



The Hon Anika Wells MP
Minister for Communications and Minister for Sport
Member for Lilley

Ref No: MC25-015607

Mayor Matt Burnett
President
Australian Local Government Association
8 Geils Court
DEAKIN ACT 2600
alga@alga.asn.au
cc: Jaimee.Bell@alga.asn.au

Dear Mayor Burnett

Thank you for your correspondence of 13 August 2025 regarding resolutions from the 2025 National General Assembly (NGA) of Local Government.

I note resolutions 21, 23, 117, 120 and 150 deal with important communications, connectivity and public safety matters and appreciate having the opportunity to respond. Please find below information about how the Australian Government is addressing the concerns your members have raised.

Motion number 21 – Effectiveness of the 4G network

The Government continues to closely monitor whether Telstra and Optus are meeting their coverage equivalence commitments, and is engaging with them in relation to individual complaints. The Government is also aware of, and concerned by, the issues of coverage being raised, especially by residents in regional and remote Australia.

The Government has made it clear to industry that they are expected to live up to commitments made before the 3G switch off regarding coverage equivalence. The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) and the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), as the appropriate regulators, have also been enlivened to possible systemic issues arising from complaints that may require regulatory intervention.

The National Audit of Mobile Coverage, which runs until June 2027, aims to not only better identify mobile coverage black spots across Australia, but to also provide an independent resource that better reflects on ground experiences of mobile coverage provided commercially by mobile network operators. Results from the Audit are available on my Department's website at www.infrastructure.gov.au/media-communications/better-connectivity-plan-regional-and-rural-australia/national-audit-mobile-coverage.

Motion number 23 – Equitable communication and connectivity levels across Australia

There are existing arrangements that ensure people across Australia have reasonable access to voice and broadband services. Under the Universal Service Obligation (USO), Telstra has regulatory and contractual obligations to provide fixed phone and payphone services nationally on reasonable request. Access to fixed broadband is supported by the Statutory Infrastructure Provider (SIP) regime. NBN Co is the default wholesale provider of broadband services nationally under SIP arrangements. NBN Co and other similar providers have requirements, on request, to connect premises to their networks and supply wholesale services that allow retail providers to provide broadband services with peak download and upload speeds of at least 25/5 megabits per second (Mbps). On fixed-line and fixed wireless networks, the wholesale services SIPs supply must also be able to support retail voice services.

In 2023 and 2024, the Government sought stakeholder views on existing universal service delivery and funding arrangements in light of changes in available technologies and consumer preferences in recent years. A summary of stakeholder feedback was released in October 2024, and all views are being carefully considered. More detail is available at www.infrastructure.gov.au/media-communications-arts/modernising-universal-telecommunications-services. The 2024 Independent Regional Telecommunications Review has also made recommendations to Government on universal service arrangements that are currently being considered.

As a first step in reforming universal service arrangements, the Government has announced that it will establish a Universal Outdoor Mobile Obligation (UOMO). The UOMO will require the three mobile carriers – Optus, Telstra and TPG – to ensure that baseline services (SMS and voice) are reasonably available outdoors throughout Australia. MNOs are expected to use their existing terrestrial mobile networks where they currently have coverage, and leverage Direct to Device technology provided by low earth orbit satellites where they do not currently have coverage. The Government expects that the obligation could commence late in 2027, subject to market developments.

Consultation on an exposure draft of the UOMO legislation is currently open at <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/have-your-say/consultation-universal-outdoor-mobile-obligation-uomo-draft-legislation>.

Motion number 117 – Combatting misinformation and disinformation

The Government has numerous programs to support local and community efforts to build civic engagement and trust. The News Media Assistance Program (News MAP) recognises local media as critical to the health of our democracy, social cohesion and informing communities. As part of News MAP the Government is providing:

- grants for the news sector, and the News Media Relief Program with these available to eligible regional, independent, suburban, multicultural and First Nations news publishers creating online news content, and
- funding to support the financial sustainability of the Australian Associated Press, for regional newspaper advertising across the total Commonwealth media advertising spend, and to the Australian Communications and Media Authority to implement the Media Diversity Measurement Framework.

The Government has also committed to the development of Australia's first National Media Literacy Strategy over the next three years, while the Electoral Integrity Assurance Taskforce provides support to state electoral commissions for the conduct of local government elections.

Motion number 120 – Sustainability of fiscal arrangements for postal services

The Government recognises the important role that Post Office licensees, agents and mail delivery contractors play in ensuring Australians have access to essential postal and other services. The Government will continue to work with Australia Post to support the long-term sustainability of its postal network and the services it provides.

Motion number 150 – Dark fibre investment

Australia's telecommunications industry operates in an environment of full and open competition, with regulatory oversight by the ACCC and the ACMA. Agreements between dark fibre providers and end-users are governed by private contracts. The Government has not identified any market issues that would require government intervention at this stage. The ACCC continues to monitor the dark fibre market.

Thank you for writing on this matter.

Yours sincerely



Anika Wells

15 October 2025