

**COMMUNICATIONS
ALLIANCE LTD**



COMMUNICATIONS ALLIANCE SUBMISSION

to the

Proposed Annual Carrier Licence Charge 2021-22 –
consultation 42/2022

2 February 2023

Submission provided to:

The Manager
Revenue Assurance, Grants and Financial Operations
Australia Communications and Media Authority
PO Box 78
Belconnen ACT 2616

INTRODUCTION

Communications Alliance welcomes the opportunity to make this submission in response to the proposed Annual Carrier Licence Charge for 2021-22.

Members of Communications Alliance may make individual submissions.

For any questions relating to this submission please contact Peppi Wilson:

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About Communications Alliance

Communications Alliance is the primary communications industry body in Australia. Its membership is drawn from a wide cross-section of the communications industry, including carriers, carriage and internet service providers, content providers, platform providers, equipment vendors, IT companies, consultants and business groups.

Its vision is to be the most influential association in Australian communications, co-operatively initiating programs that promote sustainable industry development, innovation and growth, while generating positive outcomes for customers and society.

The prime mission of Communications Alliance is to create a co-operative stakeholder environment that allows the industry to take the lead on initiatives which grow the Australian communications industry, enhance the connectivity of all Australians and foster the highest standards of business behaviour.

For more details about Communications Alliance, see <http://www.commsalliance.com.au>.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Communications Alliance appreciates the opportunity to comment on the ACMA's Draft Cost Recovery Implementation Statement (CRIS) for the 2021-22 Proposed Annual Carrier Licence Charge (ACLIC).
- 1.2 We note that consultation does not pose specific questions, and instead welcomes comments on the proposed ACLIC, the draft CRIS for the ACLIC and for the Measuring Broadband Australia program. Some of the issues raised in this submission are broader comments on the activities and programs funded through the ACLIC and have been ventilated in previous Communications Alliance submissions.
- 1.3 We welcome the decrease in ACMA and ACCC's costs attributable to their telecommunications functions. We appreciate the ACMA and ACCC's ongoing work to increase efficiency and we strongly encourage that work to continue. The ACLIC is a significant cost on the telecommunications industry. Ensuring regulatory costs are being incurred efficiently will benefit all parties, including consumers.

ACMA'S COST COMPONENT

Consumer Safeguards Review – Part A

- 1.4 We note that the costs for Consumer Safeguards Part A increased by 64.3% from the previous year. The reason given is the *“delay in the start-up phase in 2019–20, resulting in the expenditure occurring in 2020–21”*.
- 1.5 We are unable to provide full and considered comments on this section of the CRIS as there is limited information about how this program differs from the ACMA's normal course of operations, which already includes industry monitoring, compliance, and enforcement.

ACCC'S COST COMPONENT

Measuring Broadband Australia program

- 1.6 In the May 2021-22 Budget, the Government announced it would support the continued delivery of the Measuring Broadband Australia (MBA) program for an additional four years at a cost of \$7.7 million that will be recovered in full via the ACLIC.
- 1.7 Fixed wireless broadband services will now be included in the program to ensure consumers in additional regional and emerging market segments can make informed choices about broadband services. The program will also be expanded to monitor non-NBN networks as well as new higher speed services and support for access to business applications.
- 1.8 Given this is a new element to the program, Communications Alliance would welcome a review by the ACCC after the first twelve months to assess the effectiveness of the MBA in measuring the performance of these networks.
- 1.9 Communications Alliance has previously raised concerns about the MBA through the ACCC consultation process in relation to the lack of transparency on the budget and financial performance of the program.
- 1.10 In our August 2019 submission to the ACMA ACLIC consultation on behalf of our RSP members, we queried the appropriateness of charging industry for the program considering that a Regulation Impact Statement had not been prepared.

- 1.11 The most recent Measuring Broadband Report shows that take-up under the program remains low¹. As previously raised by Communications Alliance, the under-deployment of white boxes does not align with the ACCC's claims that the program is being delivered on budget.
- 1.12 The ACCC has previously advised that the lower numbers were due a delay in start-up, and that the full complement of devices was forecast to be deployed in the program's fourth year. As take-up remains low, additional clarity on what adjustments will be made to the program's budget and resulting cost recovery is welcome.

¹ <https://www.accc.gov.au/system/files/Measuring%20Broadband%20Australia%20-%20Report%2019%20-%20December%202022.pdf>



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