

Andrew Penn
Chief Executive Officer



25 November 2020

Hon David Littleproud MP
Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

By email: Minister.Littleproud@awe.gov.au

Dear Minister

Thank you for your correspondence in relation to the provision of information on Telstra's asset locations to Emergency Service Organisations (ESOs) for natural disaster purposes. We recognise the value in improved information sharing between governments and telecommunications providers. We are in active discussions with both the Federal and NSW government agencies in relation to this, and are committed to working collaboratively with them.

Since the 2019-20 bushfire season we have taken the opportunity to reflect on our response both internally and with other key stakeholders, including governments. We welcomed the opportunity to participate in the January roundtable convened by the Minister for Communications the Hon Paul Fletcher, and have worked with the Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association (AMTA) to make data on the location of Telstra's mobile and radio assets in the Radio Frequency National Site Archive (RFNSA) database more accessible to ESOs.

It is Telstra's view that a common industry approach is appropriate in relation to further information sharing with emergency services organisations. In response to your correspondence, Telstra along with other carriers has participated in meetings convened by the Communications Alliance and NSW Spatial Services, and we are currently assessing documentation provided last week by NSW Spatial Services via Communications Alliance. We are proposing to respond to those documents soon and will seek further discussions with NSW Spatial Services at that time. We are also attempting to understand what measures would be put in place to protect the requested information, given its national security, commercial and broader importance.

We believe it is important to work together with both the Australian and NSW governments to ensure that relevant considerations are addressed. It is our early assessment that the provision of information on telecommunication assets should be subject to conditions. Of particular concern is the risk of information about critical infrastructure and systems of national significance (CI-SoNS) being disclosed more broadly, and in undertaking this activity, we are mindful of our obligations under the Telecommunications Act to do our best to protect networks and facilities from unauthorised access and interference.

In addition, we are seeking a coordinated and consistent approach from all governments (Australian, state and territory) to avoid the need to provide data to multiple jurisdictions in different ways.

Finally, we believe it is important that there be continued engagement between emergency services organisations and telecommunications providers for operational decision-making in relation to telecommunications infrastructure during emergencies. We have reached out to the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications, the

s. 47F(1)

s. 47F(1)

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Department of Home Affairs (Critical Infrastructure Centre and Emergency Management Australia) as well as NSW Spatial Services in relation to some of these considerations.

We are committed to working collaboratively and constructively with governments on this topic. I will ensure your office is kept updated on Telstra's progress on this request.

Kind Regards

s. 47F(1)

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under the Freedom of Information Act 1982

s. 47F(1)

s. 47F(1)

Telstra Corporation Limited
ABN 33 051 775 556



The Hon. David Littleproud MP
Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management
Deputy Leader of the Nationals
Federal Member for Maranoa

Ref No: MC20-034722

Mr Andrew Penn
Chief Executive Officer
Telstra Corporation Ltd

s. 47F(1)

Dear Mr Penn

Thank you for the work that Telstra is continuing with regards to disaster preparedness and response. Both within the aftermath of the black summer bushfires, and in preparing for our current severe weather season.

I am writing to highlight findings from the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements, and implications for the telecommunications sector. I also wish to express my concern that previous requests to Telstra for crucial data have not been adequately responded to.

The final Recommendations of the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements were publicly released on Friday 30 October 2020. Broadly, the findings are aimed not only at Commonwealth, State, Territory and Local Governments, but also industry. With regard to essential services and their critical infrastructure, which includes telecommunications, I note Recommendations 9.4 and 9.5. These Recommendations outline specifically the need for an improvement in our national collective awareness of critical infrastructure, associated risks, and steps needed to mitigate such risks.

A key element of this involves Telstra and others in the telecommunications industry making data available with regard to the location of critical assets and any redundancies in place in order to assist emergency services responding to disasters.

I am also concerned that another key request made to Telstra which has not been actioned. During a tour of your Global Operations Centre in Melbourne on 30 October 2019, I was assured that the provision of telecommunications asset location data to emergency services was logical, and would not be an issue for your organisation. I have since received correspondence from you reaffirming this.

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under the Freedom of Information Act 1982

I am aware that the NSW Government has made representations to the Commonwealth which indicate that this information has still not been provided to frontline emergency service personnel. I am also aware that Telstra reached out to Emergency Management Australia (EMA) to discuss this in February 2020. I understand that this is the only time Telstra has reached out to EMA in response to my letter.

Given the findings of the Royal Commission, and my previous requests for the provision of this information, I urge you to provide this crucial data to emergency management agencies, first responders and officials from all States and Territories, and the Commonwealth as a priority.

I am aware of concerns that you and other members of the telecommunications industry have with regards to security and I am confident that proactively working with emergency management agencies across State and Commonwealth levels will mitigate this risk.

Australians will be watching all levels of Government and industry closely with regards to how we respond to these Recommendations. Our approach is to be open and transparent. I will be highlighting my expectations of Telstra, and others within the telecommunications industry, and will be reporting to the Australian people on the responses I receive.

I look forward to an update from you on how you are addressing these concerns.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'David Littleproud', written in a cursive style.

DAVID LITTLEPROUD MP



The Hon. David Littleproud MP
Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management
Deputy Leader of the Nationals
Federal Member for Maranoa

Ref No: MS20-002842

s. 47F(1)

TPG Telecom Australia
177 Pacific Highway
NORTH SYDNEY NSW 2060

13 NOV 2020

Dear s. 47F(1)

Thank you for the work that TPG Telecom continues to undertake with regards to disaster preparedness and responses. This was crucial during the Black Summer Bushfires, and will continue to be vital as we prepare for an approaching severe weather season.

I am writing to you to highlight findings from the *Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements*, and the implications these hold for the Telecommunications sector. I also wish to express my concern that previous requests to your organisation for crucial data have not been acted on.

The final recommendations of the Royal Commission were publicly released on 30 October 2020. Broadly, the findings are aimed not only at state, territory and local Governments, but also industry. With regards to essential services and their critical infrastructure, including telecommunications, I note recommendations 9.4 and 9.5. These recommendations specifically outline the need for greater national awareness of Australia's dependence on critical infrastructure. It further highlights the risks that threaten such infrastructure, and the steps necessary to ensure these risks can be mitigated.

A key element of this involves cooperation from your organisation and other members of the telecommunication industry in making data available to emergency service agencies (ESAs) to plan for, and respond to, natural hazards and related emergencies.

Subsequent to a meeting on 24 October 2019 with various telecommunication sector representatives including s. 47F(1) from TPG Telecom (previously, Vodafone Australia), I wrote to you on 23 December 2019 requesting that such data be shared to further support to Australia's crisis management efforts. In particular, we sought the provision of data pertaining to the location of critical assets and any redundancies in place to emergency services responding to disasters.

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I am aware that the NSW Government has made representations to the Commonwealth, which indicate that this information has still not been provided to frontline emergency service personnel. Further, officials from Emergency Management and Coordination have indicated that they have received no communication from TPG Telecom regarding this matter.

Given the findings of the Royal Commission, and my previous requests for this information, I urgently implore you to provide this crucial data to emergency service agencies and officials. While I am aware of concerns that you and other members of the telecommunications industry have with regards to security, I remain confident that proactively working with emergency management agencies across state and federal levels, that we will overcome this risk.

Australians will be closely watching all levels of government, as well as industry, in regard to how we respond to these recommendations. Our approach is to be open and transparent. I will be highlighting my expectations of your organisation, and others within the telecommunications industry, and will be reporting to the Australian people on the responses I receive.

I look forward to an update from you on how you are addressing these concerns.

Yours sincerely



DAVID LITTLEPROUD MP



The Hon. David Littleproud MP
Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management
Deputy Leader of the Nationals
Federal Member for Maranoa

Ref No: MS20-002842

s. 47F(1)

Optus
1 Lyonpark Road
MACQUARIE PARK NSW 2113

13 NOV 2020

Dear s. 47F(1)

Thank you for the work that Optus continues to undertake with regards to disaster preparedness and responses. This was crucial during the Black Summer Bushfires, and will continue to be vital as we prepare for an approaching severe weather season.

I am writing to you to highlight findings from the *Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements*, and the implications these hold for the Telecommunications sector. I also wish to express my concern that previous requests to your organisation for crucial data have not been acted on.

The final recommendations of the Royal Commission were publicly released on 30 October 2020. Broadly, the findings are aimed not only at state, territory and local Governments, but also industry. With regards to essential services and their critical infrastructure, including telecommunications, I note recommendations 9.4 and 9.5. These recommendations specifically outline the need for greater national awareness of Australia's dependence on critical infrastructure. It further highlights the risks that threaten such infrastructure, and the steps necessary to ensure these risks can be mitigated.

A key element of this involves cooperation from your organisation and other members of the telecommunication industry in making data available to emergency service agencies (ESAs) to plan for, and respond to, natural hazards and related emergencies.

Subsequent to a meeting on 24 October 2019 with various telecommunication sector representatives, including s. 47F(1) from Optus, I wrote to you on 23 December 2019 requesting that such data be shared to further support to Australia's crisis management efforts. In particular, we sought the provision of data pertaining to the location of critical assets and any redundancies in place to emergency services responding to disasters.

I am aware that the NSW Government has made representations to the Commonwealth, which indicate that this information has still not been provided to frontline emergency service personnel. Further, officials from Emergency Management and Coordination have indicated that they have received no communication from Optus regarding this matter.

Given the findings of the Royal Commission, and my previous requests for this information, I urgently implore you to provide this crucial data to emergency service agencies and officials. While I am aware of concerns that you and other members of the telecommunications industry have with regards to security, I remain confident that proactively working with emergency management agencies across state and federal levels, that we will overcome this risk.

Australians will be closely watching all levels of government, as well as industry, in regard to how we respond to these recommendations. Our approach is to be open and transparent. I will be highlighting my expectations of your organisation, and others within the telecommunications industry, and will be reporting to the Australian people on the responses I receive.

I look forward to an update from you on how you are addressing these concerns.

Yours sincerely



DAVID LITTLEPROUD MP



The Hon. David Littleproud MP
Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management
Deputy Leader of the Nationals
Federal Member for Maranoa

Ref No: MS20-002842

s. 47F(1)

13 NOV 2020

NBN Co Limited
100 Arthur Street
NORTH SYDNEY NSW 2060

Dear s. 47F(1)

As we look back on the detrimental effects of the Black Summer Bushfires and prepare for an impending severe weather season, it is absolutely critical that all aspects of Australia's society - all levels of government as well as industry (including the telecommunications sector) - work collaboratively to assure Australia is its most prepared to handle these crises.

I am writing to you to highlight findings from the *Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements*, and the implications these hold for the telecommunications sector. I also wish to express my concern that previous requests to your organisation for crucial data have not been acted on.

The final recommendations of the Royal Commission were publicly released on 30 October 2020. Broadly, the findings are aimed not only at State, Territory and Local Governments, but also industry. With regards to essential services and their critical infrastructure, including telecommunications, I note recommendations 9.4 and 9.5. These recommendations specifically outline the need for greater national awareness of Australia's dependence on critical infrastructure. It further highlights the risks that threaten such infrastructure, and the steps necessary to ensure these risks can be mitigated.

A key element of this involves cooperation from your organisation and other members of the telecommunication industry in making data available to emergency service agencies (ESAs) to plan for, and respond to, natural hazards and related emergencies.

Subsequent to a meeting on 24 October 2019 with various telecommunication sector representatives including s. 47F(1); and s. 47F(1) from NBN Co Limited, I wrote to you on 23 December 2019 requesting that such data be shared to further support to Australia's crisis management efforts. In particular, we sought the provision of data pertaining to the location of critical assets and any redundancies in place to emergency services responding to disasters.

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under the Freedom of Information Act 1982

I am aware that the NSW Government has made representations to the Commonwealth which indicate that this information has still not been provided to frontline emergency service personnel. Further, officials from Emergency Management and Coordination have indicated that they have received very little communication from NBN Co regarding this matter.

Given the findings of the Royal Commission, and my previous requests for this information, I urgently implore you to provide this crucial data to emergency service agencies and officials, from all States, Territories, and the Commonwealth. While I am aware of concerns that you and other members of the telecommunications industry have with regards to security, I remain confident that proactively working with emergency management agencies across state and federal levels, that we will overcome this risk.

Australians will be closely watching all levels of Government as well as industry with regards to how we respond to these recommendations. Our approach is to be open and transparent. I will be highlighting my expectations of your organisation, and others within the telecommunications industry, and will be reporting to the Australian people on the responses I receive.

I look forward to an update from you on how you are addressing these concerns.

Yours sincerely



DAVID LITTLEPROUD MP

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

UNOFFICIAL

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: s. 47F(1) <s. 47F(1)@optus.com.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 3 February 2021 2:20 PM
To: minister.littleproud@awe.gov.au
Cc: s. 47F(1) <s. 47F(1)@optus.com.au>; s. 47F(1)@awe.gov.au
Subject: FW: Request from Optus for retraction of public statements [SEC=UNOFFICIAL]

Dear Minister

I refer to the attached press release issued by your office this morning.

The suggestion that Optus would risk endangering lives in an emergency is wrong and disrespects the efforts we take to keep our communities safe and connected.

I respectfully ask that the you consider retracting the suggestion. It appears you may not been briefed on the current discussions between Optus and Government on this matter. In particular, at the suggestion of Minister Fletcher's office, Optus has been working closely with NSW Government to provide input into its "Digital Twin" initiative, a basis for identifying critical infrastructure for use during emergencies. Discussions with Minister Fletcher's office have indicated that the NSW initiative should provide a template for use across all Australian jurisdictions as emergencies don't know borders.

As a courtesy, please find below a press reactive we will use with media, which will be attributed to me:

- We strenuously refute any suggestion that Optus would risk lives in an emergency.
- Optus works closely with emergency services when there is a natural disaster or incident so that knowledge of where our critical communications infrastructure lies is embedded into

the decisions of those planning responses for bushfires, cyclones or floods. We have been doing this for many years to help safeguard our communities and protect lives.

- Optus has been working closely with NSW Government to provide input into its "Digital Twin" initiative, a basis for identifying critical infrastructure for use during emergencies.
- Optus have been advised by the Commonwealth that the NSW initiative should provide a template for use across all Australian jurisdictions as emergencies don't know borders, a fact well-evidenced by the disastrous 2019/2020 bushfire season.

Best regards

s. 47F(1)

s. 47F(1)

1 Lyonpark Road
Macquarie Park
NSW 2113 Australia

s. 47F(1) [@optus.com.au](mailto: @optus.com.au)

-----Original Message-----

From: CCH Parliament <politicalalert@cch.com.au>

Sent: Wednesday, 3 February 2021 9:08 AM

To: politicalalert@cch.com.au

Subject: Political Alert - REISSUE: Telstra, Optus Vodafone and NBN are risking lives during emergencies (FED)

[External email] Please be cautious when clicking on any links or attachments.

Please find attached:REISSUE: TELSTRA, OPTUS VODAFONE AND NBN ARE RISKING LIVES DURING EMERGENCIES (FED)Emergency Management Minister David Littleproud is appealing to Telstra, Optus, Vodafone and the NBN to make crucial infrastructure data available to emergency services across Australia. "Understanding the location and redundancy of telecommunication utilities and infrastructure is critical for emergency services personnel to prioritise their responses, deploy resources, and save lives during a natural disaster such as a bushfire, cyclone or flood," Minister Littleproud said. "The Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements recommendations 9.4 and 9.5 explicitly made clear the need for greater steps to create disaster resilient infrastructure, and for providers to coordinate with Government."034Y1716Total number of pages 1SUPPORT: politicalalert@cch.com.au or 02 6273 2070. MAILBOX: <http://www.cchparliament.com.au>

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