



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

MEDIA RELEASE

17 December 2019

Modernising safeguards for Australian telco customers

The Morrison Government is overhauling consumer protections to better reflect the way that modern telecommunication services are delivered in Australia.

The *Consumer Safeguards Review Part B* report released today contains 14 recommendations to implement a framework to support the reliability of modern communication services

The *Part B* report is the second stage of the Government's three-part Consumer Safeguards Review which is preparing the telecommunications industry for a post-2020 operating environment when the National Broadband Network (NBN) is fully rolled out.

Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts, the Hon Paul Fletcher Minister Fletcher MP, said the existing consumer safeguards were designed for voice services delivered over the copper telephone network.

“The [consumer safeguards](#) we have in place today have been in place for more than 20 years and are highly prescriptive. As Australia's telecommunications environment continues to change, and with the National Broadband Network rollout finishing next year, now is the right time to modernise the consumer protection framework,” Minister Fletcher said.

“The report's recommendations are designed to support Australians to get and stay connected to fixed voice and broadband services. I have asked my Department to work closely with industry, consumer groups and regulators to progress this work.”

The final stage of the Consumer Safeguards Review will consider choice and fairness in the retail relationship between the customer and their provider. The Government will consult on the final stage in early 2020.

The report is available at: www.communications.gov.au/consumer-safeguards-review

END

Media contact:

Brad Hatch | 0448 162 679 | Brad.Hatch@communications.gov.au

Rebecca Papillo | 0439 892 771 | Rebecca.Papillo@communications.gov.au

Further Information:

Consumer Safeguards Review

On 17 April 2018, the Government released terms of reference for a review to prepare the telecommunications consumer protections framework for a post-2020 environment.

The Consumer Safeguards Review is being undertaken in three parts:

- A. redress and complaints handling
- B. reliability of telecommunications services
- C. choice and fairness in the retail relationship between the customer and their provider.

Part B of the Consumer Safeguards Review

Part B of the Consumer Safeguards Review is about the reliability of telecommunications services.

It contains 14 recommendations to implement a framework to support the reliability of modern communications services. The framework will:

- provide for wholesale level regulation of connections, repairs, and appointment keeping timeframes to underpin whole-of-industry performance on connecting and repairing individual services
- ensure retail level requirements for clear consumer information around service commitments from retailers, together with transparency of performance
- allow further consideration of well targeted and sustainable arrangements to maximise connectivity for medically vulnerable consumers, and
- address existing reliability safeguards of limited and declining relevance.

Current reliability safeguards

Most of the current reliability safeguards are focused on fixed line voice services and apply only to Telstra. They were developed at a time when Telstra's copper network was used to provide all consumers with fixed line voice services and Telstra was also the dominant retail service provider. Since then, the market structure and consumer expectations have changed profoundly.