



THE HON PAUL FLETCHER MP
Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts

MEDIA RELEASE

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Telecommunications hardship principles for COVID-19

Today the Morrison Government announced a set of principles that will help Australians remain connected to telecommunications services during the ongoing challenges and impacts of COVID-19.

The Government and the telecommunications industry have issued a joint statement outlining an agreed set of principles to ensure all Australians can remain connected. The principles are based on the hardship provisions for essential services agreed by National Cabinet.

The principles provide a consistent baseline across industry that will help customers stay connected, including those who are experiencing hardship. The joint statement also prioritises the connection and restoration of services to vulnerable Australians, as well as premises where there is no other existing fixed or mobile service connected.

Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts, the Hon Paul Fletcher MP, welcomed the cooperation of industry in setting the principles intended to support Australians through this challenging time.

“Telecommunications services are essential to keeping Australians connected to friends, family and essential services such as telehealth, and enabling us to stay productive for work or study as we spend more time at home in response to social distancing measures.

“That is why the Government and the telecommunications industry have come together to agree these principles and prioritise connectivity for Australians, including those who are experiencing financial hardship due to the coronavirus,” Minister Fletcher said.

“I want to acknowledge the work Australia’s telecommunication companies have been doing throughout COVID-19 – including through existing financial relief measures and additional data offers at no extra costs – and thank them for their efforts to date,” Minister Fletcher said.

John Stanton, Chief Executive Officer of Communications Alliance, said the joint statement reaffirms that industry and Government have a shared commitment to keep Australians connected and ensure they have the services they need to help weather this crisis.

“Industry has welcomed the close engagement with Minister Fletcher during the pandemic – a time when telecommunications services are crucial to the economic, educational and personal well-being of all Australians. Telcos across the supply chain have been proactive; swiftly reconfiguring and augmenting networks and taking many steps to assist customers,” Mr Stanton said.

The joint statement can be found here: www.communications.gov.au/COVID-19_principles

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Background:

Australia's major telecommunication companies have implemented a range of support measures, which are available at:

- [NBN Co](#)
- [Telstra](#)
- [Optus](#)
- [Vodafone](#)