Internet Association of Australia Ltd
ACN 168 405 098
www.internet.asn.au

PO Box 8700
Perth Business Centre WA 6849

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

26 October 2026

Internet Association of Australia warns current approach to telco regulation will leave consumers worse off

The Internet Association of Australia Ltd (**IAA**) and its Members have written to the Minister for Communications and Sport, the Hon. Anika Wells, seeking a meeting to discuss how telecommunications regulation is designed and applied across the market, and its impact on competition in the sector.

The open letter, supported by 9 small and medium carriers and carriage service providers at the time of publication, argues that regulation prompted by the failures of a small number of large, tier-1 providers is being applied to the whole industry, imposing heavy compliance costs on hundreds of providers that have done nothing wrong.

“Our Members support strong, fit-for-purpose consumer protection, and want to be part of the solution” said Narelle Clark, CEO, "but regulation is restricting the entire industry with little to no regard as to whether the obligations actually make sense for the many small telco operators.”

IAA warns that if the current approach continues, the growing compliance burden, disproportionate obligations, and a lack of practical support from regulators and government will discourage new entrants and push existing providers to leave the market or merge, leaving consumers with less choice and higher prices. Small providers often serve regional and remote communities that are otherwise underserviced, where the loss of competition would be felt most acutely. “This is going to have a chilling effect on competition in the market as small operators are increasingly pushed out, which is not ultimately in the interest of consumers," said Clark.

IAA says consumers could be left with:

- Fewer choices, as new providers decide not to enter the market and existing ones leave or are absorbed by larger companies.
- Higher prices, as there is less competition to keep bills down.
- Poorer service, as big providers face less pressure to improve.
- Less access in regional and remote areas, where small providers often serve communities that larger companies have left underserviced.

“Challenger providers keep pressure on price, service quality and innovation," said Clark. "We are asking the Government to support practical, workable measures that keep protections strong and simultaneously the market competitive.”

Whilst the letter highlights the Telecommunications (Consumer Protections) Industry Standard 2026, currently the subject of ACMA consultation as a priority concern, it also broadly calls for:

- coordinated regulatory reform via a telecommunications regulatory initiatives grid
- genuine and meaningful consultation with the breadth of industry and not just the tier-1 telcos
- consolidation of the various consumer protections regulation under one regulatory instrument
- proportionate obligations and liability that reflect the appropriate type of telecommunications services and a provider’s size and role within the communications supply chain
- a review of the threshold used to define a ‘large provider’, and the introduction of corresponding thresholds for ‘medium’ and ‘small’ sized providers; and
- more practical support for small providers in the form of realistic templates that can be adopted by a telco to yield a safe-harbour for compliance.

The full letter and list of requests can be read on the IAA website. IAA invites other telecommunications providers who share these concerns to sign-on in support by emailing policy@internet.asn.au.

END

Media Contact:

Narelle Clark
CEO
Ph: +61 412 297 043
ceo@internet.asn.au
policy@internet.asn.au

ABOUT THE INTERNET ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

The Internet Association of Australia Ltd (**IAA**) is a not-for-profit member-based association representing the Internet community. Founded in 1995, as the Western Australian Internet Association (WAIA), the Association changed its name in early 2016 to better reflect our national membership and growth.

Our members comprise industry professionals, corporations, and affiliate organisations. IAA provides a range of services and resources for members and supports the development of the Internet industry both within Australia and internationally. Providing technical services as well as social and professional development events, IAA aims to provide services and resources that our members need.

IAA regularly engages with government and regulatory bodies on policy matters affecting the Internet industry. In particular, our advocacy efforts represent the small to medium sized internet service providers in Australia who are often disproportionately disadvantaged by law reform affecting the telecommunications sector. Our public policy work is guided by the following principles:

We stand for an internet for the common good

We stand for an open internet platform

We stand for measured, effective and practical regulation

IAA is also a licenced telecommunications carrier and provides the IX-Australia service to Corporate and Affiliate members on a not-for-profit basis. It is the longest running carrier neutral Internet Exchange in Australia. Spanning seven states and territories, IAA operates over 30 points of presence and operates the New Zealand Internet Exchange on behalf of NZIX Inc in New Zealand.

For more information about the Internet Association of Australia see www.internet.asn.au or the New Zealand Internet Exchange see www.ix.nz.