



Minister for Planning; Culture & the Arts; Science & Innovation
Government of Western Australia

Committee Secretary
House of Representatives Standing Committee on
Infrastructure and Communications
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam

**THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS AMENDMENT (ENHANCING COMMUNITY
CONSULTATION) BILL 2011**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the *Telecommunications Amendment (Enhancing Community Consultation) Bill 2011* that proposes to make amendments to the *Telecommunications Act 1997* regarding the establishment of new mobile telecommunications infrastructure.

The Western Australian Government has identified the availability of mobile telecommunications coverage as a significant social and economic enabler, particularly in regional areas of the State. Industry and community consultation has indicated that there remain numerous mobile telephony blackspots located across the State.

The Western Australian Government has committed to address these blackspots through the implementation of the Regional Mobile Communications Project. This involves providing a Grant of \$39.2 million to fund new mobile base station sites along major transport corridors and in remote communities. This project represents a significant investment by the Government towards ensuring that everyone in Western Australia will benefit from improved mobile telecommunications.

Following a competitive selection process, negotiations are under way with a preferred provider, to deploy a number of new mobile base stations across the State in order to increase the overall coverage. Many of these new base stations will be located within or near regional centres that previously have had limited or no mobile telephony coverage.

The Western Australian Government is concerned that the proposed Bill may result in ongoing delays and even denial of the deployment of this vital infrastructure to these communities.

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Western Australia has a highly centralised planning approach to telecommunications infrastructure as set out in the *State Planning Policy 5.2 Telecommunications Infrastructure*. This Policy, in conjunction with the processes in the *Telecommunications Act 1997* and the *Telecommunications (Low-impact Facilities) Determination 1997*, has resulted in a well balanced approach to the deployment of new mobile phone sites with little or no significant issues to date. The Western Australian Government believes that the existing practices adopted in assessing and approving new mobile telecommunications infrastructure in this State, coupled with the national industry guidelines endorsed by the Australian Communications and Media Authority, provide adequate protection for the community at large.

Consequently, I wish to advise you that the Western Australian Government does not support the need for the *Telecommunications Amendment (Enhancing Community Consultation) Bill 2011*.

Yours sincerely

JOHN DAY
MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND INNOVATION

23 NOV 2011