

# CommsWire

Essential daily reading for the communications industry executive

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Editor: Stan Beer

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## NEW MOBILE ROAMING RULES TO BE UNVEILED



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# ACMA FLAGS REVISED RULES FOR INTERNATIONAL MOBILE ROAMING

**The Australian Communications and Media Authority will release modified rules for international mobile roaming later this year, based not on the International Mobile Roaming Standard, but one attuned to service providers with similar, more flexible rules.**

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The organisation last September completed a review of the IMR Standard, which was introduced in 2013 to avoid consumer "bill shock" due to high international mobile roaming charges.



In a statement, the ACMA said its review found the IMR Standard had reduced bill shock, with complaints falling significantly.

But, it said, data from the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman indicated complaints had risen recently.

Complaint numbers were still relatively low, but disputed charges could be

high, indicating risks to consumers.

The ACMA said its review found IMR regulation was needed, but more flexible rules could be drafted in the light of changes to rules on mobile phone use overseas.

For example, the review concluded, providers could be given flexibility in the wording used to advise consumers about maximum charges for IMR services, and how the information was delivered.

The review also concluded that mobile network operators and mobile virtual network operators should continue to provide information to consumers when they landed in another country.

The ACMA said Communications Minister Mitch Fifield had agreed to its proposal to change the form of regulation from an industry standard to a service provider determination with a similar but more flexible set of rules.

The change would allow the ACMA to more easily update the existing the rules.

**Sam Varghese**



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# NETCOMM WIRELESS TO BE ACQUIRED BY US FIRM CASA SYSTEMS

**Australian networking solutions provider NetComm Wireless has agreed to be acquired by Massachusetts-based converged broadband solutions company Casa Systems for a price of A\$161 million or A\$1.10 per share in an all-cash transaction.**

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NetComm made the announcement to the ASX on Friday. The statement said directors had considered the acquisition to be in the best interests of shareholders. After the transaction is completed, NetComm will operate as a fully-owned subsidiary of Casa Systems.

They listed the following reasons for their recommendation:

- Significant premium: The consideration of A\$1.10 per share represents a:
  - 52.8% premium to the closing price of A\$0.720 per share on 20 February 2019;
  - 49.8% premium to the 1-month volume weighted average price of A\$0.734 1 per share;
  - 0.9% premium to the VWAP of A\$0.781 per share since NetComm announced its FY18 results on 27 August 2018.
- Certainty of value: the 100% cash consideration provides NetComm shareholders with certainty of value and the opportunity to realise their investment in full for cash.
- Limited conditionality: The scheme is not subject to a finance condition and is subject only to conditions customary for transactions of this type, including approval from the Australian Foreign Investment Review Board, court approval and approval by the shareholders of NetComm.

NetComm chairman Justin Milne said: “The scheme is an attractive, all-cash transaction. The NetComm board has unanimously concluded that the Scheme represents a compelling outcome for our shareholders, customers, suppliers and staff.

“The price is a very tangible measure of the value and quality of NetComm’s telecommunications technology solutions, our position in the global telecommunications industry, and our recent strong performance developing unique 4G and 5G solutions, winning and retaining key contracts.

“At a significant premium to the current trading price, Casa Systems’ offer provides NetComm shareholders with certainty of value and the opportunity to realise their investment in full for cash.

“NetComm’s customers will benefit from the resultant increase in scale to deploy unique telecommunications technology solutions, as well as a broader product suite and service capability.

“In addition, the scheme is great news for NetComm staff. We believe there will be excellent opportunities for our engineers to be engaged with Casa Systems’ pioneering advanced ultra-broadband 5G solutions for mobile, cable, fixed and converged service providers.

“Listed on NASDAQ, Casa Systems has revenue of approximately US\$300 million and more than 700 employees across 11 countries.”

Casa Systems chairman and chief executive Jerry Guo said: “NetComm represents a strong strategic fit for Casa Systems.

“NetComm is an innovative and agile organisation that has led the global development of fixed wireless and distribution point broadband solutions.

"We believe that this transaction will create a global leader in the rapidly growing broadband enablement space for service providers across all access technologies.

“With complementary product portfolios, the combination of Casa Systems and NetComm strengthens our ability to meet the growing demand for increased bandwidth by communications service providers around the world.

"Moreover, it positions the combined company with a broad, highly competitive product portfolio for new 4G architectures and 5G wireless.

"We see substantial benefits to Casa Systems from this acquisition. It will diversify our revenues both geographically and by product channel. It expands Casa Systems’ customer reach with the addition of several new Tier 1 Global Communications Services Provider customers.

"It adds fixed wireless products to our portfolio, enabling us to address the large 5G fixed wireless access market.

“And, it has the potential to deliver meaningful benefits through the merger of two complementary, culturally aligned organisations, with immediate EPS accretion for Casa Systems shareholders.”

A leading developer of fixed wireless broadband, wireless M2M/Industrial IoT and fibre and cable to the distribution point (FttDP and CttDP), NetComm appointed an interim chief executive, its former chief technology office Steve Collins, prior to the announcement.

Chairman and chief executive Ken Sheridan stepped aside due to family health issues but will continue as an executive director.

**Sam Varghese**



# John de Ridder

## Telecommunications Economist

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# TELSTRA ANNOUNCES '5G-READY NOW', THREE 5G SMARTPHONES

**Telstra has announced at MWC 2019 it has "partnered with some of the world's leading 5G smartphone manufacturers for exclusive or first to market deals".**

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Telstra CEO Andrew Penn said these exclusive device partnership arrangements "will ensure Telstra customers have access to 5G handsets before any other Australian mobile operator when they are released in the first half of 2019".



Speaking at Mobile World Congress, Penn added "Telstra is 5G-ready now. When we began rolling out 5G technology across Australia back in August, we also started working closely with the major mobile brands and leading manufacturers of 5G handsets.

"This was so Telstra customers would not only be the first to access to 5G smartphones but also have a variety of products

to choose from."

**Over the recent days, Telstra has made a series of 5G device announcements:**

## **Samsung Galaxy S10 5G:**

- Last week, Telstra [announced](#) the Galaxy S10 5G will be available first through Telstra when the smartphone is launched in Australia. Plus, Telstra customers who purchase a Samsung S10+ through Telstra will be able to upgrade to the 5G-capable Galaxy S10 5G at no extra cost when it is released.

## **LG V50 ThinQ:**

- Today, Telstra announced the 5G LG V50 ThinQ mobile handset, with its innovative design, 6.4" OLED display and long lasting 4000 mAh battery, will be available exclusively from Telstra when it launches in Australia.

## **Oppo:**

- Yesterday, OPPO announced its global 5G partnerships and Telstra can today announce that customers will have access to OPPO's first 5G handset when it launches in Australia.

Telstra notes this follows its demonstration in December of the HTC 5G Hub mobile smart device, which was built in collaboration with Telstra.

Over the last six months, Telstra reports having "switched on 5G technology across selected areas of Melbourne, Sydney, Canberra, Brisbane Adelaide, Perth, Hobart, Launceston, the Gold Coast and Toowoomba – making Australia's largest and fastest\* mobile network the first in the country to be 5G-ready".

**Alex Zaharov-Reutt**

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# ALCATEL UNVEILS NEW SMARTPHONES AND TABLET AT MWC 2019

**Australia's self-proclaimed No.3 smartphone brand, Alcatel, has launched three new smartphones and a new tablet at Mobile World Congress 2019 in Barcelona.**

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These new smartphones are the [Alcatel 3](#), [Alcatel 3L](#) and [Alcatel 1S](#), as well as the [Alcatel 3T 10 tablet](#). There is also a new "DragonHinge" that enables foldable displays which will be seen at retail in 2020, with details of the hinge here (link coming shortly).

Alcatel details its No.3 smartphone brand claim [here](#).



TCL is Alcatel's parent company, and notes that "each of these new Alcatel devices also comes preloaded with Google Assistant, helping you get things done quickly throughout the day, such as managing tasks, planning your day, enjoying entertainment or controlling your home's IoT devices".

Peter Lee, GM of Global Sales and Marketing at TCL

Communication said: "While we're entering an exciting era of innovation in the smartphone market with the introduction of 5G connectivity and new concepts thanks to flexible displays, we cannot lose sight of consumers who are just looking for great technology at an affordable price.

"This is why we continue to enhance and expand our Alcatel smartphone and tablet lineup, ensuring customers who want the latest mobility experiences can have them regardless of their budget."

**The three devices are listed below:**

## **Alcatel 3**

Featuring TCL's latest 5.9-inch 19.5:9 HD+ Super Full View Display with a slim mini notch providing an 88% screen-to-body ratio. It is powered by a Qualcomm Snapdragon octa-core chipset and paired with up to 4GB RAM for a smooth user experience and 64GB built-in storage along with microSD expansion, and 3500mAh battery.

## **Alcatel 3L**

"[Alcatel 3L](#) provides a TCL-built 5.9-inch HD+ Super Full View Display and slim mini notch with 88% screen-to-body ratio. The phone is equipped with a Qualcomm Snapdragon quad-core chipset and 3500mAh battery.

## **Alcatel 1S**

The budget-priced [Alcatel 1S](#) features an octa-core processor, TCL-built 5.5-inch 18:9 HD+ Full View Display, 3GB of RAM and 32GB of onboard storage with microSD expansion, and 3,060mAh battery.

Australian availability and pricing are to be confirmed. More information [can be seen here](#).

**Alex Zaharov-Reutt**

# TELSTRA, COMMBANK, ERICSSON TO TRIAL 5G FOR BANKING

**Telstra, the Commonwealth Bank of Australia and Ericsson have announced plans to trial 5G technology to move processing in the financial services sector closer to the edge.**

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The three companies hope to come up with a vision for the bank branch of the future, and to show how 5G edge computing can reduce the network infrastructure needed at individual branches.

"5G edge computing is all about bringing the network closer to the user or application. For financial institutions like Commonwealth Bank, it will help to enhance existing banking applications as well as deliver new use cases such as artificial intelligence, all supported by a range of software defined networking solutions," said Telstra group executive for networks and IT Nikos Katinakis.



Commonwealth Bank executive general manager digital and retail operations and technology Pete Steel said, "We're excited to be working with Telstra and Ericsson to test and learn on 5G and edge computing. These technologies have significant potential to enhance the availability, stability and performance of our network infrastructure and we hope they can help us provide quicker and better digital experiences for

our customers."

And Ericsson ANZ head Emilio Romeo said "We are working with Telstra, and leading Australian financial institution, Commonwealth Bank to push the boundaries of technology and create new and agile wireless network services across Telstra's network. Through this collaboration we will see first-hand the benefit that 5G will bring to a range of industries."

Telstra recently announced that it will be [the first to sell the Samsung Galaxy S10 5G in Australia](#), that it will be Australia's exclusive supplier of the LG V10 ThinQ 5G handset, and that it will be selling Oppo's first 5G handset when it is released in Australia.

Late last year [Telstra demonstrated the HTC 5G Hub device](#). The telco expects to be the exclusive supplier when the Hub goes on sale in the coming months.

And during the last six months Telstra has activated 5G technology in "selected areas" of Adelaide, Brisbane, Canberra, the Gold Coast, Hobart, Launceston, Melbourne, Perth, Sydney and Toowoomba.

"Throughout 2019, we will be extending our 5G footprint even further to cover more cities, selected regional areas and traffic hotspots, ensuring even more Australians can access Telstra's leading 5G technology," said Penn.

**Stephen Withers**

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