

**ACMA: First spectrum renewal process to begin on June 18**

**NEW TELSTRA MVNO: Nomad Mobile using Virtutel as enabler**

**NBN CO: Raises \$1.2 billion from Euro sustainability issuance**

COMMSDAY  
SUMMIT  
SYDNEY 2026

# COMMUNICATIONS DAY

1 June 2026

News and analysis about ANZ telecom and digital infrastructure

ISSUE 7377

## Telstra tells ACMA that telcos may reduce spectrum holdings

Telstra has told the Australian Communications and Media Authority that it does not believe telcos will renew all of the expiring spectrum licences if the regulator remains firm on its preferred \$7.3 billion pricing approach. Optus has also made comments to the regulator suggesting partial renewal may be on the table if ACMA proceeds with a requirement for upfront payments.

“At the proposed price levels, which in our view are well above a fair market price, it is likely that not all spectrum will be renewed,” Telstra said in its comments to the regulator.

The Telstra comments were made in relation to a ACMA consultation focused on the application process for renewing expiring licences, and came ahead of ACMA’s release earlier this month of its preferred pricing.

ACMA ultimately assessed the value of the expiring licences for MNOs and NBN Co at \$7.32 billion, down from its December 2025 proposal of \$7.34 billion, in a decision met with dismay by mobile operators.

Optus in the same consultation on renewal applications suggested that instalment payments, an approach so far rejected by ACMA, would “avoid forcing licensees into premature renew, exit or consolidate decisions driven by cashflow rather than value and reduces the risk that viable operators fail to renew spectrum simply because early, large payments are required.”

Among the suggestions by Optus would be a new step in the renewal process whereby an applicant would decide whether to accept an offer by ACMA. It noted that after receiving final pricing from the regulator “licensees may reconsider their decision on full or partial renewal.”

“This may relate to a reduction in the MHz requested by the applicant and/or the geographical extent of licence areas,” it said.

Telstra in its comments to ACMA said that there was a lack of clarity on how unrenewed spectrum would be reallocated. “This lack of clarity regarding the handling of spectrum that is not renewed presents a material investment risk for incumbent licensees,” it said.

It flagged the “potential market-wide consequences of how unallocated or reallocated spectrum is treated, including the implications for long-term spectrum planning, competition, and consumer outcomes.”

Telstra said it was critical ACMA ensures that any non-renewed spectrum “is reallocated in a way that does not disadvantage other licensees who have elected to renew their spectrum.” “Most importantly, all licensees must have access to the same price outcome,” it said.

Elsewhere the telco noted: “In circumstances where the current proposed pricing methodology for renewals reflects above market rates pricing, it may be that licence holders would choose not to seek renewal of some or all their spectrum in this process and test if fairer pricing might be available through a subsequent alternative process. It is also possible that a licensee may decide to not renew, or to partially renew, certain licence(s) due to other non-price considerations.”

In its outcomes paper ACMA noted that it has previously not identified “many strong examples where partial renewal was likely to better promote the long-term public interest than renewal of licences in full.”

“Licensees seeking partial renewal should understand that a preferred view favouring renewal in full does not automatically imply a disposition favouring partial renewal,” it warned.

It said that any spectrum not renewed will be considered in the context of its spectrum planning framework, which could mean replanning “for a different use or for different users, and allocated via a range of licences and allocation methods.”

“Licensees not wishing to renew their licences do not need to make any application, but may wish to advise the ACMA of their intention not to apply, in which case we could commence work on assessing how we may deal with the unrenewed spectrum,” it said.

Rohan Pearce

## **ACMA sets out ESL renewal process**

The Australian Communications and Media Authority announced on Friday it has finalised the application and decision-making process for expiring spectrum licences. As a result, eligible licensees will be able to start applying for renewal from 18 June, ACMA said.

“The first tranche of licences to expire are in the 850MHz and 1800MHz bands,” it said. Following consultation, the technical frameworks for these bands have been updated and the changes are reflected in the sample spectrum licence templates,” ACMA added. The regulator has registered two instruments: One covering the methods of application (email it) and the other covering the kinds of information about the use of relevant spectrum that should be included in applications, comprising site and coverage information.

“Applications must also be accompanied by information about the licensee’s proposed future use of the spectrum licence and information about any third-party authorisations or other sharing arrangements that are relevant to the licence,” an explanatory memorandum noted.

The future use proposals can be as simple as a statement signed by a CEO confirming that the applicant intends to use the renewed licence for the same uses as the existing licence.

ACMA said as a result of consultation it had simplified the information require-

ments, with MNOs and NBN Co required to hand data akin to that already provided to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission under the Audit of Telecommunications Infrastructure Assets – Record Keeping Rules.

“Failure to provide the information or documents required by the instrument may mean that a licensee’s application for renewal is incomplete, with the consequence that the licence cannot be renewed,” it said.

“ACMA considers the provision of up-to-date network information to be a reasonable requirement, and necessary in allowing it to form a view on whether to renew a spectrum licence,” it said. “This information may also assist the ACMA in forming views on public interest considerations relevant to renewing a licence.”

Licenses providing rail safety and television outside broadcasting service have different information requirements.

Rohan Pearce

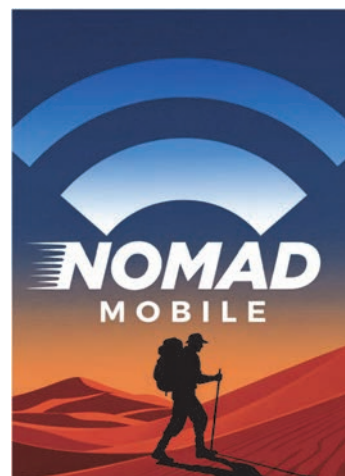
## **Diverse Network Group enters MVNO market with Nomad Mobile**

Brisbane-based Diverse Network Group has moved into the mobile virtual network operator market with the launch of Nomad Mobile, pitching the new brand at business fleets and consumers willing to pay for local support rather than lowest-cost mobile plans. Diverse is the new name for Vine Networks.

Nomad Mobile will operate as a SIM-only provider on the Telstra Wholesale Mobile network, with Virtutel providing mobile virtual network enabler services. The company said it would begin taking new customers and SIM activations from June 1.

The launch put Diverse Network Group into an already crowded MVNO segment, but with a different commercial emphasis from many budget-led mobile resellers. Nomad Mobile said it would sit between ultra-low-cost operators and the national mobile carriers, offering Australian-based support, no overseas call centres and no artificial intelligence agents.

The company said the strategy was aimed particularly at commercial mobile fleets, where support, billing and supplier consolidation could be more important than headline plan pricing.



Diverse Network Group chief executive David Trad said the move into mobile was a strategic extension of the group’s existing connectivity business.

“In Australia, customers have long wanted single-billing operators that simplify their lives and reduce the number of suppliers they need to manage,” Trad said.

“This was a huge but necessary step for us. Partnering with Virtutel as our MVNE on the Telstra Wholesale network made perfect sense — it’s the same high-quality network we already rely on as our largest supplier for both duct access and other related connectivity.”

Trad said Nomad Mobile would allow the group to offer a more complete service to customers while maintaining its service-led positioning.

“Nomad Mobile allows us to offer a complete, seamless solution while staying true to our values of local support and outstanding customer experience,” he said.

The company’s launch comes as the Australian MVNO market remains heavily price competitive, with challenger brands often seeking share through discounting, promotional inclusions and low-touch digital service models. Nomad Mobile said it would instead rely on what it described as a “White Glove” service model drawn from Diverse Network Group’s broader operations.

The company acknowledged that Australian-based human support would carry higher costs than offshore or automated support models, but said its proposition was built around customers who wanted direct access to local staff.

“We’re not trying to be the biggest or the absolute cheapest,” Trad said.

“We want to be the mobile provider customers feel good about being with — one they’re happy to recommend because they know they’ll always speak to a real local person when they need help.”

Nomad Mobile is Australian-owned and part of Diverse Network Group.

Grahame Lynch

## **NBN Co’s sustainable financing nears \$11bn**

NBN Co has raised \$1.2 billion from its second Euro Sustainability Bond issuance in European debt capital markets, bringing its total green and sustainable financing to \$10.7 billion.

“In recent weeks there have been fewer deals coming to market in an environment of investor caution,” said Fiona Trigona, executive general manager, group treasurer at NBN Co. “The success of our latest issuance in the European debt capital markets illustrates strong investor appetite for Australia and for NBN Co’s credit.”

The money from the 7.5-year bond will be invested into energy-efficient fibre deployment across the country and the NBN fixed wireless network.

“NBN Co has a strong commitment to digital inclusion, particularly for regional and remote areas,” said Trigona. “Our sustainability bond raisings enable us to make ongoing investments in energy efficient fibre, which helps deliver a more resilient network and also in the fixed wireless network which plays a crucial role in enabling connectivity in regional communities.”

In December 2025, NBN Co announced a series of projects as part of its climate mitigation actions. They included the upgrade of 84 points of interconnection to deliver higher capacity and more energy efficient equipment; the implementation of energy saving modes at 2400 fixed wireless towers; and the removal of 3200 legacy pay TV line power supplies and associated plant equipment from the HFC cable network.

Samira Sarraf



Fiona Trigona

## **Department cites prolonged contract negotiations, complexity in AusAlert delays**

The Department of Communications has cited the protracted contractual negotiations and complexity of the AusAlert project as the reasons why contracts to build the national messaging system were only signed in February and March 2025.

In early 2023 the federal government indicated it expected the NMS to be up and running by the end of 2024. According to briefing notes prepared by the department for a Senate estimates hearing and released under Freedom of Information, the system is now on track to be operational by 1 July 2026 with public facing implementation by 1 October 2026.

The overall value of the contracts with MNOs for the system are valued at \$67.64 million, the notes reveal. That includes a \$22.27m contract with Telstra to build the cell broadcast entity, which is a key part of the system to create and send messaging. Three separate contracts with the mobile carriers relate to build cell broadcast centres that support the integration of the AusAlert system.

“The breakdown of contract values has never been published due to commercial sensitivities,” the briefing stated.

The initial funding for the project was \$33 million announced as part of the 2022-23 Federal Budget. Additional funding of \$25.3 million was provided as part of the 2023-24 budget with a contingency of \$8.23 million.

The build process includes system testing to understand how messages will be delivered across different devices. The department is working with manufacturers including Apple and Google as well as with the Australian Telecommunications Alliance and ACMA to ensure requirements are met.

Samira Sarraf

## **OneWiFi says automated call testing platform has broader network assurance role**

OneWiFi & Infrastructure CEO Mevan Jayatilleke has said the company’s automated emergency call verification platform could be deployed beyond its own neutral host footprint, with potential use across conventional mobile networks and for call testing beyond Triple Zero.

The company developed the autonomous emergency call verification agent to reduce reliance on manual field testing of critical voice and emergency call services across remote, regional and multi-operator mobile sites.

The platform uses a rack-mounted device installed at a mobile site to initiate programmed or on-demand test calls, simulate real user behaviour, inject pre-recorded audio and capture radio parameters including RSRP, RSRQ, PCI and frequency layers. OneWiFi said it was designed for geographically dispersed networks and neutral host environments where multiple operators share infrastructure while retaining separate service quality and regulatory obligations.



Mevan Jayatilleke

Jayatilleke told CommsDay the same architecture could be applied more broadly across the mobile sector, including on single-operator networks and for general service assurance, public safety and enterprise resilience testing.

He said the core issue was proving that a customer at a given site could make a call when needed, rather than relying only on alarms or retrospective fault reports.

“You can’t afford to have a site dormant or users camping on a site not being able to make calls,” he said. “Whether it be Triple Zero is the worst case scenario where it’s critical, but even normal calls.”

Jayatilleke said traditional validation usually required technicians to visit sites with test equipment, which could be costly and slow when some locations were “around 16 hours from the nearest satellite town.”

“Unless you can physically, unless you can mimic the user behaviour at that site, it’s impossible to validate that it’s working 100%,” he said.

A notable feature is support for both Android and Apple devices. Jayatilleke said Android testing was more straightforward because it could be software controlled, while Apple required a mechanical workaround. OneWiFi developed robotic arms to physically interact with iPhones where direct software call initiation was unavailable.

“Apple is challenging. That is why we have to specifically design the AI around Apple because Android is so much easier,” he said. “It doesn’t let you do a backdoor software call, you have to physically do it externally.”

The system can test multiple operators sequentially using multiple SIMs. If a primary network fails, it can also check whether the site has correctly “wilted”, allowing devices to move to another available network.

“If the site has not wilted automatically, it will send the agent message saying call fail and the RF parameters showing the site hasn’t wilted,” Jayatilleke said. “So it’s a double insurance policy.”

He said this allowed operators to identify both the call failure and the risk that users remained camped on a site unable to complete calls. Results and associated site data could be returned to OneWiFi’s network operations centre or to an operator’s own NOC, with Jayatilleke saying the end-to-end response time could be less than one minute.

OneWiFi said the agent could be triggered automatically by service-impacting alarms from a network management system, operated manually by NOC staff or used for scheduled validation.

Jayatilleke linked the proposition to requirements for post-maintenance and periodic emergency call validation, saying large operators faced a significant operational burden if they needed to test extensive site portfolios after network changes.

“Operators are now required to do Triple Zero validation after every maintenance or network upgrade and/or every six months,” he said. “So imagine trying to do this for 10,000 sites every time you do a software upgrade.”

The platform also produces logs and audit trails that can help isolate whether a failure sits in the radio access network, transmission or core network. Jayatilleke said the agent’s logs could be analysed with base station data to support faster fault diagnosis and dispatch.



OneWiFi is deploying the capability across its neutral host sites and will provide it at no additional charge on its own network. Jayatilleke said the tool could also be made available commercially to other operators.

“We provide that free of charge, but equally the tool is commercially, we can make it available to other operators if they wish,” he said.

Grahame Lynch

## **AMTA advocates for prompt notification of use of drone jammers**

The Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association is calling for requirements to notify any authorised use of mobile signal jamming equipment to counter remote operated drones either in advance or as soon as the notification can be made.

In its submission to the Department of Home Affairs’ consultation on proposed approaches to Australia’s drone security, AMTA also asserted that any use of jammers should be constrained to the smallest area possible and for a duration no longer than needed to mitigate the risk posed by the operation of a drone.

AMTA said it recognises that one of the tools for countering remote operated drones is the use of jammers to electronic spectrum, and that mobile technology has been used to control drones, so disrupting signals can counter their operation.

But the industry body noted that jamming communications to the drones results in disruption to the mobile signal for legitimate users in the immediate vicinity, and that one of the legitimate uses could be contacting emergency services. For this reason, the use of jammers should be targeted and constrained as much as possible, the submission argues.

The Australian Communications and Media Authority’s guidelines require already the operator of devices exempt from the prohibition of the use of signal jammers to keep records of any use of the devices and notify potentially affected parties, AMTA said. But the provisions allow in some instances for notifications to occur after the device has been used.

Mobile operators detect and must investigate interference to their networks as part of their normal operational processes, but the cost can be avoided where the cause of interference is known to have occurred from the use of a device under exemption, AMTA said. Rapid notification can therefore benefit the industry.

The submission also requests that if operation of drone jammers is to be extended to beyond those currently allowed, that the newly authorised entities be made aware of the requirement to notify spectrum licensees when jammers are used.

Dylan Bushell-Embling

## **IAA warns of risks from overlapping regulations**

The Internet Association of Australia has told a Senate inquiry into the government’s unfair trading practices bill that telecommunications contracts should be excluded from provisions in the legislation aimed at subscription-style contracts.

The IAA said the measures risk duplicating existing obligations within the telecommunications sector.

The IAA said that the provisions would create confusion for providers in a heavily regulated sector that already have to juggle multiple regulations, particularly the small and medium providers that comprise much of the association's membership. More regulatory duplication could create "serious security concerns," it said.

"We stress the importance of sector-specific regulation that is intended to address the same or similar consumer protections contemplated in the UTP laws, but have been, or are being drafted, in a way that is appropriate to the technical and complex operational realities of the telecommunications sector," IAA wrote in its submission. "We strongly recommend the continuation of this approach and therefore respectfully request the Committee recommends that telecommunications contracts be excluded from the scope of subscription contract laws."

In the case the proposed bill passes as it stands now, IAA recommends that providers that already comply with overlapping applicable telecommunications regulation are allowed a safe harbour provision ensuring the existing compliance be extended to the UTP laws.

IAA said there are security concerns related to measures around service cancellations that are aimed at ensuring customers can end a contract online, noting for example industry regulations designed to protect consumers against fraudulent porting. It proposed new language in a bill protecting providers that are unable to provide an online cancellation due to circumstances beyond their control.

The association said it was also concerned about the proposed 1 July 2027 starting date of the new laws. "We do not consider this enough time to ensure compliance, particularly for smaller telecommunications providers who again, have limited resources," IAA stated. Compliance will require systems to be redesigned which will affect smaller telco providers that rely on white-label billing platforms or CRM systems that are not easily modified, it noted.

Adding to this are the expected new consumer safeguards regulation that will replace the TCP Code which may also require further systems changes. IAA proposes a tiered approach to the implementation of the bill for telcos to start once the new industry standard is introduced. It proposes the 1 July 2027 date apply only to large telecommunications providers, suggesting that for small businesses a more reasonable date would be 1 March 2028.

Samira Sarraf

## **Report maps digital gap among First Nations in 10 regional towns**

New research has identified high rates of digital exclusion among First Nations residents of 10 regional towns across Australia.

The report from a research team at RMIT and Swinburne Universities, sponsored by Telstra and the Australian Research Council, outlines the findings of 729 surveys of digital inclusion undertaken by First Nations Australians living in these towns.

The towns were Bunbury, Meekatharra, Newman and Derby in Western Australia, Tenant Creek and Nhulunbuy in the NT, Mount Isa and Thursday Island in Queensland, Port Lincoln in South Australia and Lismore in NSW.



The report's findings show that nationally, 92% of indigenous Australians surveyed had used the internet in the past week, 96% own or share a mobile phone, 93% use social media, 92% had used online banking in the past six months and 86% had used online government services in the last six months.

But across the 10 regional sites, 26% of respondents reported not having enough digital devices to meet household requirements. While 83% regularly use the internet, 9% never do so, and only 35% have fixed household connectivity. Nearly half (47%) of respondents use the internet at houses of friends and family, with 27% accessing the internet using Wi-Fi in public spaces.

Meanwhile 93% use a mobile phone to make and receive calls, with 91% using smartphones. But 58% of those on prepaid mobile services report running out of data at times. This has ensured that public phones remain a critical safety net for communications in emergency situations, with 11% of respondents having used such a phone to make or receive calls.

The report found that mobile internet and reliability issues impact many of the towns, with 19% of respondents reporting often or always experiencing connectivity or network issues that impacted their mobile or internet use in the past six months, and a further 38% sometimes experiencing issues.

**DIGITAL GAP:** The report notes that there is a 10.5 point gap in the digital inclusion rates of First Nations (63.4) compared to non-First Nations nationally (73.9). There is also a 12.8 point gap in access (64.3 to 77.2), a 13.3 point gap in affordability (57.3 to 70.6) and a 5.3 point gap in digital ability (68.6 to 73.8). Nearly a quarter of First Nations Australians are considered highly digitally excluded, with 41% rated as either excluded or highly excluded. This compares to just 9% and 20% respectively among non-First Nations.

The digital gap increases significantly with remoteness, with a 7.8 point gap in major cities compared to a 39.9 point gap in very remote Australia. The gap is spread largely evenly across most states, but is highest in the NT at 17.3 points and in WA at 15.1 points.

The report also identified a national average affordability gap of 13.3 points, rising to 15.7 points in remote Australia. Respondents reported an average monthly household mobile and internet expenditure of \$197.

Among respondents, 42% reported having to make compromises of speeds and/or data to afford the internet, compared to 38% for First Nations Australians nationally. Meanwhile 46% of respondents reported having to sacrifice or cut back on essential costs to afford the internet, compared to 18% for non-First Nations Australians nationally. Meanwhile 25% of those who do not use the internet cited cost as a key barrier.

Dylan Bushell-Embling

## **AARNet swings to reported loss after retiring security centre service**

National research network operator AARNet swung to a reported loss in 2025 as a result of its decision to retire its security operations centre service for universities.

The company attributed the nearly \$18 million deficit for the year to “the recognition of an associated onerous contract impairment and provision” which required AARNet to bring forward its remaining contractual obligations to the SOC from 2026 and 2027 into the 2025 result.

The loss compares to a restated surplus for 2024 of around \$5 million, and was recorded despite a 5.9% increase in revenue to \$131.1 million in 2025.

In its annual report, AARnet CEO Ben White said the company had made the difficult decision to retire the SOC service “in light of changing customer requirements and the evolution of mature commercial alternatives.” He said the company is continuing to invest in its nationwide network, expanding capacity, strengthening security and resilience, and extending connectivity across metropolitan, regional and remote locations.

“Examples of this include the ongoing investment in our network technology upgrade to AARNet5 and the inter-capital Triversity fibre construction program, both of which have made significant progress in 2025. These investments are critical to supporting emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and the growing demand for cloud services and data movement across the sector,” he said.

“Looking ahead, our priority is to continue to build on AARNet’s role as a trusted, sector-owned partner, providing capabilities to support research, education and collaboration at national and global scale.”

According to the report, AARNet’s network now has a provisioned backbone capacity of 28.2Tbps, spans over 31,000km of fibre and connects 1,497 sites. Around 500km of fibre was newly deployed in 2025. The network achieved 99.99% backbone availability during the year.

The network supports over 5 million users across 41 Australian universities, 54 research institutes, 22 cultural organisations and more than 5,000 schools. It connects to international research and education networks in over 140 countries through 11 subsea cables.

AARNet has now invested \$160.2 million in infrastructure over the past five years and anticipates investment at a similar rate for the next five years. The company is also helping to pursue advances in secure networking through initiatives such as its collaboration with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation and QuintessenceLabs to trial quantum-secure communications technologies over its fibre network.

Through a long-term agreement with APA Group, AARNet is also operating telecom services on the Basslink fibre cable connecting Tasmania to mainland Australia, the report notes.

“Looking ahead, our priority is to continue to build on AARNet’s role as a trusted, sector-owned partner, providing capabilities to support research, education and collaboration at national and global scale,” White said.

AARNet is owned by 38 Australian universities and the CSIRO and operated as a non-profit.

Dylan Bushell-Embling

# Marles warns subsea cables now a strategic target as AUKUS launches seabed project

Deputy prime minister and defence minister Richard Marles has warned that subsea cables have become a major field of strategic contest, arguing that Australia's dependence on a small number of international fibre links has made seabed infrastructure a critical national security issue. Speaking at the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore, Marles said Australia was "among the most exposed nations in the world" to disruption of subsea infrastructure, with about 99% of the country's internet traffic carried over just 15 subsea cables.



Richard Marles on Saturday

"Fifteen cables — fifteen physical assets on the ocean floor — carry essentially the entirety of our international digital connectivity," he said. "Our financial systems, our health systems, our communications, our intelligence partnerships, our ability to operate as a modern economy and a functioning state: all of it is critically dependent on infrastructure that is exposed, that cannot move and — as we have now seen demonstrated in the Baltic — can be cut with an anchor in the middle of the night."

Marles used the speech to link recent cable damage in the Baltic Sea and Taiwan Strait to the wider emergence of grey-zone coercion at sea, while stopping short of attributing the incidents to particular states or actors.

He said the past 18 months had seen "a series of attacks against subsea critical infrastructure at a scale and frequency that is historically unprecedented," pointing to the November 2024 severing of fibre optic cables between Germany and Finland and Sweden and Lithuania, as well as subsequent damage in the Gulf of Finland involving the tanker Eagle S.

Marles said Finnish coastguards had seized the tanker after it dragged its anchor for almost 100 kilometres across the seabed, severing a power connector between Finland and Estonia and damaging four telecommunications lines. He also cited repeated cable damage around Taiwan, including five reported cases in 2025 compared with three in each of 2024 and 2023.

"It is striking that several cables have been severed across the Baltic and the Taiwan Strait since November 2024," he said. "Now, maybe these were accidents. But even if they were, it highlights the vulnerability of this crucial part of the globe's infrastructure. If they were intentional, we are left to wonder: are countries testing our response times, testing our attribution thresholds and testing our political will to respond?"

Asked on Sunday what evidence had convinced Australia that shadow fleet activity, cable incidents and grey-zone coercion were connected rather than separate maritime security events, Marles said the point was that even accidental damage highlighted the fragility of critical infrastructure.

"Let's assume what we're talking about is accidents here," he said. "Even at that level, what this is demonstrating is the fragility, if you like, of what is now critical global infrastructure. I mean if it is possible for an anchor to cut a cable in the middle

of the night by accident that of itself ought to be a concern. But if there is any intention in respect of this, that requires our attention as well.”

Marles said the rules-based order could no longer be understood only in terms of seaborne trade. “We now need to be thinking about the seabed and what lies there because that is fundamental infrastructure for all of our countries,” he said.

**UNDERSEA DRONES:** The comments came as Australia, the US and the UK announced the first AUKUS Pillar II “Signature Project”, focused on cutting-edge payloads and enabling systems for uncrewed undersea vehicles.

The three governments said the project would support protection of critical national seabed infrastructure, surveillance, reconnaissance and strike capabilities, logistics operations, anti-submarine and anti-surface warfare, mine countermeasures, electronic warfare and contested littoral manoeuvre.

Marles said the project was intended to deliver capability quickly. “This is about getting increased capability to the war fighter next year,” he said. “We wanted this to have a very clear, short time frame backed up with real money and we’ve done all of that.” The AUKUS announcement was made after Marles met US secretary of war Pete Hegseth and UK secretary of state for defence John Healey at the US embassy in Singapore, where the three governments reaffirmed their commitment to the AUKUS partnership. The official statement said delivery under the uncrewed undersea vehicle project would start in 2027.

The Singapore meeting also coincided with the launch of the Guiding Principles for Underwater Infrastructure Defence Exchanges, known as GUIDE, a voluntary framework endorsed by 17 countries including Australia, Singapore, New Zealand, the UK, France, Finland, Estonia, Sweden, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand.

Singapore defence minister Chan Chun Sing said underwater infrastructure now formed part of the wider strategic environment beneath major waterways.

“Today, the waterways are not just avenues for us to conduct our trade, but underneath those waters are also critical underwater infrastructure that connects our energy grid and our telecommunications grid,” he said.

Chan said disruption to one part of the network had wider implications for the whole system, arguing that the cross-regional nature of the framework reflected the need for countries from Europe, the Middle East, Southeast Asia and the Asia-Pacific to develop common norms around building, maintaining and protecting critical underwater infrastructure.

The GUIDE framework said subsea telecommunications cables carried more than 95% of internet and data traffic under the ocean, while subsea energy infrastructure, including pipelines and power cables, was also central to economic growth and connectivity. It said recent cable and pipeline incidents had underscored the vulnerability of critical underwater infrastructure and highlighted difficulties in responding outside territorial waters, including attribution, jurisdiction and enforcement.

Under the framework, defence establishments would support civilian agencies and private operators rather than displace them, with potential cooperation including maritime awareness, early warning, information-sharing, technical exchanges, crisis response contacts and support for international law and norms.

Grahame Lynch

## **Token efficiency to define data centre competitiveness: Cushman & Wakefield**

The use of tokens as a core measure of artificial intelligence workloads is expected to reshape how data centre performance, pricing and site selection are assessed, according to new analysis from Cushman & Wakefield.

The real estate specialist's data centre development advisory team said traditional metrics such as megawatts and cost per kilowatt remained important, but AI adoption was shifting attention to tokens as the basic unit of AI output.

"This marks a move from capacity-based to outcome-driven measurement," the researchers said. "In this context, AI data centres are increasingly viewed as 'AI factories,' converting energy into intelligence."

Cushman & Wakefield said the shift could make token efficiency a more important competitive measure for data centre operators, particularly as token-based pricing models made output per megawatt a clearer differentiator.

"Operators can differentiate on token efficiency per MW, maximising output rather than simply scaling capacity," the report said. It said operators could compete by improving efficiency, adopting modular designs that allowed faster technology refresh and enabling more flexible operations.

The researchers said token-based pricing could also influence location decisions. Because token pricing was largely region-agnostic, operators may be able to improve economics by locating infrastructure in lower-cost regions, provided latency, power and connectivity requirements were met.

However, the report said a full shift to cost-per-token benchmarking would not be straightforward for data centre operators because similar power inputs could produce materially different token outputs depending on the model, workload and infrastructure configuration.

"Since similar power can produce varying levels of token output, it is a less consistent basis for benchmarking across different setups and infrastructure," the report said.

Tony Chan

## **Japan team claims first full-spectrum hollow-core fibre demo**

Oki Electric Industry, Lightera Japan and Keio University have claimed the first wide-band wavelength division multiplex transmission demonstration using hollow-core fibre across the full optical fibre spectrum.

The demonstration was conducted at the Keio Future Photonic Network Open Lab using an optical line system developed by Oki and hollow-core fibre from the Lightera Group.

The companies said the system achieved single-fibre bidirectional transmission across the 1.26  $\mu\text{m}$  to 1.58  $\mu\text{m}$  range, covering the O, E, S, C and L bands. They said the result opened the way for further development of 100G-PON access technology, which is expected to support Japan's Innovative Optical and Wireless Network initia-

tive. The team did not disclose the bandwidth or speed achieved in the demonstration. The researchers also said the trial system was able to reduce power consumption, with future commercial systems potentially using one-tenth of the power of current solutions. Oki said it would continue research into the use of hollow-core fibre in passive optical network systems, while Lightera said it would further develop hollow-core fibre and related technologies.

**Lightera and Nokia:** Lightera has separately partnered with Nokia to promote optical local area network solutions for enterprises in Europe, initially targeting the UK, Germany, Spain and Portugal.

The collaboration combines Lightera's passive optical infrastructure with Nokia GPON, XGS-PON and 25G-PON technologies. The companies said the Passive Optical LAN architecture could replace traditional copper and switch-based networks and support high-bandwidth, low-latency AI applications.

Tony Chan

## **SpaceX to build US\$2.29bn network for US Space Force**

The US Space Force has awarded SpaceX a US\$2.29bn contract to accelerate development of the Space Data Network backbone known as MILNET.

The network is planned as a satellite constellation using optical inter-satellite links to provide high-capacity, low-latency backhaul communications for the US Department of Defence.

The Space Data Network will sit alongside the Space Development Agency's Transport Layer network within the Department of Defence's Proliferated Warfighter Space Architecture, a low-Earth orbit satellite architecture designed to support resilient tactical communications and tracking.

The Transport Layer is being developed separately by vendors including York Space Systems, Lockheed Martin and Northrop Grumman. It is being deployed in tranches, with the first tranche comprising 126 satellites and a second tranche expanding the network to more than 500 satellites with advanced variants.

The Space Data Network contract was awarded by Space Systems Command. Some analysts have described the program as a possible third tranche of the Transport Layer architecture, while also adding greater integration with commercial networks and a more hybrid communications architecture.

Under the contract, SpaceX is expected to deliver a fully operational prototype capability by the end of 2027.

Tony Chan

## **SUPERLOOP COMPLETES LIGHTNING BROADBAND ACQUISITION**

Superloop has completed its acquisition of 100% of Lynham Networks Pty Ltd, the parent company of Lightning Broadband, for \$165 million in cash consideration, subject to final completion adjustments. Lynham Networks operates an open-access wholesale FTTP network across more than 400 MDUs and SDUs. Superloop said that at the end of April, the business comprised approximately 56,000 secured lots across

Victoria, New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory, South Australia, Queensland and Western Australia, including approximately 16,000 services in operation. The acquisition was funded from existing cash and Superloop's debt facilities.

### **CHORUS REGULATED ASSET BASE GREW IN 2025**

Chorus has submitted its 2025 fibre regulatory report. The wholesaler said that as part of that process it calculated that the regulated asset base increased from NZ\$5.9 billion in 2024 to approximately \$6.0 billion at the end of 2025. "Within this total, the core RAB was \$5.1 billion in 2025, up \$0.2 billion from 2024, while the financial loss asset was lowered to \$0.9 billion in 2025," it said. Chorus said that as expected, it under-earned its maximum allowable revenue for 2025. "Revenues were \$101 million lower than allowed in 2025 and, together with various other adjustments, this results in a wash-up balance of \$76.3 million that will be carried forward to PQP3," it said.

### **SPARK REFINANCES BANK DEBT FACILITIES AFTER DC DEAL**

Spark has announced the refinancing of its bank debt facilities. "This follows a review of Spark's banking arrangements after the sale of a 75% stake in its data centre business in January 2026, to ensure its funding structure aligns with its simplified operating model, capital requirements, and financial strategy," the telco said. "As a result, Spark Finance has established a new suite of committed bank facilities totalling NZ\$500 million."

### **PNG DATACO SIGNS NEUTRAL HOST AGREEMENT**

PNG DataCo Limited has signed a series of agreements with the Morobe Provincial Government, including a memorandum of agreement covering neutral host mobile sites and the rollout of an ERP system to modernise operations. CEO Paul Komboi said: "Today's signing represents a significant step forward in our shared vision with the Morobe Provincial Government to deliver inclusive, modern, and transparent public services. Through these agreements, DataCo will provide the digital infrastructure and platforms required to support Morobe's transformation into a leading digital province in Papua New Guinea."

### **UK STARTUP DEMOS WORLD'S SMALLEST OPTICAL GROUND STATION**

UK space startup Archangel Lightworks has completed successful trials of what it claims as the world's smallest deployable operational optical ground station. The multi-day TERRA-M solution trials were funded by the UK Defence Science and Technology Laboratory and took place in the Mediterranean region. According to Archangel Lightworks, TERRA-M demonstrated reliable, secure and rapid data transfer with a low Earth orbit satellite across multiple passes using laser communication standard defined by the US Space Development Agency.



## 10 YEARS AGO IN COMMSDAY

NBN chairman Dr Ziggy Switkowski has publicly defended his company's controversial decision to call in the Australian Federal Police on leaks of internal powerpoints but his intervention in the debate has been criticised as a breach of the caretaker conventions which call for government business enterprises to refrain from sensitive statements during election campaigns.

Vodafone will today announce the next phase in its ongoing campaign to move beyond its traditional metro focus and strengthen its regional mobile network: 32 new regional base stations across New South Wales, Queensland, Tasmania and Western Australia.

TPG CEO David Teoh has now become Australia's tenth wealthiest man, according to this year's Business Review Weekly annual Rich List with his wife Vicky right beside him. The duo were ranked 10 and 11 collectively in the 2016 list, with a combined wealth of A\$3.08 billion.

Telstra has confirmed the departure of CTO Vish Nandlall, amidst reports that the executive was sacked for having allegedly falsified his CV though Nandlall himself has denied these claims.

Telstra networks GMD Mike Wright has warned that the shift to next-generation services and to the NBN is bringing more and more complexity into consumer premise equipment like home gateways with issues like the recent Telstra NBN and ADSL outages an unforeseen consequence.

## LATEST SHARE PRICES

| Company name                       | Change (%) | Last price | Change  | Volume  | Market cap |
|------------------------------------|------------|------------|---------|---------|------------|
| 5G Networks Limited                | +3.57%     | 0.0870     | +0.0030 | 241,394 | 23.499M    |
| Pentanet Limited                   | +11.11%    | 0.0200     | +0.0020 | 141,133 | 8.663M     |
| Aussie Broadband Limited           | 0.00%      | 5.37       | 0.00    | 1,486M  | 1.576B     |
| Comms Group Limited                | -1.33%     | 0.0740     | -0.0010 | 27,027  | 40.46M     |
| Chorus Limited                     | 0.00%      | 8.07       | 0.00    | 524,242 | 3.501B     |
| Macquarie Technology Group Limited | +3.48%     | 74.70      | +2.51   | 81,805  | 1.925B     |
| Megaport Limited                   | +5.36%     | 15.52      | +0.79   | 3,299M  | 2.854B     |
| NEXTDC Limited                     | +1.74%     | 15.24      | +0.26   | 3,28M   | 11.012B    |
| Superloop Limited                  | -3.34%     | 3.4700     | -0.1200 | 5,058M  | 1.786B     |
| Spark New Zealand Limited          | +0.62%     | 1.6250     | +0.0100 | 1,419M  | 3.071B     |
| Swoop Holdings Limited             | +1.06%     | 0.0950     | +0.0010 | 4,000   | 29.551M    |
| Telstra Group Limited              | -0.38%     | 5.21       | -0.02   | 40,399M | 58.297B    |
| TPG Telecom Limited                | -1.76%     | 3.9000     | -0.0700 | 21,698M | 7.656B     |

## About Communications Day (including Space & Satellite AU & The Line New Zealand)

Communications Day is the telecommunications news bible of ANZ. Published daily since August 1994, CommsDay is expertly written and edited by a team of industry writers with a combined 80 years experience in telecoms across Australia, NZ, Asia, the United States and Europe. CommsDay is available by subscription only and read by up to 10,000 industry executives as well as policymakers and parliamentarians every week day. Around 90% of our readers are in Australia, 5% in New Zealand and the remainder across the rest of the world including Singapore, the United States and the United Kingdom.

### PUBLISHED BY DECISIVE PUBLISHING

**Mail: PO Box 490 Milsons**

**Point NSW 1565**

**Website: [www.commsday.com](http://www.commsday.com)**

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Monday 1 through Wednesday 3 June 2026, Fullerton Hotel Sydney  
Last few registrations available at [commsday.com](https://commsday.com)

## MONDAY 1 JUNE (Heritage Ballroom, Level 6)

### Special Session: Restoring Telecom Reputation

#### MC: ATA CEO Luke Coleman

12.00pm Registration and Lunch  
1.15pm Assistant minister, regional development Senator Anthony Chisholm  
1.30pm Roy Morgan CEO Michele Levine  
1.50pm Shadow communications minister Senator Sarah Henderson  
2.10pm Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman Cynthia Gebert  
2.30pm Internet Association of Australia CEO Narelle Clark  
2.50pm Australia Mobile Telecommunications Association CEO Louise Hyland  
3.10pm First Nations Digital Inclusion Advisory Group co-chair Dr Lyndon Ormond-Parker  
3.30pm Senderz.ai founder Dan Rosen  
3.45pm NZ Telecommunications Forum CEO Paul Brislen  
4.05pm UTS Professor Ray Owen  
4.25pm Close & Pre-reception drinks  
5pm-7pm Opening reception sponsored by Corning

## TUESDAY 2 JUNE (Grand Ballroom, Basement)

#### MC: Joe Hildebrand

8.00am Registration and coffee

#### Morning Keynotes

9.00am Optus chief customer officer Anthony Shiner  
9.20am Ericsson ANZ managing director Ludvig Landgren  
9.40am Amazon Web Services head of telco, Australia Nathan Hill  
10.00am Cisco ANZ chief technology officer Carl Solder  
10.20am Superloop group executive, consumer Mehul Dave  
10.40am Break sponsored by Maser

#### Morning Plenary

11.20am Accenture ANZ Communications & Media Industry Lead Gohulan Sivathanan  
11.40am BAI Communications chief commercial officer Elyssa Rollinson  
12.00pm Vocus CEO Andrés Irlando  
12.20pm Indara CEO Emilio Romeo  
12.40pm Kearney partner Zorawar Singh and global lead,

comms, media & tech Owen Tracey

#### 1pm Lunch

#### Afternoon Plenary

1.50pm NetComm sales director Andrew James & technology director Charlie Warren  
2.05pm CloudRAN.ai MD Bai Wei  
2.20pm HPE Networking senior director, SP APJ Garry Turner  
2.35pm Uniti Group CEO Kevin Teoh  
2.50 Refreshment break  
Afternoon Keynotes  
3.20pm SUBCO founder and co-CEO Bevan Slattery  
3.40pm Australian Competition and Consumer Commission commissioner Anna Brakey  
4.00pm Australian Telecommunications Alliance CEO Luke Coleman  
4.20pm Australian Communications and Media Authority chair Nerida O'Loughlin  
4.40pm TPG Telecom CTO Giovanni Chiarelli 5pm Close

## WEDNESDAY 3 JUNE (Grand Ballroom, Basement)

#### MC: Joe Hildebrand

8.00am Registration and coffee

#### Morning Keynotes

9.00am Optus CTO Sri Amirthalingam  
9.20am Nokia managing director, Oceania Adrian Heley  
9.40am NBN CO CEO Ellie Sweeney  
10.00am Commscope SVP, Broadband Networks Philippe Vanhille  
10.20am Telstra InfraCo CEO Steven Worrall  
10.40am Break

#### Morning Plenary

11.20am Allot VP product management Moti Goldshtein  
11.40am Viasat senior vice president Carlin Charteris  
12.00pm ANDREW engineering fellow Marty Zimmerman  
12.20pm Aussie Broadband CEO Brian Maher  
12.40pm Red Hat regional telco leader, south Asia and ANZ Jonathan Ang

#### 1pm Lunch

#### Closing Session

1.50pm Dell principal network architect Tim Anstey & AMD Sr. Solutions Architect – ANZ Egor Pyrkov  
2.05pm Blue Planet senior solutions architect Mitchell Stafford  
2.20pm Sateliot chief commercial officer Gianluca Redolfi  
2.35pm 7-MINUTE Lightning Talks: Netcracker master solutions engineer Anton Petrov, Critical Infrastructure Consulting founder and principal Dan Whitford, Incognito VP sales Gonzalo Jofre, Madison Connectivity CTO David White, IAA CEO Narelle Clark  
3.20pm Great Debate including Long Street Advisors CEO Mohammad Chowdhury, TM Forum EVP, AI Guy Lupo, NEXTDC head of colocation Chris Losco, IAA CEO Narelle Clark  
4.00 Close

**Full coverage in CommsDay this week**