

Sims outlines telecommunications sector priorities in Covid-19 crisis

Source: [Australian Competition and Consumer Commission](#)

Date: 14 April 2020

Abstract:

On 6 April 2020, the Chairman of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), Rod Sims, addressed the CommsDay Summit 2020: 'Redefining Tomorrow. Together'. The **speech** outlined the critical role the communications sector needs to play in delivering better services during the Covid-19 pandemic, while maintaining longer term competition and efficiency in the market.

Mr Sims noted that during the current crisis, everyone is becoming acutely aware of the importance of broadband services and connections in staying productive and engaged at work and at home, and in keeping connected with others during social distancing.

He said there are encouraging signs the sector is responding well to the crisis, with NBN speeds and mobile networks holding up well, despite significantly increased traffic.

The ACCC is also playing its part by:

- establishing a Covid-19 Taskforce to monitor and gather daily intelligence about emerging issues, which is working to ensure consumers and businesses understand their rights and obligations when dealing with cancelled events, travel or services; and
- granting of authorisations to competitors in the industry to cooperate and share resources and information to better service the public during the pandemic. The ACCC may grant authorisation if it is satisfied that the public benefit from the proposed conduct outweighs any likely public detriment. Further information can be found in the Exemptions sub-topic on [Authorisation](#).

The ACCC's media release can be found [here](#) and transcript of speech can be found [here](#).

Relevant to competition in the sector, the ACCC will pause its regulatory inquiries related to NBN entry-level access pricing and wholesale service standards to allow the communication sector to focus its response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As an interim measure, the ACCC released position papers to provide guidance to NBN and access seekers with a view to continuing negotiations on new wholesale arrangements which are due to expire later this year, including [NBN Wholesale Service Standards Inquiry](#) and [NBN Access Pricing Inquiry](#).

The guidance provides the ACCC's current views on the nature and directions of any final access determination (FAD) it may make, once circumstances stabilise and inquiries resume. NBN Co has been consulting with access seekers over commercial access agreements since late 2019, including service standards, product and pricing offers. Further information on the inquiries and be found at: [NBN Wholesale Service Standards Inquiry](#) and [NBN Access Pricing](#).

The ACCC's media release can be found [here](#).

For more information about COVID-19, see the [LexisNexis Information Hub COVID-19](#)