

LABOR SENATORS' DISSENTING REPORT

Telecommunications Legislation Amendment (Deregulation) Bill 2014 and the Telecommunications (Industry Levy) Amendment Bill 2014

The Telecommunications Legislation Amendment (Deregulation) Bill 2014 and the Telecommunications (Industry Levy) Amendment Bill 2014 were referred to the Senate Environment and Communications Legislation Committee for inquiry and report on 30 October 2014. Submissions closed on 10 December 2014.

Among other things, these bills deal with the abolition of the Telecommunications Universal Service Management Agency (TUSMA) and the transfer of its functions to the Department of Communications.

On 14 December 2014, the Government announced that it had reached agreement with Telstra on the revised Definitive Agreements. These agreements included revisions to the Commonwealth Agreements, including revisions to the TUSMA Agreement.

This committee undertook the majority of its deliberations and accepted submissions on these Bills prior to Telstra's announcement that it had varied the TUSMA Agreement with the Commonwealth. It is Labor's view that the new arrangements for TUSMA set out in these bills should be reconsidered in light of these amendments to the TUSMA Agreement with Telstra.

Labor considers that the Senate Environment and Communications Legislation Committee should re-examine the Telecommunications (Industry Levy) Amendment Bill 2014 and the Telecommunications Legislation Amendment (Deregulation) Bill 2014 to give the appropriate scrutiny to these new arrangements, ensure that the bill, as drafted, is still appropriate in light of the variations to the TUSMA Agreement, and to ensure that affected stakeholders have adequate opportunity to comment in light of these developments.

Recommendation 1:

Labor Senators recommend that the Telecommunications (Industry Levy) Amendment Bill 2014 and the Telecommunications Legislation Amendment (Deregulation) Bill 2014 be referred back to the Senate Environment and Communications Legislation Committee for consideration in light of new developments.

**Senator Anne Urquhart
Deputy Chair
Senator for Tasmania**

**Senator the Hon Lisa Singh
Senator for Tasmania**