**OPTUS:** Aust media bargaining code could be adapted to subsidise telcos for OTT losses

**NBN CO:** 3Q results see revenues up 10%, subscribers up 5%

**SUPERLOOP:** Acurus buy enables launch of white label services

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# RSPs want ACCC to impose immediate access determination on NBN Co

NBN Co's five top retailers have flicked the switch to thermonuclear and demanded new Australian Competition and Consumer Commission chair Gina Cass-Gottlieb abandon the special access undertaking process and move straight to an access determination to regulate wholesale pricing.

The bombshell letter was sent two days after the ACCC published NBN Co's proposed Special Access Undertaking alongside "preliminary analysis" which was sharply critical of potential price rises baked into NBN's proposed product constructs.


Aussie Broadband OPTUS tpg TELECOM VOCUS

25 May 2022

Ms Gina Cass-Gottlieb
Chair of ACCC
Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
27/135 King Street
Sydney NSW 2000
Email: gina.cass-gottlieb@accc.gov.au

Copy to:
Anna Brakey (anna.brakey@accc.gov.au)
Sean Riodan (sean.riordan@accc.gov.au)

Dear Ms Cass-Gottlieb

Australia has an opportunity to grow into a leading digital economy and digital society. The National Broadband Network is an important part of the telecommunications infrastructure that is the backbone of a future digital Australia. For our digital economy to live up to its full potential, we need reasonable wholesale price levels, greater predictability, and better service quality from NBN Co.

The ACCC is currently consulting on revisions to NBN Co's special access undertaking (**SAU**). These revisions are long overdue. The SAU is a critical instrument in the current regulatory framework applying to the NBN Co. The SAU will shape the regulatory settings for NBN Co at an important time for Australia's digital future, as well as for decades to come. However, we are concerned and disappointed with the minor changes that NBN Co has proposed to the SAU. Such changes do not address the core of the issues discussed at length since the ACCC's industry roundtable in June 2021.

Should NBN Co's proposed changes be accepted, there is a real risk that this infrastructure will become even more underutilised, causing harm to consumers, the market and the economy. NBN Co's wholesale prices will rise and increase every year thereafter at a rate higher than inflation, thereby worsening household cost of living pressures and making nbn high-speed broadband unaffordable for many Australians. NBN Co's returns will become excessive relative to the returns required to deliver efficient investment in infrastructure. The proposed changes would not deliver the stable regulatory regime developed in the ACCC industry workshops, which aimed to give RSPs the predictability needed to support independent RSP investment decisions.

Telstra, Optus, Vocus, TPG Telecom and Aussie Broadband have asked the ACCC to consider an interim access determination if an access determination cannot be settled by November. This would enable the ACCC to set access terms and conditions on NBN Co with a compressed public inquiry, while there are even precedents - for example from a 2011 interim regulation of domestic transmission - to backdate them.

This rapid escalation is occurring in the narrow window between the election and the swearing in of the new communications minister, expected to be next Wednesday.

The five RSPs claim that the NBN's proposed SAU does not address issues they identified in a series of workshops conducted across the second half of last year.

"Should NBN Co's proposed changes be accepted, there is a real risk that this infrastructure will become even more underutilised, causing harm to consumers, the market and the Economy," the five write. "NBN Co's wholesale prices will rise and increase every year thereafter at a rate higher than inflation, thereby worsening household cost of living pressures and making NBN high-speed broadband unaffordable for many Australians."

They said that NBN Co's returns will become excessive relative to the returns required to deliver efficient investment in infrastructure. "The proposed changes would not deliver the stable regulatory regime developed in the ACCC industry workshops, which aimed to give RSPs the predictability needed to support independent RSP investment decisions."

The letter goes on to claim that NBN Co has chosen to make no material compromise to its June 2021 position paper. "As the ACCC will appreciate, NBN Co's historic position was of serious concern and triggered the need for RSPs to request the ACCC and the minister to intervene. Instead, and in parallel to the ACCC's industry consultation, NBN Co has notified RSPs of its intention to raise the wholesale cost of supplying an end user from 1 May 2023, should its proposed undertaking not take effect and commercial agreements not be renewed by then. In this context, NBN Co has no incentive to offer a revised undertaking that is in the best interests of end users, nor to do so without unnecessary delay."

It alleges that such conduct by NBN Co underlines the market power of NBN Co that the SAU seeks to mitigate and claims that the current process is not delivering optimal outcomes in the long-term interests of end-users.

"We therefore consider that greater regulatory intervention is required. We request the ACCC undertake a Part 25 inquiry and urgently develop an Access Determination that will establish a regulatory regime which promotes the interests of end users," said the five.

They claim that such an access determination could prevent year-on-year wholesale price increases worsening cost of living pressures, encourage the future investment needed by the market, contribute to growth of Australia's digital economy and protect RSPs from monopolistic behaviour. If this cannot be achieved by 30 November or thereabouts, they request the ACCC consider issuing an Interim Access Determination to "ensure end users do not suffer from the effects of NBN Co's proposal to significantly increase wholesale prices."

What's not clear is whether a direct access determination could offer RSPs much relief in comparison to the status quo. Even if the ACCC was to directly regulate, it cannot set prices below costs: and under the existing NBN costing process, not only has the ACCC signed off on costs to date but NBN Co's revenues have also undershot allowable amounts. Indeed, NBN Co will only use 68% of its allowable revenue this financial year, according to one estimate of the Long Term Revenue Constraint Methodology output seen by CommsDay.

But the RSPs are undeterred and believe historical costs should be treated differently. "We believe the long-term interests of end users are paramount. Current and future end users should not be compelled to underwrite NBN Co's inefficient historical costs and subsidise its entry into adjacent competitive markets," the five said. "NBN Co has had more than enough time to engage meaningfully with the ACCC and industry. The proposed SAU variation is unsatisfactory. It is now time for the ACCC, working with the industry, to take the next step of designing and enforcing an alternative regulatory framework to that proposed by NBN Co."

A participant in the group of five RSP consultations which resulted in the letter told CommsDay that their wish list was simple. "The NBN is 30% underutilised. Make the prices more affordable and allow us some margin and we will sell more of the product. This is what we are trying to tell NBN and they won't listen," the participant, who didn't want their statement attributed, told CommsDay. Under the SAU variation consulta-

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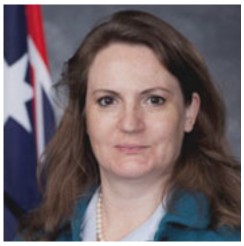
## KEYNOTE SPEAKERS INCLUDE

Stéphane Israël
CEO Arianespace

Air Commodore Nicholas Hogan, Director General for Space Capability

Enrico Palermo, Head, Australian Space Agency



Myra Sefton
Assistant Secretary Space Systems, CASG, Defence

Head of Satellite & Space Systems, Optus Nick Leake,

David Ball, Regional Dir, ANZ, Lockheed Martin

Colin Stone CEO
Digicel Papua New Guinea

Martin Rowse Strategic Campaign Lead and KAM for Space, Airbus, Aus/Pac

As well as speakers from: EOS, Intelsat, Viasat, Eutelsat, Hughes Network Systems, ST Engineering, Speedcast, Thales Australia, SES Networks, Integrasys, Envision, Av-Comm, NSR, Vodafone Cook Islands, Delta Systems International, Wireless Nation NZ, CSIRO and more

## CONFERENCE THEMES

> Satellite leader round table
> Mobility: one of the big winners out of satellite's transition
> Driving solutions for enterprise networks
> Satellite-LTE, satellite-5g, satellite-broadband: the right solution for enduser requirements
> Satellite manufacturing/networks: ensuring platforms are up to task
> Earth observation: solutions & applications
> National regional security round table: responsibilities of planning strategic satcom procurement to meet future demand
> Delivering gov/mil operational secure satcom solutions for advanced capabilities
> PNG/Pacific Islands: smart solutions for connectivity and services

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AUSTRALASIA SATELLITE FORUM 2022

**DAY ONE: 14 JUNE**

9.00: Opening Address: Kevin French, TalkSatellite

9.10: Keynote Address: Stéphane Israël, Chief Executive Officer, Arianespace

**9.40: Satellite Operator Roundtable – Thought Leadership**

* Nick Leake, Head of Satellite & Space Systems, Optus
* Terry Bleakley, Regional Vice Present Asia Pacific, Intelsat
* John Turnbull, Director, SES Networks

10.30: Presentation – Vivek Prasad, Senior Analyst, NSR (an Analysys Mason Company)

11.00: Networking Break Sponsored by Hughes

**11.30: Panel Discussion: Mobility, One of the Big Winners Out of Satellite's Transition**

* Paul Petit-Jean, VP, Head of Maritime BL, Eutelsat
* Alvaro Sanchez, CEO, Integrasys
* Peter Girvan, Vice President Asia Pacific, Viasat Inc
* Chris Hill, CTO, Speedcast

12:20: Keynote: Rick Greenwood, VP Engineering and Operations Airbus Secure Defence & SpaceAirbus/Team Maier

12.40: Lunch Sponsored by Northrup Grumman

**14:00: Panel Discussion: Satellite Manufacturing/Networks, Ensuring Platforms are up to Task**

* Glen Tindall, CEO, EOS Communications Systems
* Rick Greenwood, VP Engineering and Operations Airbus Secure Defence & Space
* Joseph Anderson, Vice President Operations and Business Development, Space Logistics LC
* Julia Dickinson, Chief Engineer, Lockheed Martin

**14.45: Panel Discussion: Driving Business Solutions for Critical Enterprise Networks**

* Vaibhav Magow, Vice President, Hughes Network Systems
* Rajeev Nair, Senior Vice President Asia Pacific, SatADSL
* Luke Robertson, General Manager BSS Programs NBN Co
* Paul Richardson, International Satcom Sales Manager, Milexia
* Ashley Neale, Space and Satellite Development - Strategic Projects, Vocus
* Piers Cunningham, Mobility & Government, Optus Satellite

**15.30: Panel: PNG/Pacific Islands, Smart Solutions for Connectivity and Services**

* Colin Stone, CEO , Digicel Papua New Guinea
* Maui Sannford, MS Consuling,Tahiti
* Dalsie Green Baniala, Head Pacific, Envision
* Phillip Henderson, CEO, Vodafone Cook Islands
* Andrew Johnson, Managing Director, Delta Systems International
* Tenanoia Simona, CEO, Tuvalu Telecommunications Corporation

16.20: Networking Break

**16.40: Satellite-LTE Satellite-5G Satellite-Broadband, LEO-Broadband: The Right Solution For Enduser Requirements**

* John Arnold, Regional Vice President Asia Pacific, ST Engineering iDirect
* Santosh Shanker, Head of Network & IT Infrastructure, Wireless Nation NZ
* Jacques-Samuel Prolon, Executive Vice-President, Kacific

17:30 Keynote: Nick Leake, Head of Satellite & Space Systems, Optus

**DAY TWO: 15 JUNE**

9.00: Opening Address: Air Commodore Nicholas Hogan, Defence Space Command's, Director General for Space Capability (inclusive of SATCOM).

**9.40 Round Table: National and Regional Security, responsibilities of planning strategic satcom procurement to meet future demand.**

* David Ball, Regional Director Australia and New Zealand, Lockheed Martin
* Nick Miller, Director of Sales Satellite, Optus
* Martin Rowse, Strategic Campaign Lead and KAM for Space, Airbus, Australia / Pacific
* Matt Dawson, Director Space, Thales Australia, & New Zealand
* Glen Tindall, CEO, EOS Communications Systems
* Myra Sefton, Assistant Secretary Space, Systems, CASG, Defence

10.50: Keynote Presentation – Chris Jewell, Program Director Lockheed Martin

11.10: Networking Break Sponsored by Vocus

**11.40: Panel Discussion: Delivering gov/mil operational secure satcom solutions for advanced capabilities.**

* Patrick Carroll, Director, Global Government Sales, SES Networks
* David Wilson, Business Development Manager Asia Pacific Intelsat
* Robert Teasdale, Government Systems, Viasat Australia
* Paul Scully-Power

12.30: Keynote: Matt Dawson, Director Space, Thales Australia, & New Zealand

12:50 Networking Lunch: Sponsored by Eutelsat

14.15: Keynote: Enrico Palermo, Head, Australian Space Agency

**14.35: Panel Discussion: Earth Observation: Solutions & Applications**

* Aude Vignelles, CTO Australian Space Agency
* Michael Cratt, Managing Director, Av-Comm
* Dr Alex Held, Director Centre for Earth Observation Satellites, CSIRO

15.35:Presentation: Space Situational Awarenes: William E Barrett, Senior Vice President, Asia Pacific Aerospace Consultants

16.00 Networking Break sponsored by Kacific Broadband Satellites tion, the ACCC has set a deadline of 8 July for submissions.

The five RSPs also banded together last August in a letter to the ACCC at the start of the SAU process. That letter said: "Any future regulatory decisions should be bench-marked against the measure of "how many more Australians can we connect to the NBN and how much more can we encourage them to use the NBN."

Grahame Lynch

# Optus says media bargaining code a model for making OTTs pay

Optus has called for the federal government and Australian Competition and Consumer Commission to consider whether a model based on the News Media Bargaining Code legislation could work for the telecommunications sector by potentially forcing OTT players to negotiate with carriers over data delivery charges.

The media bargaining code, which is overseen by the Australian Communications and Media Authority, is meant to address the perceived imbalance between local publishers and international digital platform providers, particularly Facebook and Google.

The aim of the code was to induce digital providers to negotiate with publishers to pay for the display of their content on their services, with Facebook's NewsFeed and Google Search the initial targets. The legislation created a framework allowing the relevant minister to designate a digital platform as being subject to the code. So far, no companies have been designated, but the previous federal government claimed victory in the wake of negotiations between Google, Facebook and publishers.

The comments by Optus came in response to an ACCC inquiry into whether there was a need for new regulatory tools and potential options for reform to address competition and consumer issues in the digital platform services space. The media code itself emerged from the ACCC's initial Digital Platforms Inquiry.

The ACCC in a February issues paper said that one option it could consider was taking a leaf from the telco sector and extending regulatory measures such as service declarations and access determinations to key digital platforms.

Optus for its part said that that regulator should consider whether existing laws in the Competition and Consumer Act are "fit for purpose to address the market failures arising from the market power of the global Digital Platforms." Optus specifically noted Part XIB and XIC, which set out anti-competitive conduct rules for the telecommunications industry and the telecommunications access regime, respectively.

"The market power of Digital Platforms raises issues with regards to consumer protection and also to the effectiveness of Australian competition law regime – including industry specific regimes like that which applies to the communications sector," Optus said.

It argued that telco is a "classic two-sided market" but while both content providers and end users benefit, ISPs are currently only able to charge retail customers.

Optus stated: "Platforms in many other markets charge both sides of their platforms for connecting customers (e.g., newspapers, subscription television, credit card networks)...The absence of an adequate mechanism to charge OTT providers for traffic, particularly during peak periods has led to a situation where OTTs are 'free riding' on ISP networks."

The telco said the challenge was in getting OTT providers to the table to engage in "bona fide commercial discussions" with the ISP industry.

Optus said it "is now calling on the ACCC to investigate whether it has sufficient powers under legislation to require digital platforms to agree payment terms with ISPs for use of their networks, particularly during peak periods, if they refuse to engage in bona fide commercial negotiations."

The telco said the ACCC should "raise this concern as a matter of priority in its advice to government on any reform to competition and consumer laws arising from the Digital Platform Services inquiry."

Rohan Pearce

## NBN revenue outpaces connections growth

NBN Co has revealed that active connections have continued to creep upwards on its network. There were 8.5 million homes and businesses with an NBN service as of 31 March, out of the 12.1 million premises classed as ready to connect.

That's up from the 8.4 million active services at the end of 2021, and 8.1 million in March 2021. While services were up 5% year on year, revenue for NBN Co's first nine months of its financial year was up 10% on the prior corresponding period to $3.8 billion. Revenue growth was primarily due to growth in activations and customers upgrading to higher speed tiers, NBN Co said. Residential ARPU remained static quarter on quarter, however, at $46.

NBN Co said that business revenue was up 22% year on year in its first three quarters to $750 million.

EBITDA, including subscriber costs, was $2.3 billion, up $1.4 billion. During the period NBN Co paid Telstra and Optus $174 million in subscriber costs, down 83% from the $1.05 billion paid during the prior corresponding period. The company said it is still expecting subscriber payments to end during FY23.

Capex was down from $1.99 billion to $1.8 billion.

As of the end of March, some 76% of residential and business customers were on plans with 50Mbps+ wholesale speed tiers, and around 18% on 100+Mbps services.

Rohan Pearce

## Superloop buys Acurus to break into white label telco services

Superloop has arranged to acquire Melbourne-based technology company Acurus for $15 million in cash and shares to break into the white label telecom as a service market. The acquisition includes the Acurus Anex white label platform as well as the company's managed services business.

The Acurus Anex ISP-as-a-service platform allows Australian brands to sell telecom products - including NBN services, naked ADSL, PSTN, mobile and residential VoIP services - as well as electricity and gas products under their own brands. Acurus provides the platform to enable the internet offerings of EnergyAustralia and OfficeWorks.

Superloop plans to use the platform to expand its addressable market beyond traditional telcos and into the growing domain of non-traditional retailers, according to CEO Paul Tyler. The company will over time enable customers on the Acurus white label platform to use the Superloop network.

"With this newly acquired white label telco capability, brands from any industry who are looking to broaden their core offering with turnkey telco services will have a great option to consider," he said. "Customers will have access to the well-regarded expertise of the Acurus team for integrated white label services combined with Superloop's high-speed infrastructure-on-demand platform and network assets."

During a webinar, Tyler said Superloop sees the non-traditional telco segment to be a fast growing part of the market. He said the company will seek to extend the capability to enter the telecom market to all sorts of Australian brands.

The acquisition will also support Superloop's ambition to grow the challengers' share of the Australian telecom market to 30%, Tyler said. The ACCC report published this week estimates their market share at 11.8%, up from just 4% around two years ago.

"We think the natural level is 30%. In the US it's more like 40%. So we think 30% is a very reasonable and realistic target for the industry. We are targeting between 4% and 5% market share ourselves. But we think [our retail brands combined] with the challengers we will support through our wholesale offerings will on aggregate get to that 30% level," he said.

Acurus also offers network design and integration, SD-WAN and network auditing services alongside a range of IT managed services.

Subject to customary closing conditions, Superloop expects to complete the acquisition by the end of July. The company will make an upfront payment of $12 million in cash and $3 million in shares, and the deal is subject to earn out payments contingent on meeting stretch targets capped at $20 million including $4 million in Superloop shares.

Dylan Bushell-Embling

## Telstra to begin signing up energy customers

Telstra has begun accepting expressions of interest from customers as part of a phased rollout of its new energy business, with the telco aiming to be a top five retailer in the space by FY25 with half a million customers.

"You'll have the option to be one of the first customers to sign up once we launch in your area," the telco's registration form states. The plans will be carbon neutral and customers will be able to earn points as part of the Telstra Plus loyalty scheme. Telstra Energy services will be incorporated within the telco's My Telstra app.

Intellihub earlier this year revealed it would be a key supplier of smart metering services to the telco's customers. As part of an agreement with Telstra, Intellihub said it would "provide new advanced metering and data insights to Telstra Energy," with the company's Intelli-M smart meter and Intelli-ConX communications bridge to be deployed under the contract.

The Australian Energy Regulator in November granted gas and electricity retail authorisation for NSW, South East Queensland and South Australia, as well as electricity retail only in Tasmania. In December Victoria's Essential Services Commission granted Telstra authorisation for that state.

Telstra Energy is part of the "new markets" businesses that the telco will seek to scale as part of its growth-oriented T25 strategy.

The telco has previously said initially its own employees would be able to sign up for its energy offer, before broadening out to customers with the plan of ramping up marketing from FY23.

Rohan Pearce

## Starlink launches large vehicle internet access service in ANZ

SpaceX's Starlink has launched a new plan for RVs and large vehicles which provides access to high-speed, low-latency internet on an as-needed basis at any destination where Starlink provides active coverage. In Australia's case, that is most of the southern half of the continent and all of New Zealand. The service will be available in the northern half of the continent by Q1 2023.

The company's initial service was only intended for use at the specific location where the user is registered, with some limited portability added for an extra $US25/month - and a de-prioritised service away from home. However, the new service means users can now buy a dish without having a "home" address, with prioritised service. Starlink for RVs is also not designed for use while in motion. The company said prioritising residential makes it possible to offer Starlink for RVs immediately "with minimal impact to the most loaded portions of the network".

The dish is $924 plus shipping and handling of $150, while the service costs $174/month. Starlink for RVs provides the ability to pause and unpause service at any time and is billed in one-month increments. This compares to $139/month for the Starlink residential service.

CommsDay understands a number of companies are already validating the new RV service in Australia, along with Starlink's new business service.

One suggested it is a "gamechanger" for backhaul to remote areas or where you need a service established very quickly. One particular application is using it as a failover link in the event of a major backhaul outage. In this scenario the link could be configured as SD-WAN so that the link is used but throughput is managed and prioritised. Starlink for RVs could also be utilised for backhaul for remorse 4G and 5G cell sites, providing immediate connectivity.

Simon Dux

## Totogi launches cloud-based real-time charging for mobile operators globally

Public cloud-based telco software firm Totogi has announced its Charging System is now generally available in all 26 regions of Amazon Web Services. Described as the world's first SaaS, multi-tenant rating and charging system created for MNOs and MVNOs that is capable of handling one million transactions per second and around one billion subscribers in a single region.

The company has been in stealth mode with only its acting-CEO, the founder and CEO of public-cloud company Telco DR Danielle Royston, linked to it. She invested US$100 million in Totogi before last year's Mobile World Congress. At the Congress, Telco DR purchased the entire 65,000 square feet of floorspace that Ericsson had vacated in Hall 2, immediately boosting the profile of her Cloud City telco projects.

The Totogi Charging System requires no capex investment, as no on-premises equipment is required. The company said it can connect to any 4G or 5G core, whether located on-prem or in another cloud. By utilising the public cloud, the need for pre-provisioned capacity is eliminated and disaster recovery is built-in and available on-demand. Totogi claims the platform offers up to "an estimated 80% lower total cost of ownership compared to private cloud or on-premise deployment scenarios."

The company said cloud-based charging for telcos happens in real time, as opposed to "billing" which typically happens on a 30-day cycle.

"With Totogi, you can turn customer data into hyper-personalised plans—even for a single subscriber." said Royston. "Think it's not important? McKinsey recently reported that in the wake of the pandemic 71% of consumers now expect personalisation."

She added that a key differentiator with the Totogi Charging System is that it can be set up in days, allowing for CSPs of any size to pilot the system easily - several operators in EMEA and LATAM have already completed successful pilots.

The Totogi Charging System is priced by the transaction and based on usage, starting at US$50 per million transactions. Royston said CSPs start with a free pilot and only begin to pay for the system once they exceed 500 million transactions per month.

"For decades, operators have been trapped with the incredibly slow project timelines and exorbitant cost of other telco charging offerings. With the availability of the Totogi Charging System on AWS, we have shortened the deployment time frame from 6-12 months down to a few weeks," said Royston. "This announcement is another significant step in our $100 million investment to bring speed, scale, and lower TCO to telcos."

Simon Dux

## TIO: Phone and internet complaints increase this quarter despite downward trend

The Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman's Q3 Complaints Report shows phone and internet complaints increased for the first time in five quarters. However, although residential consumers and small businesses complaints increased 21% to 22,203, compared to the previous quarter, they are still down almost 27% year-on-year (30,315 in Q3 2021).

The TIO described the blip as "significant" and counter to a two-year trend of declining complaint numbers.

Dodo was the only telco to see a decline in complaints for the period. Medion, TPG and Southern had the largest percentage increases. While TPG, Medion and Aussie Broadband had year on year complaint increases, other telcos in the top 10 had year on year decreases in complaints.

Complaints increased across all service types. The most complained about service type was mobile with just more than 8,500 complaints, but the steepest increase was recorded in internet services with a 31% increase compared to the previous quarter.

Communications Alliance CEO John Stanton said a number of factors played into the latest data. "There is a seasonal effect, as the first three months of the calendar year usually see slightly higher numbers than other quarters," he said. "I suspect that service disruptions caused by severe flooding in eastern Australia have also had some impact."

He added: "We have also seen an increase in complaints that are subject to reclassification – in other words, complaints that, for a range of reasons, are not valid and are subsequently backed out of the data. There are some complaints in this category that are within the quarterly reported numbers and that will be removed when the TIO publishes its annual report."

MOBILE COVERAGE: The TIO said that while poor customer service and problems with a bill continue to be the main problems reported by consumers, the quarter three results show complaints about poor mobile coverage increased almost 46%, and complaints about inadequate fault testing increased almost 63% from the previous quarter.

Nearly 53% of complaints included a problem with a fault or connection, including challenges with service quality and getting connected to a network.

"Over the past two years, it has been pleasing to see improved industry practices reflect in a steady decrease in our complaints. This quarter's increase in complaints is a reminder that telcos need to focus on working with consumers to resolve complaints before they escalate to us," said ombudsman Cynthia Gebert.

Simon Dux

# CSPs planning 50 new regions over next two years: TeleGeography

Global cloud service providers are accelerating their expansion to new markets with 50 new cloud regions being planned for launch in the next two years, says market researchers TeleGeography.

Microsoft Azure, Google, AWS and Oracle, as well as newer entrants Alibaba and Tencent are preparing to deliver 50 new regions in the next 24 months, following the launch of 18 new regions in 2021. Since 2013, CSPs have launched an average of 15 per year worldwide.

At present, Asia has the most in-service cloud zones, coming in at over 230. Further, the region is poised to keep its lead for the "foreseeable future." Most recently, Alibaba launched new regions in South Korea, Thailand and the Philippines while Microsoft Azure just launched its fifth region in China, said TeleGeography citing data from its interactive Cloud Infrastructure Map.

According to the Map, CSPs offer cloud regions in four markets across Australia and New Zealand: Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra and Auckland. Sydney by far has the most diverse offering with six CSPs - Alibaba Cloud, AWS, Google Cloud, IBM Cloud Microsoft Azure and Oracle Cloud - operating regions, followed by Melbourne with 4 CSPs - AWS, Google, Microsoft and Oracle. Meanwhile, Canberra is home to two CSP regions - both from Microsoft and Auckland has two regions from AWS and Microsoft.

From the data, Microsoft offered the widest footprint covering all the four markets in ANZ, followed by AWS with 3 regions and Google and Oracle with 2 regions.

"Regions were accelerating pre-pandemic with 28 new regions in 2019, but numbers unsurprisingly cooled off when restrictions were enforced. We're now seeing expansion pick up again in above-average numbers," said TeleGeography principal analyst Patrick Christian (pictured). "We expect that this momentum will continue."

Beyond the cloud, the researchers also found continual resilience in MPLS deployments within corporate wide area networks.

"While its role in the WAN is diminishing, MPLS remains a critical component of many enterprise networks," TeleGeography said, pointing however to continual price declines across geographical regions.

Tony Chan

## TELSTRA, RMIT TO MAP DIGITAL DIVIDE IN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

Telstra is working in partnership with researchers from RMIT University on a project to thoroughly map the digital gap facing remote Indigenous communities across Australia. The two year Mapping the Digital Gap project will see the team travel from the Kimberley and the deserts of Central Australia to Cape York and the Torres Strait to survey and interview hundreds of residents and agencies in 12 remote communities each year.

## MAXAR SEEKS TO BUILD THE MOST ACCURATE 3D MAP OF EARTH

Space-tech company Maxar is using its extensive archive of satellite imagery to build what it expects to be the highest resolution 3D map of the globe. The Globe in 3D product line combines satellite imagery with Vricon 3D technology to provide accurate 3D representations of terrain for defence, government and commercial applications. Maxar delivered a 3D data suite and high resolution satellite imagery to the Department of Defence in June last year as part of the multi-million dollar contracts awarded to the company.

## HAWAII REVEALS DOMESTIC CABLE SYSTEM PROJECT

The Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii has awarded a contract to privately held Ocean Networks to carry out preliminary work on a new domestic subsea cable project to connect together the state's dispersed islands.

## ACCC STREAMLINES RKR REPORTING FOR TPG

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission has formally updated its Division 12, Internet Activity, and Telecommunications Infrastructure Assets record keeping rules. The update streamlines reporting for TPG Telecom, allowing the telco to report RKR data as a single entity. The ACCC launched a consultation on the proposed updates in March.

## WEBCENTRAL EXTENDS DEBT FACILITIES WITH CBA

Webcentral Limited announced it has extended the maturity date of its debt facility with Commonwealth Bank of Australia to July 2025 following the consolidation of existing CBA debt facilities of Webcentral and 5G Networks. Webcentral has also achieved a 1% reduction in the average interest rate margin applicable to the market rate loan facility. The total debt facility limit remains unchanged and all other terms and conditions are typical for a facility of this size and term.

## OVERNIGHT STOCK PRICES (ASX)

| Name | Ticker | Current Price($) | Day Change($) | Day Change (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aussie Broadband Ltd Or... | ABB | 4.080 | -0.070 | -1.69 |
| Chorus Ltd | CNU | 6.590 | 0.070 | 1.07 |
| Comms Group Ltd | CCG | 0.095 | 0.001 | 1.06 |
| Field Solutions Holdings L... | FSG | 0.130 | 0.000 | 0.00 |
| Global Data Centre Group... | GDC | 1.450 | 0.040 | 2.84 |
| Hutchison Telecommunic... | HTA | 0.077 | 0.000 | 0.00 |
| Macquarie Telecom Group... | MAQ | 56.400 | -1.400 | -2.42 |
| Megaport Ltd | MP1 | 6.970 | -0.400 | -5.43 |
| Nextdc Ltd | NXT | 10.770 | -0.160 | -1.46 |
| Over the Wire Holdings Ltd | OTW | 5.710 | 0.000 | 0.00 |
| Spark New Zealand Ltd | SPK | 4.320 | -0.010 | -0.23 |
| Spirit Technology Solutio... | ST1 | 0.052 | 0.000 | 0.00 |
| Superloop Ltd | SLC | 0.810 | 0.020 | 2.53 |
| Swoop Holdings Ltd | SWP | 0.660 | 0.070 | 11.86 |
| Symbio Holdings Ltd | SYM | 4.300 | -0.190 | -4.23 |
| Telstra Corp Ltd | TLS | 3.930 | 0.060 | 1.55 |
| TPG Telecom Ltd Ordinar... | TPG | 5.770 | -0.070 | -1.20 |
| Uniti Group Ltd Ordinary ... | UWL | 4.920 | 0.010 | 0.20 |
| Vonex Ltd | VN8 | 0.078 | 0.001 | 1.30 |

## About Communications Day (including Space & Satellite AU)

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## 10 YEARS AGO TODAY IN COMMSDAY

NBN Co fibre will not surpass DSL for active connections until 2020, according to the author of a soon-to-be-released Telsyte report. And Telsyte analyst Chris Coughlan has questioned Telstra's commitment to shutting down its copper and cable networks within 18 months, a key tenet of the telco's A$11 billion agreement with NBN Co.

Vodafone has called on the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission to limit the final access determination on backhaul services to a period of just 12 months, arguing that longer timeframes risked locking in higher prices to the detriment of consumers.

UK-based Vodafone Group- 50% owner of VHA—shed 64,000 Australian mobile subscribers during the three months to 31 March 2012.

Two new data centres being built by Leighton Group subsidiary Metronode in Sydney and Wollongong will be linked by fibre-optic network infrastructure to support high capacity connectivity between the facilities, according to Leighton Telecommunications GM Peter McGrath.

A two-day meeting between top executives from Samsung and Apple to sort out patent and royalty disputes has ended without any concrete resolution, according to online reports.