



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STANDING COMMITTEE
ON INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNICATIONS**

Inquiry into the Telecommunications Amendment
(Enhancing Community Consultation) Bill 2011

MEDIA RELEASE

Issued: 21 March 2012

*Chair: Nick Champion MP
Deputy Chair: Paul Neville MP*

Telecommunications Amendment (Enhancing Community Consultation) Bill – report released

The House Infrastructure and Communications Committee reported today on the **Telecommunications Amendment (Enhancing Community Consultation) Bill 2011**.

The bill aims to enhance the level of community consultation when installing mobile phone towers. The Committee clearly heard people's frustration at the lack of consultation during the proposal to install mobile phone towers, but has concluded that the bill, as it stands, will not address most of these issues.

The Committee is aware that a balance is needed between the need for decent mobile communications services and the need for people to be consulted about towers which are often regarded as unsightly and intrusive. The Committee noted however that there is confusion about how these installations are regulated. Free-standing towers are often of great concern to people, but are regulated by state and territory law and **not** by the Act that the bill seeks to amend.

It is clear from the Committee's investigations that the increased notification requirements specified in the bill won't apply to free-standing towers, but will apply to many thousands of routine upgrading and maintenance activities conducted by carriers each year. The Committee heard that this will potentially severely delay these ongoing, largely routine, activities, and cause significant increases in industry costs.

The Committee was told that the current industry code is binding under current legislation, and when revised, will enhance the existing consultation requirements for facilities regulated by the Act. Feedback to date, including from the Australian Local Government Association, has been positive.

Committee Chair, Nick Champion MP, said that 'The Committee can see what the bill is trying to do. It can also understand why so many in the community have concerns about the roll-out of mobile phone towers and extensions. Unfortunately though, the bill, as it stands, will not do what it promises. It is also likely to have serious unintended consequences. The Committee recommends that the bill not be passed.'

The report can be accessed at the following link:

http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House_of_Representatives_Committees?url=ic/telecommunications/report.htm

For further details about the inquiry: contact the secretariat on phone (02) 6277 2352; email ic.reps@aph.gov.au; or website <http://www.aph.gov.au/ic>

For media comment only: please contact the Committee Chair, Mr Nick Champion MP, on (02) 6277 4451 (Parliament House) or (08) 8284 2422 (electorate office)