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## Telecommunications Regulatory Update

### Government releases reviews on Commonwealth-held spectrum and spectrum pricing

The Australian Government has announced the outcomes of its reviews into both the pricing framework and Commonwealth-held spectrum assets, following industry consultation last year. The recommendations put forth in the reviews will be implemented by the Department of Communications and the Arts (DCA) and the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) as the independent regulator.

Key recommendations of the reviews include:

- developing principles on the efficiency of spectrum markets, and establishing spectrum pricing frameworks;
- consolidating taxation legislation to support the Government's objective to move to a single spectrum licencing framework; and
- creating a whole-of-government approach to managing Commonwealth spectrum holdings, supported by the establishment of an advisory committee comprised of relevant government agencies.

More information on the reviews is available [here](#).

### Government introduces instrument to define the meaning of 'local' in 'local content rules'

The ACMA has made the *Broadcasting Services (Meaning of Local) Instrument 2018* (Instrument). Under the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* (Act), the ACMA may define what is meant by the expression 'local' for the purposes of the application of a specified provision of the Act to a specified licence area. The Instrument will replace the earlier *Broadcasting Services (Meaning of Local) Instrument 2007*, which is due to sunset on 1 April 2018

The Act sets out the minimum service standards for local news and information (i.e., the 'local content rules') for relevant regional commercial radio broadcasting licensees, and imposes obligations on licensees to submit local content plans to the ACMA for approval. The instrument defines the meaning of 'local' for the purpose of the local content rules.

The instrument is designed to provide guidance to relevant licensees in the licence areas specified in the instrument about what is meant by the expression 'local'. The definition is relevant for licensees who may be affected by a trigger event, and who are consequently required to meet local content rules, and to submit draft local content plans to the ACMA.

A copy of the Instrument is available [here](#).

### Government releases working paper into fixed-line broadband

The Bureau of Communications and Arts Research (BCAR) has released the 'Demand for fixed-line broadband in Australia' (Working Paper). BCAR has stated that the research supporting the Working Paper took into account rising data demand due to an increasing number of households nationally, and likely trends in online video consumption, virtual reality and the Internet of Things.

The Working Paper has estimated that 98% of Australian households will have a peak bandwidth demand of 49Mbps or less by 2026. It forecasts that the rollout of the NBN should provide sufficient bandwidth capacity for Australians, even though the average 2026 household will be demanding 420GB of data each month (more than four times as much as demand in 2016).

BCAR has received some criticism over its findings on the basis that the speeds forecast in the Working Paper are already below international standards.

A copy of the Working Paper is available [here](#).

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## Contact us

**Patrick Fair**

Partner

+61 2 8922 5534

[patrick.fair@bakermckenzie.com](mailto:patrick.fair@bakermckenzie.com)**Anne Petterd**

Associate Principal

+65 6434 2573

[anne.petterd@bakermckenzie.com](mailto:anne.petterd@bakermckenzie.com)**James Halliday**

Partner

+61 2 8922 5187

[james.halliday@bakermckenzie.com](mailto:james.halliday@bakermckenzie.com)**Andrea Kennedy**

Partner

+61 3 9617 4423

[andrea.kennedy@bakermckenzie.com](mailto:andrea.kennedy@bakermckenzie.com)**Penny Ward**

of Counsel

+61 3 9617 4542

[penny.ward@bakermckenzie.com](mailto:penny.ward@bakermckenzie.com)

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