

8 May 2020

Communications Alliance  
PO Box 444  
Milsons Point NSW 1565

Submitted online at [www.commsalliance.com.au/Documents/public-comment/submit-comments](http://www.commsalliance.com.au/Documents/public-comment/submit-comments)

Dear Communications Alliance

### **Draft Reducing Scam Calls Code C661:2020**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft *Reducing Scam Calls Code (C661:2020)* (Code). I strongly support industry-wide, enforceable obligations to combat scam calls.

Based on my office's experience with consumers who have received scam calls, I offer the following observations.

#### **Consumers contact the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman about scam issues**

Individuals and small businesses contact my office about scam issues. We assist these consumers by referring them to the appropriate body or where appropriate, handling their complaint.

In May 2019, I made a submission to the ACMA's Scam Technology Project that highlighted a range of scam issues consumers contact my office about, including scam calls. I have provided a confidential copy of this submission for your information.

When a consumer tells us about an unresolved scam issue that is outside our jurisdiction, we may refer them to Scam Watch. If we can handle the complaint, we will consider on a case-by-case basis the actions the consumer's telecommunications provider should take to provide a fair and reasonable outcome to the consumer.

After this Code comes into effect, we may consider a provider's compliance with the obligations under this Code, when determining a fair and reasonable outcome of a complaint.

#### **The scope of the Code is a strength**

I am pleased to see the Code defines "scam calls" broadly. The definition of "scam calls" appears to capture all voice services, regardless of the technology used to deliver or receive a voice call. This should allow the Code to capture new scam activity and scam methods as they evolve quickly.

Extending the Code's scope to information sharing across industry and supporting the ACMA's ongoing role in this space is also a positive step. Information sharing will improve the identification of consumer issues and assist in designing consumer protection.

#### **The Code presents an opportunity to better address number spoofing issues**

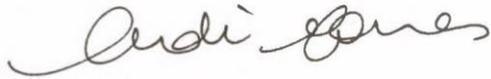
Our experience shows number spoofing impacts individuals and small businesses, as well as well-known brands. I strongly encourage Comms Alliance to include obligations in the Code that specify actions carriers and carriage service providers must take to address these complaints.

Small businesses who have their number spoofed tell us they receive an influx of calls from people the scammer has called, abusing the small business they believe is responsible for the scam. This ties up business resources for significant periods of time. For both individuals and small businesses who have their number spoofed, consequences flowing from the resulting influx of calls can be extreme.

When my office handles complaints from these individuals or small businesses, we may expect their provider to offer a new phone number. Obligations on industry under the Code should require action to stop the influx of calls to consumers who have had their number spoofed, including a requirement to offer a new phone number.

I look forward to seeing the outcome of this consultation and the release of the finalised Code.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Judi Jones". The signature is fluid and cursive, written on a light-colored background.

Judi Jones

**Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman**

