

To the Department of Communications and the Arts  
GPO Box 2154  
Canberra ACT 2601

## Submission response—Possible amendments to telecommunications powers and immunities

This submission can be published on the World Wide Web

Yes.

### Date of submission

17 July 2017

### Logo of organisation—if an organisation making this submission



### Name and contact details of person/organisation making submission

Darlene Irvine, Executive Officer, Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Council

Email: [d.irvine@fnqroc.qld.gov.au](mailto:d.irvine@fnqroc.qld.gov.au)

Phone: 07 4044 3038

Mobile: 0403 808 680

Postal: PO Box 359, Cairns Qld 4870

### General comments

As a result of the number of State and Commonwealth submissions we have had to undertake recently and the level of knowledge and expertise required to respond in a timely and informed manner the Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils and our thirteen council members are not in a position to provide a comprehensive response to the below questions the Federal Government is seeking. We would however like to provide some general comments to hopefully portray our position.

We support the submission made by the Local Government Association of Queensland on behalf of local government.

We would however like to provide some overview commentary regarding our concerns:

- a. The turnaround time for comments/approval from local government (a reduction from 9 to 5 days for those items not identified as low impact and in some instances 24 hours) is unfair and unrealistic. Surely these industries have spent considerable time planning such projects and due time and respect could be given to local governments to consider their requirements and the impact on their community.
- b. We object to telecommunication carriers having greater powers to install their infrastructure on existing public infrastructure such as bridges and water and sewerage infrastructure without consultation and permission from the asset owner.
- c. Each local government will have their own priorities; within our membership we have some councils with a proliferation of towers (many of which are not shared) while others would welcome a tower or two. This not only relates to the towers themselves but also the size of the towers. Industry should work with local governments on the placement of infrastructure to ensure local government strategic directions are not compromised by private industry wants. Councils in this region are more than willing to work with telecommunication carriers to obtain a mutually beneficial result.
- d. We object to bridges being identified as low impact. The local governments in this region have 963 bridges and major culverts and 17,830 minor culverts. The placement of cables etc. on these assets without consent from the asset owner is not acceptable. As we understand it, if a structure is replaced or works undertaken, it will be at our cost to replace the cables etc. This is an effective cost shift from private industry to local governments and subsequently the ratepayer.

Given the time telecommunication carriers should take to plan their expansion or renewal of assets surely it is not unreasonable that due consultation with the local government is undertaken and the decisions of that council (on behalf of their community) is respected; just like any other private business in a local government area.