



Australian Government

**Australian Government response to the Senate
Environment and Communications Legislation
Committee report:**

**Telecommunications Legislation Amendment
(Universal Outdoor Mobile Obligation) Bill Inquiry**

August 2026

Contents

Overview.....3

Australian Government response4

 Recommendation 2:4

Overview

The Australian Government thanks the Senate Environment and Communications Legislation Committee (the committee) for the report on its inquiry into the Telecommunications Legislation Amendment (Universal Outdoor Mobile Obligation) Bill 2025. This includes the contributions of regional, consumer and industry stakeholders that provided submissions to the committee and attended the public hearing.

The report recommended that the bill be passed by the Parliament and identified broad stakeholder support for the objectives of the Universal Outdoor Mobile Obligation (UOMO). This recognises the importance of expanding baseline mobile coverage to many regional and remote areas outside of terrestrial mobile coverage and the benefits to public safety.

The Australian Greens recommended that the Government mandate domestic mobile roaming services.

The report raised a number of implementation issues raised by industry and consumer stakeholders, including providing more detail on what is expected by 'reasonably available' mobile coverage and 'equitable basis', and developing service standards. As the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts (the department) stated in its submission to the Senate Committee inquiry, there are powers in the bill to address these issues during the implementation of the Uomo.

The committee also raised the way in which direct to device services would be used to deliver emergency calls and temporary disaster roaming, and the importance of forthcoming developments in the allocation of spectrum and device standards. As the department also noted in its submission, these issues are subject to separate policy processes or are already able to be addressed through existing regulatory powers.

The government expects to undertake broad public consultation to inform implementation following passage of the bill and before the default day. This will focus on:

- industry preparedness to meet the 1 December 2027 default day, including consideration of technical and wholesale issues and the impact on consumers;
- determining circumstances in which it would not be reasonable for a mobile network operator (MNO) to make mobile coverage available in an area under the Uomo; and
- considering the appropriateness of standards, rules and benchmarks relating to mobile and Uomo services.

Australian Government response

The Australian Government's response to the inquiry into the Telecommunications Legislation Amendment (Universal Outdoor Mobile Obligation) Bill 2025 is set out in detail below.

Consistent with the Australian Government Tabling Guidelines, the response does not address recommendations in the report that relate to the Senate's consideration of the bill, including:

- Committee recommendation 1: The committee recommends that the Senate passes the bill
- Australian Greens senators' additional comments, Recommendation 1: That the bill be amended to include minimum standards for reliability, quality, and accessibility of mobile services.

Recommendation 2:

- That the Australian Government mandate domestic mobile roaming services be available to Australian consumers.

The Government **notes** this recommendation.

Under Part XIC of the *Competition and Consumer Act 2010*, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) is the longstanding independent expert regulator of wholesale access to telecommunications networks.

On 5 August 2026 the ACCC announced it was commencing an inquiry to examine regional mobile coverage including whether regulating wholesale access to some mobile services could improve consumer outcomes in regional Australia. This inquiry will allow the ACCC to consider current market conditions and new technologies through a public, evidence-based and consultative process before deciding whether regulation is needed.

The inquiry will run for approximately 12 months and will consider whether the ACCC should declare one or more wholesale mobile services, including domestic roaming and a radio access network service. The ACCC will only make a declaration if it considers doing so would promote the long-term interests of end-users.

In relation to access to mobile networks to contact Triple Zero during emergencies, any properly configured mobile handset can make an emergency call if within mobile coverage from any mobile network operator through a process known as 'emergency call camp-on'. This is available regardless of whether an end user is an active customer of any available network, including if a handset does not have an active SIM card.

As indicated in the department's submission, Temporary Disaster Roaming capability is being progressed by industry and will complement the UOMO and enable consumers, regardless of their mobile provider, to have limited connectivity during emergencies, provided there is sufficient coverage and capacity on other networks.

In response to other issues raised by the committee:

Default day and industry preparedness

The committee considered feedback from industry players that the market is still evolving, alongside stakeholder views that consumers are seeking access to the benefits of the UOMO sooner. The committee determined that existing provisions in the bill would provide sufficient flexibility to adjust the obligation to market circumstances if needed.

Flexible powers include the ability for the Minister for Communications (the minister) to delay the default day by 12 months up to 3 times. As noted in the department's submission, before exercising this power the minister would need to consult MNOs and consider technical and market issues and the impact on consumers.

Reasonably available

The concept of reasonableness deals with situations where it may not be possible for an MNO to supply mobile coverage in a particular area. The department's submission to the committee provided further clarity on the circumstances when it would not be reasonable for an MNO to provide mobile coverage, such as due to technical limitations, temporary interruptions to the availability of wholesale services, temporary outages and the capability of handsets and services available from the end-user's chosen plan. As acknowledged by the committee, following passage of the bill the government intends to develop a requirements and circumstances instrument that would specify circumstances in which it would not be reasonable for MNOs to make mobile coverage available in fulfilment of the UOMO, and set requirements on MNOs.

Standards and equity

The government is committed to ensuring that the UOMO delivers equitable access to mobile coverage, including for vulnerable consumers. The bill would create new ministerial powers to set broad-ranging standards, rules and benchmarks. Such standards could, for example, cover network reliability and timeframes for rectifying network faults and outages, or for conducting maintenance.