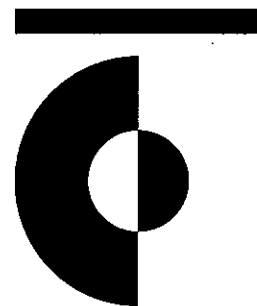


2 February 2012

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications
PO Box 6100, Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Email: stephen.palethorpe@aph.gov.au



**Telecommunications
Industry
Ombudsman**

Dear Mr Palethorpe

**Simon Cohen
Ombudsman**

Universal Service Obligation (USO) legislative reform package – Telecommunications Universal Service Management Agency Bill 2011, Telecommunications Legislation Amendment (Universal Service Reform) Bill 2011 and Telecommunications (Industry Levy) Bill 2011

I appeared before the Committee this morning to provide evidence in respect of the above Bills.

During my evidence, I believe I was asked a question about whether the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman ("TIO") had previously made a submission that the National Relay Service provider be required, under Part 6 of the *Telecommunications (Consumer Protection and Service Standards) Act* ("T(CPSS) Act"), to be a member of the TIO scheme. While I do not have a transcript of the question or my response, I believe that I responded to the effect that this request had been made.

Since appearing before the Committee, I have had the opportunity to review relevant previous submissions of my office. In particular, the TIO made submissions to the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy on the:

- Discussion Paper – *Implementation of Universal Service Policy for the transition to the National Broadband Network environment* – November 2010
- *Universal Service Obligation Legislative Reform for transition to the National Broadband Network* – August 2011.

Each of these submissions includes a suggestion or recommendation by the TIO that consumers with a complaint about a Universal Service Obligation service have easy and accessible access to the TIO. The submissions, in this respect, focus on Standard Telephone Services.

The submissions do not, however, directly address the suggestion in my submission to the Committee (at page 9) that Part 6 of the T(CPSS) Act be amended require NRS contractors to be members of the TIO scheme.

Given this, and my answer to the Committee, I thought it appropriate to immediately draw this matter to the Committee's attention.

Yours sincerely

Simon Cohen
Ombudsman

"... providing independent, just, informal and speedy resolution of complaints"

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