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Ms Louise Gell
Committee Secretary
Senate Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts Committee
Department of the Senate
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

Dear Ms Gell

Re: Proposed sale of Government owned interest in Telstra

I understand your Committee has been asked to report on the Bills to be introduced today regarding the sale of Telstra. I understand there is a very limited time within which submissions may be made on the matter by members of the public and that a report is expected from the Committee by 12 September.

I have not yet seen the legislation – it does not appear to be on the website. I cannot understand the rush associated with this matter, and am left to surmise that the Government either wants to have the legislation passed before the public realizes what is involved or wants it passed before its members realize what is involved. Either way, I am very concerned about the patent intention of the Government to push through this legislation through without proper consideration, either by me or by the representatives I and others have elected to consider such matters.

Consequently I am unable to support the proposal for sale of the Government's Telstra interest at this time. That is not to say that I would not support a sale once I am convinced that the Government, in its hurried attempt at drafting and submitting legislation, has adequately provided for all the necessary safeguards to protect the users of telephony services in remote areas of this country.

I submit to the Committee that its members ought to report to the Senate that the vote on the matter should not proceed until such time as both the public and members of Parliament have had an adequate opportunity to consider the legislation.

Presently I don't live in a remote area. However I have lived in very remote areas, including one where as late as 1989 it was still serviced by a manual telephone exchange. (Some members of the committee may recall such quaint services – they disappeared decades earlier in *populated* parts of the country.) My experiences with poor service delivery by Telstra both in the bush and more recently in suburbia lead me to hold grave concerns regarding the will (and perhaps the capacity) of a privatised Telstra to properly support telephony users in the less populated parts of this country.

I urge the committee to delay the passing of the legislation until proper consideration of the matter by the committee and the Senate as a whole.

Yours faithfully

Damian Quinn
(submitted via email)