
Regulatory issues

Public inquiry into intercarrier roaming

On 24 November 1997 the Commission announced a public inquiry into whether to 'declare' services facilitating intercarrier roaming between existing and new digital mobile networks, to be established in the 800 MHz and 1.8 GHz bands.

Services can be declared if the Commission is satisfied that doing so would be in the long term interests of end users.

Intercarrier roaming allows a customer from one mobile telephone network to access service from another network using the same terminal. For example, roaming can enable the customers of a new mobile carrier in the 1.8 GHz band in, say, a metropolitan area to use an existing GSM network where the new network has no presence, such as in regional or country areas.

The Commission's decision follows a request from the Minister for Communications, the Information Economy and the Arts in regard to the establishment of rights of intercarrier roaming:

- between the existing GSM digital mobile services and new services which may be offered in the 1.8 GHz band; and
- between digital mobile services which may be offered in the 800 MHz band.

The Commission was asked to work with interested parties and the Telecommunications Access Forum to establish what services needed to be declared to enable intercarrier roaming, with a view to determining whether a public

inquiry was appropriate and, if so, to undertake such an inquiry. The Commission also sought separate technical advice on the nature of roaming and related services.

The Commission has released a discussion paper which includes the legislative background to the inquiry and the specific issues which are considered relevant to the possible declaration. It plans to hold a public meeting in late January 1998 to provide an open forum on the matter.

Copies of the discussion paper are available from Commission offices and the Commission's Internet web site.

Further information on regulatory issues can be found in the Commission's newsletter *Public Utility Regulators Forum*. The newsletter covers the latest developments in Australia's regulatory environment, and includes contributions from various State/Territory and national regulators. It is available from the Commission's Melbourne office.



Photography by Arthur Mostead