



Gabrielle Williams MP

Minister for Government Services
Minister for Consumer Affairs
Minister for Public and Active Transport

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Hon Michelle Rowland MP
Minister for Communications
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BMIN-2-24-37636

Dear Minister,

I welcome the opportunity to respond to your draft Ministerial Policy Statement (MPS) that will provide guidance to the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) as it manages its expiring spectrum licence (ESL) process.

I reaffirm key policy positions set out in the enclosed Victorian Government's submission to ACMA's Stage 1 ESL consultation. Principally, that the Victorian Government relies on guaranteed and affordable access to radiofrequency spectrum to deliver services critical for Victorian citizens and businesses. This includes the State's transport, emergency management, justice, health, education and environmental management sectors' use of spectrum-dependent communications networks to function safely and effectively.

In relation to the draft MPS, Victoria supports the broad policy objectives the Commonwealth Government has set out for commercial use of spectrum, including providing for an appropriate balance between ensuring service continuity for consumers and also supporting new entrants and use cases. However, I seek clarification and provide feedback on matters outlined below.

I note in the draft MPS you have excluded rail safety communications services in the 1800 MHz band, as these services provide a distinctly different use case. VicTrack and other rail entities hold licences in the 1770-1775 / 1865-1870 MHz range currently used for metropolitan rail safety and communications services, but this is not specified in their existing licences. I seek your confirmation that these licences will be treated consistently with the other rail safety and communications service spectrum licences in the 1800 MHz band in the MPS, given their use in providing critical government services.

The Victorian Government has supported spectrum access for emergency management services, including public safety mobile broadband (PSMB), in its Stage 1 ESL submission. Noting the draft MPS supports facilitation of opportunities for new entrants and use cases, I ask that you consider including PSMB requirements in the MPS.

I acknowledge that you will be considering additional guidance to the ACMA through the expiring spectrum licence process. For future Ministerial guidance, the Victorian Government recommends that spectrum licence allocations which support state government service delivery be provided at an affordable discounted cost. As per Victoria's Stage 1 ESL submission, unreasonably priced spectrum will likely divert critical public funds away from

health, education, justice, and other important services, or alternatively, these significant costs may have to be passed onto rail users.

The *Radiocommunications Act 1992* provides for reductions and exemptions for specified public services and I request that you direct ACMA to apply this principle to ensure services critical to the safety and productivity of all Victorian citizens and businesses are not put at risk.

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

I look forward to working with you on these important matters as the ESL process continues.

Sincerely,



Gabrielle Williams MP
Minister for Government Services
Minister for Consumer Affairs
Minister for Public and Active Transport

15 / 04 / 2024

Enc. Victorian Government's submission to ACMA's Stage 1 ESL consultation

cc: Hon Catherine King MP, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government
cc: The Hon Danny Pearson MP, Minister for Transport Infrastructure