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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### NEW WEBSITE TO INFORM AUSTRALIAN CONSUMERS ABOUT MOBILE PREMIUM SERVICES

#### *Communications Alliance empowers customers of Premium SMS/MMS Services*

**Sydney, 7 November 2008** – Communications Alliance will today launch a web-based “one-stop-shop” - called 19SMS ([www.19sms.com.au](http://www.19sms.com.au)) - to provide consumers with a comprehensive guide to Mobile Premium Services (MPS).

The initiative is designed to help consumers make informed decisions when subscribing to Premium SMS (Short Message Services) and MMS (Multimedia Message Services) delivered through their mobile phones.

Such services typically involve subscribing by texting a keyword to a six or eight digit phone number with a “19” prefix called a “short code”. Known collectively as Mobile Premium Services because they are charged at higher rates than normal mobile calls, they offer a variety of content and services such as mobile ringtones, mobile wallpapers, games, chat services, competition voting, horoscopes, news, sports, weather updates etc.

The *19 SMS* website developed by Communications Alliance aims to address community concerns about poor understanding of MPS products by giving consumers the information they need when making a decision about subscribing to such services. It also seeks to assist MPS customers to gain better outcomes when issues arise.

Communications Alliance CEO Anne Hurley said there was a clear need to educate MPS users and their families about the implications of subscribing to mobile premium services.

“Over the past few years there has been a surge in the number and diversity of mobile premium services on the market with an enthusiastic uptake by Australian consumers,” Ms Hurley.

“By empowering people with knowledge about these services through our *19 SMS* website, we hope MPS customers will be in a much better position to manage their expectations and to match services to their needs.”

Features on the *19 SMS* website include:

- 19 Service Finder – a search tool that allows consumers to enter the short code of a service and find detailed information, including the name of the provider, an overview of the specific campaign, billing charges and a Helpline phone number;



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- Definition of a Mobile Premium Service and a simple explanation of how such services operate;
- Easy to understand definitions of industry terms and jargon;
- Billing model overview to help customers understand how they are charged for MPS products;
- FAQs – frequently asked questions about MPS with concise answers;
- How to subscribe and unsubscribe to MPS;
- Where to get help or to make a complaint;
- Consumer tips on how to use MPS responsibly;
- Useful links to organisations such as Communications Alliance, the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA), the Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association (AMTA), Consumers Telecommunications Network (CTN), the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman (TIO), mobile phone companies and You Can On A Mobile (a program promoting responsible use of mobile phones).

Visit *19 SMS* by entering the following address into your web browser:

[www.19sms.com.au](http://www.19sms.com.au)

### **About Communications Alliance**

Communications Alliance was formed to provide a unified voice for the Australian communications industry and to lead it into the next generation of converging networks, technologies and services.

For further information see [www.commsalliance.com.au](http://www.commsalliance.com.au)

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