

TELCO NEWS · AUGUST 2026

Four Documents That Changed Australian Telco

Between the end of July and the middle of August, four Australian bodies published material that makes telco claims independently checkable. An ombudsman report built on 28,000 complaints. A competition inquiry. A court filing.

Four things landed between 29 July and 13 August 2026. The Ombudsman published a systemic report on regional, rural and remote telecommunications drawing on **nearly 28,000 complaints**, and called for reform of the regulatory framework. The ACCC opened a twelve-month inquiry into whether wholesale mobile services, including **domestic roaming**, should be regulated. The ACMA commenced Federal Court proceedings against Optus Mobile over the September 2025 emergency call outage. And the ACMA published a report ranking **33 telcos** on complaint handling. **The common effect is that provider claims are now checkable.** Coverage categories are standardised, outages are published, complaint handling is ranked, sender IDs are registered or labelled, and the regional gap is quantified.

The short version

Date	Who	What	Why a business should care
13 Aug 2026	Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman	Systemic report on regional, rural and remote telecommunications, built from nearly 28,000 complaints, with a call for framework reform	The regional connectivity gap is now documented at national scale, from complaints rather than surveys
5 Aug 2026	ACCC	Mobile services inquiry launched under Part 25 of the Telecommunications Act 1997, running roughly twelve months	Whether you get a choice of mobile provider where you actually work is now a live regulatory question
30 Jul 2026	ACMA	Federal Court proceedings commenced against Optus Mobile over the 18 September 2025 emergency call outage	Tells you exactly how seriously the regulator now treats Triple Zero, and therefore how seriously you should
29 Jul 2026	ACMA	Telecommunications Consumer Complaints report for January to March 2026, ranking 33 telcos on complaint handling	A free, public, comparable assessment of how your provider behaves when something breaks

■ Also worth knowing

How to read it	What to take from it
Look up your current provider first	Before you renew. If they rank badly on handling, that is a forecast of your next bad day, not a statistic
Then anyone you are considering	Including us. A provider unwilling to discuss their position has answered a different and more revealing question
Read it with the Ombudsman's quarterly data	Around 14,000 complaints a quarter nationally, with small businesses making roughly one in ten. That is the population being ranked
Know its limits	It measures complaint <i>handling</i> , not service quality. Few complaints handled badly reads very differently from many handled well

Why this is different from every other paper on regional connectivity

Advocacy about regional telecommunications is not scarce. What is scarce is evidence collected for a purpose other than making the argument. **The Ombudsman's material is the complaints themselves**, real customers, real services, gathered as part of a statutory dispute resolution role. When the organisation whose job is resolving those disputes says the framework generating them needs reform, that carries a weight no submission from an interested party ever will.

■ Questions the full guide answers

- ☐ What did the TIO report on 13 August 2026 find about regional telecommunications?
- ☐ Is domestic mobile roaming going to become mandatory in Australia?
- ☐ How do I check how a telco handles complaints before I sign with them?
- ☐ What can I now verify about a phone provider that I could not before?
- ☐ If the rules have improved, why are complaints still high?
- ☐ Why does the ACMA taking Optus to court matter to my business?
- ☐ What should I actually do this week off the back of all this?

This is the summary. The guide has the detail.

Every point above is worked through in full on our site, with the Australian context, the numbers and the exceptions. If you would rather talk it through, call 1300 663 222 or visit vocphone.com/about/contact-us.