

CHAPTER 9

OTHER ISSUES CONSIDERED BY THE COMMITTEE AND CONCLUSIONS

Other issues considered by the Committee

9.1 In the course of its deliberations, the Committee identified a number of further issues which did not directly relate to specific provisions in the package of legislation. Nevertheless, the Committee is of the view that the following matters will be of importance in ensuring that the new telecommunications regulatory regime operates in the best interests of all Australian consumers.

Price discrimination on local call charges

9.2 The *Telecommunications Act 1991* provides that, albeit with some exceptions, a carrier who is dominant in a telecommunications market, must not discriminate between persons who acquire services in that market.¹ The legislative package before the Committee would not prohibit price discrimination.

9.3 During its deliberations, the Committee was presented with a number of views regarding price discrimination in the telecommunications industry.

9.4 The joint submission from Optus Communications/Optus Vision (Optus) argued that the ACCC should have the power, among other things, to prohibit a person who is subject to a tariff filing obligation from discriminating between purchasers of goods or services, except where it is solely a reasonable allowance for differences in costs.²

9.5 Optus noted that, without a power to prohibit price discrimination, under the legislation as drafted:

The range of discriminatory prices would only be restricted at the top end through operation of the price ceiling applying to local calls... The ACCC might decide to issue a competition notice restraining Telstra or another carrier or service provider from price discrimination if that discrimination had the effect of substantially lessening competition. However, this power is significantly more confined than AUSTEL's current power to disallow tariffs... Price

1 Section 183 - 186, *Telecommunications Act 1991*.

2 Optus Communications/Optus Vision, Submission 40, Vol 3, p 366.

discrimination on a regional basis may create strategic barriers to entry in other geographical regions or more generally, with the effect many customers do not get the benefits of competition... [T]he legislation does not provide any basis for the ACA or ACCC to intervene having regard to consumer policy concerns.³

9.6 The Consumers Telecommunications Network expressed their view that they:

view [price discrimination] with a great deal of concern. It is strongly our feeling that the benefits of the competitive market and the move towards deregulation of this industry should be provided in such a way that all Australians achieve that benefit. There are many Australians who will never have the choice of the Optus local call because the cable will not come to them and there is no reason, in our view, that those people should be left behind.⁴

9.7 Telstra, in a supplementary submission to the Committee, noted that:

flexible pricing is at the heart of competitive behaviour, and is a theoretically recognised means of optimising consumer welfare...

A firm which is subject to a non-discrimination requirement has reduced ability, relative to its competitors, to meet competition, offer specials and to innovate. In essence, its ability to compete fairly and vigorously is compromised. There are costs to efficiency and consumer benefits flowing from this type of constraint.⁵

9.8 Telstra referred to a number of analyses which suggested that excessive restrictions on price discrimination have the effect of impeding effective price competition and thus slowing the price reductions which come from that competition.⁶ In particular, Telstra noted that the 1993 Hilmer Committee of Inquiry into National Competition Policy concluded that:

price discrimination generally enhances economic efficiency, except in cases which may be dealt with by s. 45 (anti-competitive agreements) and s. 46 (misuse of market power) [of the *Trade Practices Act 1974*]...

3 Optus Communications/Optus Vision, Submission 40b(S), Vol 5, p 1003.

4 Ms Helen Campbell, Co-ordinator, Consumers Telecommunications Network, *Committee Hansard*, p 114.

5 Telstra Corporation Ltd, Submission 43c(S), Vol 5, p 1089-1090.

6 Telstra Corporation Ltd, Submission 43c(S), Vol 5, p 1090.

[Prohibitions on price discrimination] should form no part of a national competition policy.⁷

9.9 The Committee considers that enabling all market participants to engage in fair competition, including flexible pricing, is essential to ensuring that the full benefits of an open market are realised. While it notes that broad restrictions on Telstra's competitive conduct played a useful role in encouraging the early development of infrastructure and service competition under the existing regulatory regime, the Committee is conscious that maintaining these restrictions creates a real possibility that competition, and with it the associated benefits to consumers, will be excessively restricted.

9.10 The Committee is satisfied that general trade practices law, supplemented by the competition rule provisions of this legislation, provides an appropriate regulatory framework for addressing anti-competitive conduct. It does not believe a power to impose positive pricing restrictions in the terms proposed by the Optus submission is consistent with the transition to a fully competitive telecommunications industry.

9.11 The Committee would be concerned, however, if the more competitive environment introduced by this legislative package did not result in benefits, in particular price reductions, to all Australians. In the past five years, competition in domestic long distance and international services has extended across Australia. In addition, strong competition exists in mobile services. Local call services, however, remain largely uncontested by alternative providers across much of Australia.

9.12 The Committee notes that the price control provisions contained in Part 6 of the *Telstra Corporation Act 1991* are, in part, intended to ensure that the benefits of competition flow to all Australian consumers.⁸ The Committee believes that this mechanism could appropriately be used to place ongoing pressure on Telstra to reduce its untimed local call charges throughout Australia in a manner which reflects the average price reductions in areas where it faces competition. As a market leader, the downward pressure on Telstra's local call charges throughout Australia will flow through to other market participants.

7 Telstra Corporation Ltd, Submission 43c(S), Vol 5, p 1092.

8 AUSTEL, *Price Control Arrangements for the Australian Telecommunications Industry*, Occasional Paper Economics 3, 1994, p 5; AUSTEL, *Annual Report, 1992-93*, p 55.

RECOMMENDATION 9.1

The Committee recommends that the Minister for Communications and the Arts amend existing price control arrangements for the Telstra Corporation Limited, made under the *Telstra Corporation Act 1991*, to ensure that the price ceiling across Australia for untimed local calls is revised on an annual basis to reflect average price reductions made by Telstra Corporation Limited in areas where local call competition exists.

Report of the Standard Telephone Service Review Group

9.13 The Minister for Communications and the Arts, Senator the Hon Richard Alston, released the report of the Standard Telephone Service Review Group (STS Review Group) on 6 February 1997. The majority report of the Group addressed a range of issues which were the subject of submissions or evidence presented before the Committee during its deliberations.

9.14 The Committee notes the Minister's indication that the Group's reports will be carefully considered in the context of the new telecommunications regulatory arrangements to be established by the package of Bills being considered by this Committee⁹. The Committee is of the view that the STS Review Group majority report contains a useful basis for addressing the fundamental telecommunications needs of Australians over the medium term.

9.15 The Group's report noted that Telstra's current Integrated Systems Digital Network (ISDN) commitments would ensure that at least 93.4 per cent of customers in Australia will be able to get access to a digital data capability of a level contemplated by the Group's Recommendation 13¹⁰ by mid 1997.¹¹

9.16 The Committee believes that this level of rollout is a minimum level which must be achieved to ensure that the Group's recommendation that such a service level be reasonably available to all Australians by 1 January 2000 can

9 Minister for Communications and the Arts, Senator the Hon Richard Alston, 'Report on Standard Telephone Service Released', *Media Release*, 6 February 1997, p 1.

10 The Standard Telephone Service Review Group recommended a digital data capability comparable to that currently offered by the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI) ISDN services (*Review of the Standard Telephone Service*, 1996, p 166). This would support services such as fax, email, access to the Internet, electronic commerce and educational applications (*Review of the Standard Telephone Service*, 1996, p 165).

11 Standard Telephone Service Review Group, *Review of the Standard Telephone Service*, 1996, p 162.

be implemented. It considers that the legislative package before it should bind Telstra to further commitments for the period until the year 2000.

9.17 The Committee is conscious, however, that the STS Review Group was unable to undertake a quantitative assessment of the costs of particular universal service obligation (USO) options.¹² It concludes that further consideration of the costs and benefits of incorporating a digital data capability as a prescribed service under the USO is necessary before a decision to prescribe such a service is taken.

RECOMMENDATION 9.2

The Committee recommends that the Minister accept the general thrust of the Standard Telephone Service Review Group's Recommendations 1 to 16.

RECOMMENDATION 9.3

The Committee recommends that:

- a) the Telecommunications Bill 1996 be amended to bind the Telstra Corporation Limited to its existing commitment to provide 93.4 per cent of customers in Australia with access to a digital data capability by 1 July 1997 and establish further targets for extension of the availability of these services over the period to 1 January 2000;
- b) the Minister investigate the costs and benefits associated with prescribing reasonable access to digital data capability for all Australians by the year 2000 (pursuant to the Group's Recommendation 13), including a review of the appropriateness of making a carriage service providing a digital data capability a prescribed carriage service from 1 July 1998;
- c) the Minister, in consultation with industry, pursue self-regulatory or legislative measures to give effect to the Standard Telephone Service Review Group's recommendations in relation to quality of service and the funding of special telecommunications services and equipment for people with disabilities; and
- d) a broader review be undertaken in 2001 of the universal service arrangements (pursuant to the Group's Recommendation 15).

12 Standard Telephone Service Review Group, *Review of the Standard Telephone Service*, 1996, p 163.

Public health and electromagnetic energy concerns

9.18 During the course of the inquiry's proceedings a number of issues were raised concerning the manner in which the legislation currently addresses telecommunications towers and associated public health and radiofrequency (RF) electromagnetic energy (EME) concerns.

9.19 The Committee notes that the Telecommunications National Code 1996 (TNC) currently requires carriers to carry out prescribed activities, involving the installation and maintenance of facilities, in accordance with any standard that:

- relates to the prescribed activity;
- is recognised by the Australian telecommunications industry as a standard for use in the industry, including, for example, an Australian Standard (AS); and
- is likely to reduce a risk to the safety of members of the public, employees of the carrier and subcontractors engaged by the carrier if the carrier complies with the standard.¹³

9.20 The TNC also requires carriers to supply relevant State and Territory authorities, the Chairperson of the Australian Heritage Commission, the Director of National Parks and Wildlife and the Secretary of the Department of Environment, Sport and Territories with information on the estimated strength of the electromagnetic field that a proposed individual or co-located facility is expected to generate at a peak usage period during the operational life of the facility:

- as measured at a point 5 metres distant from the base of the structure supporting the source of generation of the field;
- at the nearest point to which the public has access abutting the site of the facility; and
- whether the strength is within the limits set by Australian Standard 2772.1 Radiofrequency Radiation Part 1: Maximum Exposure Levels - 100 kHz to 300 GHz (AS 2772).¹⁴

13 Telecommunications National Code 1996, p 33.

14 Telecommunications National Code 1996, pp 45-46 and 52.

9.21 The Committee further notes that the Government announced in October 1996 that it would provide \$4.5 million over five years for research and public information into health issues associated with mobile towers and other communications devices and equipment. In support of the RF EME program, the Minister for Health and Family Services, Dr Michael Wooldridge MP, stated that while:

there is not substantiated evidence available to date of adverse health effects associated with RF EME exposure - within the standards that apply in Australia and overseas - there is still a need for further research and to provide information to the public.¹⁵

9.22 The program will involve: the public dissemination of up-to-date information about RF EME public health issues; continuing Australian participation in the World Health Organisation's project to assess the health and environmental effects of EME exposure; and the establishment of an Australian research program to examine RF EME issues of particular relevance to the Australian environment, to complement overseas research activities. The research program will be managed by the National Health and Medical Research Council.¹⁶

9.23 Health and safety considerations are addressed in the legislation in three main areas:

- technical standards for customer equipment;
- requirements for carriers to comply with industry standards when carrying out authorised activities; and
- provisions to give the Australian Communications Authority (ACA) powers to make standards concerning the performance of, and maximum permitted level of, radio emissions from devices wider than the Spectrum Management Agency's (SMA) current powers.

9.24 Division 3 of Part 21 of the Telecommunications Bill 1996 (the Bill) provides that the ACA may make technical standards relating to customer equipment relating, inter alia, to protecting the health and safety of persons

15 Minister for Communications and the Arts, Senator the Hon Richard Alston and the Minister for Health and Family Services, Dr Michael Wooldridge MP, *Government to Study the Health Effects of Mobile Phones and Other Radiocommunications Equipment*, Media Release, 15 October 1996.

16 Minister for the Communications and the Arts, Senator the Hon Richard Alston and the Minister for Health and Family Services, Dr Michael Wooldridge MP, *Government to Study the Health Effects of Mobile Phones and Other Radiocommunications Equipment*, Media Release, 15 October 1996.

operating, working on, using services supplied by, or otherwise likely to be affected by telecommunications networks or facilities.

9.25 Clause 10 of Schedule 3 to the Bill provides that if a carrier engages in an activity authorised under Divisions 2, 3, or 4, which relates to the inspection of land and the installation or maintenance of facilities, it must do so in accordance with any relevant standard recognised by the ACA (such as AS 2772) which is likely to reduce any risk to the safety of the public.

9.26 Items 47, 63-65 and 83 of the Radiocommunications Amendment Bill 1996 will extend the power of the ACA to make standards to protect the health and safety of persons in relation to the operation of radiocommunications devices (that is, transmitters and receivers).

9.27 Submissions and evidence before the Committee raised concerns that the legislation failed to adequately address RF EME and public health considerations. Specifically, concerns were raised in connection with the need for the legislation to recognise the importance of public health and the preparation and adequacy of the Australian Standard.

9.28 The Electromagnetic Radiation Alliance of Australia (EMRAA) suggested that the legislation needed to encompass a philosophical point of view that public health is important:

We believe that it is incredibly important that the Government does in its legislation address the question of public health. We are very concerned that the proposed Bills do not address that question at all. In fact at some point... it refers to endangered species of plants and animals, but there is no reference to human health.¹⁷

9.29 The EMRAA claimed that the Bill (in particular, Schedule 3) was giving priority to the telecommunications network over public health by not requiring the ACA to give regard to the public health implications posed by a proposed facility when considering whether to issue a facility installation permit.¹⁸

17 Mrs Lynette Ward, Secretary, Electromagnetic Radiation Alliance of Australia, *Committee Hansard*, p 188.

18 A facility installation permit authorises a carrier to install specified telecommunications facilities (ie. individual facilities, groups or facilities or whole networks). The permit grants the carrier a limited exemption from State/Territory environment and planning laws for the purposes of the installation. The ACA must consider a number of criteria (specified in clause 25 of the Schedule) and consult with the ACCC and relevant environment and heritage authorities before issuing a permit. In addition, the ACA must not issue a permit unless it has held a public inquiry in relation to the permit. A permit is subject to such conditions as are specified by the ACA in the permit.

9.30 The Committee notes that clause 25(1)(g) of the Schedule stipulates that the ACA must not issue a facility installation permit unless the relevant carrier has satisfied the ACA that:

the advantages that are likely to be derived from the operation of the facilities in the context of the telecommunications network to which the [facility or] facilities relate outweigh any form of degradation of environmental amenity that is likely to result from the installation of the facilities.¹⁹

It further notes that clause 2 of the Schedule clarifies that the term 'environment' includes all aspects of the surroundings of human beings, whether affecting human beings as individuals or in social groupings.²⁰

9.31 Given this broad definition of 'environment', which the Committee believes would require the ACA to give regard to a proposed facility's potential impact on the public health (involving RF EME considerations) in determining whether a facility installation permit should be issued, the Committee was of the view that clause 25(1)(g) of Schedule 3 to the Bill did not require amendment.

9.32 With regard to the suggestion that the Bill should provide for the pre-eminence of public health considerations over those related to the delivery of telecommunications services, the Committee notes that the legislation already requires mandatory compliance with industry standards likely to reduce any risk to the safety of the public. The Committee was not convinced, on the evidence before it, that the legislation required further amendment.

9.33 As discussed, a number of submitters raised concerns with the process of preparing Australian standards generally and in particular AS 2772. For example, Ms Hart complained that:

The standards committee [who formulate AS 2772] is dominated by the telecommunications industry. Despite claims by [the Department of Communications and the Arts] that the community's views are fairly represented this is unfounded. It behoves legislators to examine the standard, its method of revision and the composition of the committee.²¹

In addition, the Association of Citizens Against Telecommunications Towers (ACATT) claimed that it had

19 Clause 25(1)(g), Telecommunications Bill 1996.

20 Clause 2, Telecommunications Bill 1996.

21 Ms Hart, Submission 11, Vol 1, p 68.

spent many hours... attempting to plumb through the depths and cobwebs surrounding Standards Australia without an enormous degree of... 'success'.

... There is absolutely nobody on the committee representing 'the public' of Australia.²²

9.34 In response to these claims, the Standards Association countered that:

The process used in preparing Australian standards is completely open in that proposed projects are advertised at the commencement stage and again at the draft stage in the national press and in our journal, *The Australian Standard*, which has a circulation of 25,000. Membership of the committees preparing Australian standards is open to all stakeholders via national organisations, government departments and the like. Committee membership is not limited to subscribing members of Standards Australia...

Before publishing a new or revised Australian standard, consensus of the representative stakeholder committee is necessary. This requires, amongst other criteria, agreement by significant stakeholders... In all cases where it is known that Australian standards are likely to be referenced in legislation or regulations, the relevant regulatory authority is represented on the applicable committee and the principles of the COAG guidelines on referencing of standards in legislation, are taken into account in the drafting procedures. Likewise, Standards Australia's policy is to align with international standards and has voluntarily declared compliance with the WTO Technical Barriers to Trade Code...

Standards Australia provide travel and accommodation expenses for representatives of the Consumer Federation of Australia to [attend] committee meetings as a means of broadening the representation on our committees.²³

9.35 Standards Australia submitted the following information and comments in relation to the composition of Standards Committee TE/7 - Human Exposure to Electromagnetic Fields, which is responsible for preparing the joint Australian/New Zealand standard AS 2772.1, and the preparation of the standard itself:

- eighteen Australian organisations have a representative on the Committee: AUSTEL; Air Services Australia; Australasian Faculty of Occupational Medicine; Australian Council of Trade Unions;

22 Ms Kate Barrett, Coordinator, Association of Citizens Against Telecommunications Towers, *Committee Hansard*, p 188.

23 Standards Association of Australia, Submission 80, Vol 5, pp 900-902.

Australian Electrical and Electronic Manufacturers Association, Australian Radiation Laboratory; Australian Radiation Protection Society; Australian Telecommunications Users Group; CSIRO Division of Telecommunications and Industrial Phasers; Communications, Electrical and Plumbing Union; Department of Communications and the Arts; Department of Defence; Electricity Supply Association of Australia; National Occupational Health and Safety Commission; Spectrum Management Agency; Standards Australia; and Telstra. Another eight New Zealand organisations are represented on the Committee;

- there is substantial community and worker involvement with the Committee via the various government agencies and unions. While there is no direct consumer representation, Standards Australia claims that this is a matter of choice by the various consumer bodies. It claims to have encouraged the appointment of a consumer representative on the Committee without any success to date; and
- before publishing a new or revised standard, the agreement of all significant stakeholders, including the applicable regulator (that is, the ACA from 1 July 1997), would be necessary.²⁴

9.36 While the Committee accepts Standards Australia's claim that it had encouraged the appointment of a consumer representative on Standards Committee TE/7, it is of the view that consumer representation is essential for contributing to transparency and therefore public confidence in AS 2772.1. Accordingly, the Committee urges Standards Australia and consumer organisations to work together to ensure that there is appropriate consumer representation on the Committee.

24 Standards Association of Australia, Submission 80, Vol 5, pp 900-902.

RECOMMENDATION 9.4

The Committee recommends that Standards Australia and consumer organisations work together to ensure that there is appropriate consumer representation on the Committee Standards Committee TE/7 - Human Exposure to Electromagnetic Fields, which is responsible for preparing AS 2772.1 - Radiofrequency Radiation Part 1: Maximum Exposure Levels - 100 kHz to 300 GHz.

9.37 A number of submissions to the Committee expressed concern that the AS 2772.1, which is based on thermal (or, heating) levels of radiation, is inadequate to ensure the safety of public health from emissions from telecommunications towers. In particular, submissions noted evidence which suggests that biological effects occur at athermal (or, very low, non-heating) levels of radiation.²⁵

9.38 DOCA advised the Committee that under:

the new legislation... the Spectrum Management Agency [to become the Australian Communications Authority on 1 July 1997] is being given a health and safety function, which enables it to determine particular standards. Currently, under the code, there is a requirement for carriers to comply with AS 2772, which sets the health standard...

So there is a mechanism within the Act already - in the new law - to enable stricter, stronger standards to be made if there is a case to be made in relation to health and safety matters.²⁶

9.39 The Committee is conscious of the level of community concern regarding the emission levels of telecommunications towers and RF EME in general. While little scientific evidence was put before it, it is of the view that the possible effects of athermal emissions should be investigated.

25 Electromagnetic Radiation Alliance of Australia, Submission 9, Vol 1, p 51; Dapto Residents Against Tower Health Risks, Submission 69, Vol 4, p 726.

26 Ms Fay Holthuyzen, First Assistant Secretary, Telecommunications Industry Division, Department of Communications and the Arts, *Committee Hansard*, p 184-185.

RECOMMENDATION 9.5

The Committee recommends that a significant proportion of the \$4.5 million the Government has allocated to research into health issues associated with mobile towers and other communications devices and equipment be targeted to determining the necessity for a mandatory Australian Communications Authority standard on electromagnetic energy emissions to ensure safe levels of athermal radiation are not exceeded.

Impact of new technology on people with disabilities

9.40 In its submission to the Committee, the Deafness Forum of Australia noted the electromagnetic interference experienced by many hearing aid users and most cochlear implantees when using digital mobile phones. The Forum recommended that greater consideration be given to the impact of new digital technologies on the Deaf or hearing impaired before that technology is introduced.²⁷

9.41 In its deliberations, the Committee concluded that the impact of new technology on equipment used by the Deaf and hearing impaired warrants further exploration. More generally, mechanisms should be established to ensure the impact of new technologies on people with disabilities is addressed during the process of introducing those technologies.

RECOMMENDATION 9.6

The Committee recommends that the Minister establish appropriate arrangements to ensure due regard is given to the impact of the introduction of new technologies on people with disabilities. In particular, these arrangements should include appropriate direction to the Committee on EME Public Health Issues (which administers the \$4.5 million radiofrequency electromagnetic energy program) to ensure adequate resources are directed towards research into digital interference with equipment used by the Deaf and hearing impaired.

Penalty provisions

27 Deafness Forum of Australia, Submission 10, Vol 1, p 60-61.

9.42 Telstra expressed concerns that penalty provisions in the legislative package are excessive. Telstra observed that the Trade Practices Amendment (Telecommunications) Bill 1996, and the Telecommunications Bill 1996, incorporate penalty provisions relating to a failure to comply with information gathering obligations, the competition rule, tariff filing directions and record keeping rules.

Failure to comply with these provisions is likely to result in substantial fines to the corporation and its employees as well as the real possibility of imprisonment.²⁸

9.43 In particular, Telstra recommended that there be a removal of gaol sentences altogether for proposed sections 152DE, 151DF, 152DG, 152DH, 152DI, 152DJ, 151BI, 151BS, 151BV of the Trade Practices Amendment (Telecommunications) Bill 1996 and clauses 262(3), 288, 292(2), 478(4), 509, and 510 of the Telecommunications Bill 1996.

9.44 In evidence before the Committee, DOCA said that:

...all the offences that we have in these provisions are equivalent to many other offences in Commonwealth legislation. The penalties are roughly equivalent to those other penalties. We ran the legislation past the criminal law policy area in the Attorney-General's Department to check that very point and they were quite comfortable with the particular penalties concerned... by virtue of subsection 4B(2) of the Crimes Act 1914 a court will have a discretion if it thinks it is appropriate in all the circumstances of the case to impose a pecuniary penalty instead of or in addition to a penalty of imprisonment.²⁹

9.45 The Committee is satisfied that, in general, the penalties as established under these provisions are appropriate and consistent with equivalent arrangements elsewhere in Commonwealth law. The Committee is of the view, however, that to assist readers, an appropriate note should be included wherever a penalty of imprisonment may be imposed making reference to the discretion available to a court under subsection 4B(2) of the Crimes Act to impose a pecuniary penalty instead of, or in addition to, a penalty of imprisonment.

RECOMMENDATION 9.7

28 Telstra Corporation Ltd, Submission 43, Vol 3, p 458.

29 Mr Rohan Buettel, Assistant Secretary, Planning and Review Division, Department of Communications and the Arts, *Committee Hansard*, p 76.

The Committee recommends that where penalties of imprisonment are imposed by provisions in the package of legislation, a note should be included to advise readers of the effect of subsection 4B(2) of the *Crimes Act 1914*.

Conclusions

9.46 An efficient and responsive telecommunications industry is of fundamental importance to Australia economically and socially. The regulatory environment within which this industry operates will be central in shaping the industry's future. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that this inquiry prompted significant interest from a wide variety of industry and community groups.

9.47 The Committee believes that the submissions received by it and evidence presented during public hearings have provided a sound base from which to consider the legislative package. Having reviewed and considered the issues raised during the inquiry, the Committee concludes that in the broad the legislative package is likely to provide for a more competitive, efficient and responsive telecommunications industry capable of delivering benefits to all Australians. It concludes that, apart from the recommendations made in earlier chapters to this Report, the telecommunications legislative package should be passed in its current form.

RECOMMENDATION 9.8

The majority of the Committee recommends that the 11 Bills in the telecommunications package be passed, subject to the amendments recommended by this Report and to the correction of any drafting errors which may be revealed during debate on the Bills.

KAY PATTERSON
CHAIRMAN