

CommsWire

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COMPETITION IS THE SPICE OF 5G LIFE: FIFIELD



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GOVT SETS LIMITS TO ENCOURAGE 5G SPECTRUM COMPETITION

The Australian Government has announced competition limits, which it says will allow a fair and competitive auction by telcos bidding for 5G spectrum in the 3.6 GHz band.

Announcing the competition limits today, the Minister for Communications and the Arts Senator Mitch Fifield said spectrum is a “highly valued and finite resource, which is essential for a range of everyday services, particularly mobile broadband.”

Senator Fifield (below) said the allocation limits would allow for a competitive auction process, “while preventing any one bidder from acquiring an amount of spectrum which could preclude other telcos from rolling out 5G networks.”



“The next generation of mobile services, 5G, will deliver significantly faster mobile data speeds and allow for millions of new devices to connect. The 3.6 GHz band is recognised internationally as a key band for telcos to roll out new 5G networks.

“Australians have a voracious appetite for mobile data, and our competitive telecommunications market means that Australians already enjoy some of the fastest mobile broadband speeds in the world.

“These auction limits promote competition in the telecommunications industry while ensuring this scarce spectrum is put to its highest-value use,” Senator Fifield said.

The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) is preparing to auction 125 MHz of available spectrum in the 3.6 GHz band later this year.

In preparation for the auction, Minister Fifield has directed the ACMA to impose allocation limits of 60 MHz in metropolitan areas and 80 MHz in regional areas.

The limits account for existing spectrum holdings in the broader 3400-3700 MHz band (which is all suitable for 5G), meaning that carriers which already have significant holdings in this band would be limited in the amount of new spectrum they could bid for, or may not be able to participate in the auction.

The Minister said the limits were set following careful consideration of advice from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, which consulted with relevant parties.

Peter Dinham

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FALL OF US\$157 BILLION MOBILE VOICE REVENUES BY 2023: JUNIPER

The bottom is falling out of the mobile voice market. Worldwide operator-billed mobile voice revenues are forecast to fall from US\$354 billion in 2018 to US\$197 billion by 2023, an average annual decline of 10%, according to a new report from Juniper Research.

But despite the predicted fall in revenues, Juniper also identified a series of new opportunities – including in 5G and Artificial Intelligence (AI) - which it said would collectively enable operators to sustain, or even increase, service revenues.



And according to Juniper, 5G is critical for operators to slow declining voice revenues and it expects that 5G connections will exceed 370 million by 2023 - generating US\$88 billion in operator-billed revenues – or over 50% of the anticipated voice revenue loss.

Juniper also argued that operators could generate additional revenue through support for new voice services, powered by technologies such as Google's Duplex.

Two other “opportunities” identified by Juniper include:

- **CPaaS (Communications Platforms-as-a-Service) Disruption**

In order to capitalise on revenue streams for emerging voice services, Juniper says that operators must adopt new ecosystems of converged technologies, including voice, messaging and digital assistants such as Alexa.

It predicted that operators will facilitate these changes by supporting the CPaaS model, with central management of communication offered via a single platform.

- **The VoLTE Opportunity**

The research forecasts significant growth for OTT apps such as WhatsApp and Messenger, with the apps forecast to generate 15.7 trillion minutes of voice usage by 2023; equivalent to streaming 3.8 trillion music tracks.

Juniper urged operators to rollout voice technologies that offer superior benefits and are easily integrated into this CPaaS approach, such as VoLTE (Voice over LTE).

Research author Sam Barker said, “The OTT ecosystem is fragmented and, as a result, is unable to offer the same level of reach as operators.

“In order to maximise OTTs shortfall in this area, operators must adopt the CPaaS approach to win back traffic, thus minimising future shortfall in revenues.”

Juniper forecasts that VoLTE users will exceed the OTT voice app users for the first time in 2020, a year earlier than previously anticipated.

Peter Dinham



John de Ridder

Telecommunications Economist

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TELECOMS COMPLAINTS REPORTING CHANGES SENSIBLE SAYS LABOR

The Australian Labor Party has welcomed the scope of expansion of the Complaints in Context reporting process for the telecommunications industry, describing the proposed changes as a sensible and pragmatic measure, while also lambasting the Government.

Labor's Shadow Minister for Communications Michelle Rowland said to expand the participation of telecommunications providers in the reporting scheme can, in turn, improve public access to comparable baseline measures on the service performance.

Rowland's comments follow [this week's release](#) by the Communications Alliance of the revised draft of the Telecommunications Consumer Protections (TCP) Code for a 30-day period of public and stakeholder feedback, prior to updating of the registered and enforceable industry code of conduct.

Under the proposed changes to the draft code, the quarterly Complaints in Context report managed by Communications Alliance will be expanded to encompass many more telcos and to provide transparent and comparable information to consumers on the complaint handling and customer service performance of suppliers.

Key changes to the TCP code include a new rule on third-party charges that appear on customers' bills, for services such as mobile premium services and direct carrier billing.

In her statement, issued on Tuesday, Rowland said that, "in contrast to these pragmatic steps, the Turnbull Government is all over the shop. Its consumer agenda is two years behind schedule, lacks cohesion, and is characterised by proposals that fail to address the key incentive structures that too often work against consumer interests".

According to Rowland, Labor's [NBN Service Guarantee](#) will establish the right incentives to encourage the telecommunications supply chain to deliver more responsive service and better safeguard individual consumers and small businesses against excessive NBN downtime.

Rowland says that strengthening wholesale service standards on the NBN also has the strong support of stakeholders including:

- The NBN Joint Parliamentary Standing Committee;
- Small business groups;
- Consumer groups such as ACCAN;
- Retail service providers; and
- Internet Australia.

"It's time this out of touch minister focused on consumer outcomes, rather than how to sweep complaints under the rug," Rowland said.

Peter Dinham



NSW POLICE FORCE TO GET RADIO UPGRADE IN NEW ENGLAND

The next phase of the NSW Police Force's microwave narrow band point-to-point radio communications network upgrade will be in the New England area of the state.

[NEC Australia](#) has already deployed 180 of its iPasolink radio terminals in rural areas around the state as part of an upgrade of the [NSW Police](#) microwave radio network that began in 2014.



The company has now been contracted to perform the next phase of the upgrade, which will cover the New England area in the north of the state.

The iPasolink outdoor units (left) are designed to cope with harsh environmental conditions, while their small size reduces tower load and avoids having to strengthen existing towers.

Another benefit is their low power consumption. This is particularly important in rural and remote areas that rely on solar panels.

"The new iPasolink platform is underpinning our critical radio communications network, essential to the protection of NSW's seven million people," said NSW Police Commander of wireless technology, David Brogden (left).

"Not only is it robust in all conditions but its light weight also helps us reduce operational costs."

NEC Australia radio solutions business manager Krisztian Som said, "This contract is another example of NEC's expertise in designing and delivering innovative solutions for Australia's emergency and public safety agencies."

Stephen Withers

CHINA MOBILE, INTEL AND HUAWEI COMPLETE 5G IODT TESTING

Giant telecommunications and hardware technology market players China Mobile, Intel and Huawei have joined forces to complete 5G interoperability and development testing (IODT) in compliance with the latest 3GPP Release15 Standard.

The multi-vendor 5G NR IODT with full protocol, full channel, and full procedure is completed. The test was conducted at the China Mobile Research Institute.

China Mobile says this means that 5G network and 5G terminals from different vendors cannot only perform functional tests, but also can further implement 5G service tests, support various enhanced Mobile Broadband services such as ultra-high-definition video and VR. China Mobile says testing is a key step to an end-to-end 5G commercialised system.

And based on the largest C-band cell bandwidth defined by the 5G NR standard incorporating the latest Massive MIMO multi-antenna technology, the test completed by CMCC, Intel and Huawei successfully verified the rationales of the 3GPP 5G NR standard, and realised the interconnection of the NR-compliant terminal and network.

This year, China Mobile plans to carry out 5G trials in several big cities, which it says cannot be achieved without the support of commercial terminals.

Huang Yuhong, vice-president of China Mobile Research Institute, said: "The success of this interoperability test can provide more kinds of terminals for the follow-up China Mobile's 5G scale test, and also providing a large-scale verification of 5G.

"China Mobile will release the first version of its 5G commercial product requirements this year and launch the first pre-commercial terminals in 2019, which will play an important role in such areas as fixed home access, industry video and smart manufacturing."

Yang Chaobin, president of Huawei 5G product line, said: "3GPP 5G NR based interoperability testing will further promote the commercial process of 5G. Huawei will actively work with operators and industry partners to promote the maturity of China's 5G industry and help operators to obtain 5G business success."

"As we work to accelerate 5G commercialisation after the finalisation of the 3GPP 5G R15 standard, Intel has been actively partnering with leading companies in 5G NR trials in preparation for the availability of Intel's XMM 8000 series of 5G commercial multi-mode chipsets in commercial devices in 2019," said Asha Keddy, vice-president and general manager of Next Generation and Standards at Intel Corporation.

"China will be an early leader in 5G, and Intel's collaboration with China Mobile and Huawei will help accelerate the future of 5G, with end-to-end solutions from the network, to the cloud, to the client."

Peter Dinham

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