

CommsWire

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GROWING CHORUS TO CHANGE ENCRYPTION LAW



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AIIA URGES GOVERNMENT TO MAKE CHANGES IN ENCRYPTION LAW

The Federal Government's encryption law in its current form will have a negative impact on the country's ICT industry and block practitioners from innovating and exporting the products of their innovation, the Australian Information Industry Association claims.

In a statement, AIIA chief executive Ron Gauci (below) said, in a submission to an ongoing inquiry into the legislation, that amendments that had been proposed, but not included, should be subject to comprehensive scrutiny and consultation with industry, privacy and security experts.

A [review](#) of the encryption law was begun by the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security as soon as it was [passed](#), on 6 December 2018, with a reporting date of 3 April. It was expected to provide some solace to the technology industry.



But the PJCIS [kicked the issue down the road](#), asking the Independent National Security Legislation Monitor, Dr James Renwick, to review the law and report back by 1 March 2020. The PJCIS will then submit a report to Parliament by 13 April 2020.

The AIIA statement said the limited consultation on the draft bill in 2018 and the amendments to the Telecommunications and Other Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act 2019 had done little to ease industry concerns about the effects of the law.

"The concerns that have been repeatedly expressed by the AIIA in this context are not isolated; there is broad consensus across the ICT industry on the potential adverse effects this legislation could have for Australian business and economic interests," said Gauci.

"Australian-based products and services captured by the Act are at risk of being perceived as less secure than those in other jurisdictions."

He said that the AIIA was a strong supporter of efforts to fight against the use of encryption to conceal the activities of criminals.

"It's worth noting that according to the 2018 survey conducted by the Alliance for a Safe and Secure Internet, 84.8% of Australians polled say it is important, or very important, that anything the government does to combat crime should not create weaknesses in Australia's online security systems and make it easier for criminals and terrorists to cause further harm to everyday Australians," Gauci added.

Sam Varghese

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VERIZON BRINGS FIFTH 5G-ENABLED DEVICE TO MARKET IN US

US telco Verizon has debuted its fifth 5G-enabled device with the nationwide launch of the Inseego 5G MiFi M1000.

Verizon says that when connected to its 5G Ultra Wideband network, the device - exclusively available to Verizon customers in the US - provides the large bandwidth and fast download speeds required for applications like 4K/8K video streaming, virtual reality and augmented reality (VR/AR), mobile workforce and industrial IoT.

Verizon has also launched 5G Ultra Wideband mobility services in St. Paul, Minnesota, joining Denver, Chicago, Minneapolis and Providence as the fifth of more than 30 Verizon 5G "mobility cities" the company says it plans to launch in 2019.



“The Inseego MiFi is our first business-ready 5G device, combining bandwidth and speed customers expect from 5G, with enterprise-grade security businesses require,” said Tami Erwin, executive vice president and group CEO for Verizon Business.

“Verizon continues to lead in 5G, adding to our coverage area with St. Paul and launching the Inseego 5G hotspot, our fifth 5G enabled device.”

Verizon says that, by tapping into the power of its 5G Ultra Wideband network, the 5G MiFi M1000 can allow first responders to rapidly set up mobile command centres with “blazing-fast data speeds supporting powerful new public safety applications like object detection, geospatial visualisation and more”.

The telco says its 5G Ultra Wideband service and the Inseego MiFi 5G can also support telemedicine by enabling real-time interaction between healthcare providers and patients for remote consultations or physical therapy sessions using VR headsets and gloves.

“Additionally, advancements in real-time interactions for robotics and cloud-based artificial intelligence can come to life. When tethered to a 5G MiFi M1000 on Verizon’s 5G Ultra Wideband network a robot can interact with humans (or with other machines) with near real-time reaction speed,” Verizon said.

“We’re thrilled to introduce Verizon’s first commercial 5G mobile hotspot engineered specifically for 5G data connectivity in partnership with Verizon,” said Dan Mondor, chairman and CEO of Inseego.

“By delivering massive amounts of data at breakthrough speeds, 5G will enable many transformative applications that once seemed impossible. The new MiFi M1000 makes those ‘use cases’ a reality by connecting data-hungry users to incredible speeds, with enterprise-grade security.”

Peter Dinham



John de Ridder

Telecommunications Economist

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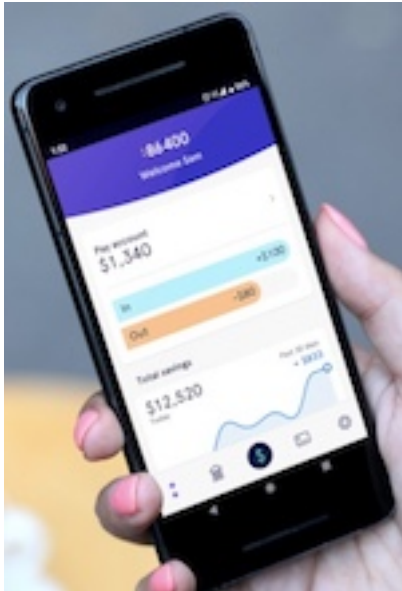
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DIGITAL BANK 86 400 GETS DEPOSIT-TAKING LICENCE FROM APRA

Australian digital bank, 86 400, which enables transactions via mobiles, has received an authorised deposit-taking institution licence from the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority, becoming the second such bank to obtain permission to accept deposits.

A statement from the company said apps for 86 400 would be available shortly in both the Apple and Android stores. The bank is yet to announce a date when it would launch.

In January, APRA [granted](#) an ADI licence to Volt Bank.



Chief executive Robert Bell said: "For the last two years, we've been busy building a smarter alternative to how Australians bank. Today's news confirms we've passed all of the necessary checks and balances required to call ourselves a bank.

"This has been an incredibly thorough process and we've had every element of our business stress-tested to confirm that we are as robust, secure and safe as any bricks-and-mortar bank. The only thing remaining is to bring 86 400 to market, which we're now very close to doing.

"I'm so proud of our team for all the work that's gone into getting us to this point — but we're only just getting started."

The company said customers would be able to open accounts in a couple of minutes with real-time payments through Osko. From launch onwards, customers will have access to Apple Pay, Google Pay, Samsung Pay, as well as FitBit Pay and Garmin Pay, along with a Visa debit card, ATM access and customer support.

The bank's chairman, Anthony Thomson, said: "From early on, we've been incredibly confident that what we're building will offer Australians a smarter alternative to the Big Four banks.

"Smart tech is everywhere: smartphones, smart cars and even smart homes. They exist to make our lives easier and more convenient. But when it comes to managing our finances, these same benefits haven't been available to us until now. Designed for smartphones, our smartbank will help people take control of their money, offering far more than they'd expect from a bank."

Thomson, who has founded and chairs two successful challenger banks in Britain, added: "With the latest technology, a simpler operating structure and streamlined systems and processes, we'll be able to make savings that are passed on to our customers, and better returns for our investors. To get APRA's approval today is a testament to the incredible work of the 86 400 team over the past two years."

Sam Varghese



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EC FINES QUALCOMM \$385M FOR ABUSING MARKET DOMINANCE

The European Commission has hit US mobile phones chip maker Qualcomm with a €242 million (\$385.6 million) fine for abusing its market dominance in 3G baseband chipsets.

In a statement on Thursday, the EC, the executive arm of the European Union, said Quantum had sold products below cost in a bid to force its competitor, Icera, out of business, an act that was illegal under Eu anti-trust rules.

This is the second fine levied on Qualcomm in successive years. Last year, the EC [fined](#) Qualcomm €997 million (A\$1.53 billion) for abusing its market dominance in LTE baseband chipsets.



In Thursday's [statement](#), EU competition commissioner Margrethe Vestager said: "Baseband chipsets are key components so mobile devices can connect to the Internet. Qualcomm sold these products at a price below cost to key customers with the intention of eliminating a competitor.

"Qualcomm's strategic behaviour prevented competition and innovation in this market, and limited the choice available to consumers in a sector with a huge demand and potential for innovative technologies.

"Since this is illegal under EU anti-trust rules, we have today fined Qualcomm €242 million."

Earlier this year, Qualcomm and Apple [settled](#) all pending litigation between the two companies, a deal which also included a payment from Apple to Qualcomm, the amount of which was not disclosed.

The two companies also said they had reached a six-year licence agreement, effective from 1 April, which included a two-year option for extension and a multi-year chip supply deal.

In its statement, the EC said while market dominance was not illegal in the EU, dominant companies had "a special responsibility not to abuse their powerful market position by restricting competition, either in the market where they are dominant or in separate markets".

It said investigations had found that Qualcomm abused its dominance between mid-2009 and mid-2011 through predatory pricing.

"Qualcomm sold certain quantities of three of its UMTS chipsets below cost to Huawei and ZTE, two strategically important customers, with the intention of eliminating Icera, its main rival at the time in the market segment offering advanced data rate performance," the EC said.

"This behaviour took place when Icera was becoming a viable supplier of UMTS chipsets providing high data rate performance, thus posing a growing threat to Qualcomm's chipset business."

Qualcomm [said](#) it would appeal the finding in the EU's General Court.

"The Commission spent years investigating sales to two customers, each of whom said that they favoured Qualcomm chips not because of price, but because rival chipsets were technologically inferior," said Don Rosenberg, executive vice-president and general counsel of Qualcomm.

"This decision is unsupported by the law, economic principles or market facts, and we look forward to a reversal on appeal.

"The Commission's decision is based on a novel theory of alleged below-cost pricing over a very short time period and for a very small volume of chips.

"There is no precedent for this theory, which is inconsistent with well-developed economic analysis of cost recovery, as well as Commission practice.

"Contrary to the Commission's findings, Qualcomm's alleged conduct did not cause anti-competitive harm to Icera, the company that filed the complaint.

Icera was later acquired by Nvidia for hundreds of millions of dollars and continued to compete in the relevant market for several years after the end of the alleged conduct.

"We co-operated with Commission officials every step of the way throughout the protracted investigation, confident that the Commission would recognise that there were no facts supporting a finding of anti-competitive conduct.

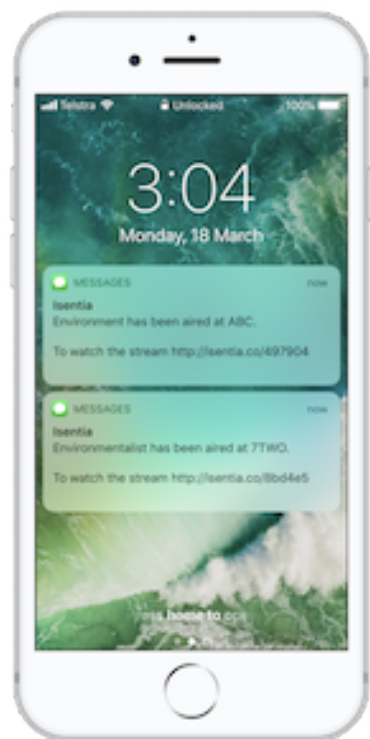
"On appeal, we will expose the meritless nature of this decision."

Sam Varghese

ISENTIA LAUNCHES LIVE ALERTS BROADCAST MONITORING ON MOBILES

ASX listed media intelligence company ISENTIA has announced the launch of Live Alerts, a new broadcast media alert service that provides communications professionals real time broadcast media updates on mobile phones in Australia and New Zealand.

Paul Russell, Chief Technology Officer, notes Live Alerts is the result of the companies increased focus on market-centric product innovation.



“Live Alerts is an exciting broadcast media monitoring service that creates an entirely new capability, utilising innovative voice-to-text technology and advanced search systems. Once set up, clients receive immediate text message alerts about relevant broadcast news, which is a major benefit for anyone in crisis or issues-management environments. The result isn’t just an incremental improvement in speed, it is a significant step change.

“Not only did we need to address the changing needs of our growing mobile-first client base, but we have to keep pace with the changing nature of broadcast itself.

“Live Alerts gives clients the information they need to act swiftly, especially during moments of increased media attention. The goal is to get mentions about their organisation or specific selected topics that appear on radio and TV, onto our clients’

phones as quickly as possible.”

The initial release of Live Alerts offers a catalogue of Australia and New Zealand broadcast channels, monitored 24/7 through scheduled automation. The selected content is passed through a voice to text translation service to produce a transcript at speed, allowing ISENTIA to run the necessary proprietary relevance matching process to then flag important mentions to clients via SMS.

The SMS enables the client to immediately see the context of their alert and watch or listen to the relevant content. The text message format, chosen following client research, quickly delivers the news of any key broadcast media occurrence to clients, which is then supported by ISENTIA’s acclaimed media monitoring and insights services.

Live Alerts has been built and tested in Australia and New Zealand for three months, with more than 70 clients using the beta service and providing feedback.

Staff Writers

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