS and reduce SMS scams.
<b>New ACMA commitments</b>	<p>New rules will mandate brand participation in the SMS Register if they wish to use SMS to communicate with customers. Rules will also mandate telco participation if they are to carry SMS messages on behalf of brands.</p> <p>New SMS Register rules will be put in place by 30 September 2025 with the register commencing operations from 15 December 2025.</p> <p>The ACMA will also implement a new Telco Consumer Protections Communications Strategy to better inform telco customers of their rights, what they can do if their telco is not delivering and where to go for help.</p> <p>Rollout of the Strategy will commence by end August 2025.</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>In 2025, the ACMA will also update delegated legislation to reflect the <i>Digital ID Act 2024</i> so that Digital ID can be used by telco operators.</p>
<b>Outcome: Trust and confidence in Australia's telecommunications networks and services improve as measured in long term research.</b>	

<b>Objective: The ACMA will streamline regulatory approaches and, where feasible reduce timeframes for its regulatory decision-making and approvals.</b>	
<b>ACMA Actions to date</b>	In February 2024 the ACMA transitioned over 12,000 amateur radio licensees to class licensing arrangements which allow qualified amateurs to operate under shared frequencies without needing to obtain or renew an individual licence. The changes have streamlined ACMA regulatory processes and decreased costs for amateur operators.
<b>New ACMA commitments</b>	<p>The ACMA will reform broadcast apparatus licence frequency coordination through new outsourced arrangements with established industry-based frequency assigners (e.g. for special event licensing) during 2026. This will free up resources to expedite more complex licensing such as the consideration of conversion of commercial AM radio stations to FM.</p> <p>The ACMA will introduce a new approach to broadcast content investigations to reduce timeframes and make fit for purpose and improve transparency. Consultation on new arrangements will be completed by end of August with streamlined processes to be in place from September. The aim of the new processes is to reduce timeframes to less than 6 months for all investigations.</p> <p>The ACMA will streamline community broadcasting licence renewals and adopt new risk-based approaches to renewals. This will focus in the first instance on new arrangements for indigenous media organisations holding more than one licence being in place by November 2025 following a process of consultation with broadcasters.</p> <p>Benefits include fewer interactions for broadcasters with the regulator; less onerous documentation for renewals for identified low-risk entities and streamlined processes for the ACMA.</p> <p>The ACMA will take a pragmatic approach to industry reporting required under outdated legislation. It will exercise forbearance on regular reporting with little utility or benefit. Invitations from peak bodies for proposals on where reporting forbearance may be indicated will be extended in August 2025.</p>
<b>Outcome: The ACMA will survey its stakeholders and benchmark itself against like regulators on its regulatory decision-making processes and timeframes.</b>	

<b>Objective: The ACMA will take actions to improve industry understanding of its obligations and transparency of the ACMA's priorities and work program</b>	
<b>ACMA Actions to date</b>	<p>Since 2019, the ACMA has released its annual compliance priorities to inform industry and consumers of areas of regulatory focus.</p> <p>In 2024, the ACMA released guidance material for industry on rules for telcos supporting customers facing financial hardship.</p> <p>In 2024, the ACMA also released a statement of expectations on the use of consent in direct marketing to provide guidance to business that undertake email, phone and SMS marketing. Stakeholders, including peak body the Association for Data-driven Marketing and Advertising, have been uniformly positive about the statement's clarity and usefulness to industry.</p> <p>The ACMA has released regular guidance to the wagering industry through Compliance Updates since the commencement of Betstop – the National Self-exclusion Register in 2023.</p>
<b>New ACMA commitments</b>	<p>In addition to its compliance priorities, the ACMA will publish its annual work program for the first time in 2025-26. This will provide ACMA's stakeholders with greater transparency of the agency's highest priority tasks and their timings. The work program will be published by end September 2025.</p> <p>The ACMA will also undertake a new program of work to publish guidance to the telco industry to increase its understanding of recently introduced obligations.</p> <p>Guidance on operation of the 2024 Financial Hardship Standard and the 2025 Domestic and Family Violence Standard will be released by end September 2025.</p>
<b>Outcome: Industry has an increased understanding of rules leading to greater compliance levels and considers the ACMA transparent and predictable in its decision-making.</b>	

<b>Objective: The ACMA will support industry innovation with fit-for-purpose and contemporary technical and regulatory frameworks.</b>	
<b>ACMA Actions to date</b>	<p>The ACMA has had an active disposition to revoke or sunset legislative instruments that are no longer required and to deregister unnecessary industry codes of practice.</p> <p>The ACMA revoked or allowed to sunset 17 legislative instruments across 2024 and 2025 and deregistered an outdated industry code.</p>
<b>New ACMA commitments</b>	<p>Subject to consultation, the ACMA will allow a further 7 legislative instruments to expire in October 2025.</p> <p>The ACMA will undertake a program of work to update spectrum licence technical frameworks with the aim of easing restrictions to enable newer technologies and deployment scenarios. Stakeholder consultation for the review of the 2.5 GHz band framework is expected to commence in Q3 2025. Technical frameworks will also be reviewed as part of the expiring spectrum licence process on a band-by-band basis, with the review of the first bands planned for Q4 2025.</p> <p>The ACMA will undertake a review of the Radcomms innovation and industry development exemption framework to support defence/security industry innovation to ensure it remains sufficiently flexible and adaptable to technology advancements and a rapidly changing security environment.</p> <p>The ACMA anticipates commencing the review in 2026, though it has not yet made any public announcements.</p>
<b>Outcome: Level of industry innovation increases as a result of ACMA changes to regulatory and technical frameworks within its remit</b>	



<b>Objective: The ACMA will seek out and take up opportunities for greater coordination with domestic and international regulators where interests align.</b>	
<b>ACMA Actions to date</b>	<p>The ACMA has actively supported and contributed to the program of work of the National Anti-Scam Centre since its inception in July 2023.</p> <p>It has entered into eight bilateral Memorandums of Understanding with international regulators to formalise intelligence sharing and best practice actions to prevent scams.</p> <p>The ACMA has also taken a lead role as an Executive and founding member of UCENet, a global network of agencies and organisations engaged in combatting unsolicited communications.</p> <p>Formalised in March 2022, the DP-REG is an initiative for Australian regulators to share information about, and collaborate on, cross-cutting issues and activities relating to the regulation of digital platforms.</p> <p>Through DP-REG, member regulators seek to promote regulatory coherence and ensure new regulations are designed with the wider regulatory environment in mind. A whole-of-government approach to the regulation of digital platforms can reduce compliance costs for businesses, address emerging harms to Australians, and benefit international regulatory cooperation.</p> <p>DP-REG has enhanced the capacity and expertise of each participating regulator. It aims to ensure that Australia's digital economy is a safe, trusted, fair, innovative and competitive space.</p> <p>The ACMA has regular communication with international spectrum agencies, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussing views and coordinating efforts with like-minded administrations to achieve desired outcomes at international forums such as the International telecommunications Union (ITU) and Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT).</li> <li>• Participating in a Spectrum Regulators Forum (SRF) with Canada, New Zealand, the UK and USA that meets several times a year.</li> </ul>
<b>New ACMA commitments</b>	<p>DP-REG will continue to work together, and with government and industry, to identify further joint work that can support the Australian Government's goals to improve and streamline our regulatory environment while responding to emerging risks and opportunities across the digital space.</p>
<b>Outcome: Regulator coordination and cooperation results in joint actions to improve regulatory frameworks and results</b>	