

August 2022

# THE TELIT

The TITAB Cabling Newsletter



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## Editorial

TITAB Australia is part of a network of associated training and regulatory bodies. We argue that telecommunications is an essential service as important as other utilities, electricity, gas and water. And recently with fire and flood emergencies and then Covid, a resilient network was proven to be absolutely critical.

If a key section of the network goes down (base station?) there is no Internet, no ability to call 000, SES or other services. Restoration of service, is mainly carrier, but customers premises cabling restoration needs properly trained, registered cablers not “cowboys”. Often, after natural disasters, unqualified, unlicensed/unregistered building tradesmen, electricians, plumbers and cablers turn up - some via Internet platforms with no checks – and recently TITAB and CITT issued press releases warning of the risks.

Training is a major challenge! The network is multi-faceted and for years we have put forward ideas for training and reskilling. The widespread use of contracting, while understandable, means that the cycles of contracting work are too short to bring on apprentices or trainees for continuous work. Perhaps, we need a group training company system and co-ordination between the major players on training to support industry. There are now large numbers of overseas skilled workers filling gaps.

The election of a new federal government and commitments on climate change and a rebuild of manufacturing may provide opportunities for solutions to our reskilling and training needs as there are a number of technological overlaps at the core skills level providing more viable RTO class numbers.

With advice from the Communications Advisory Group (a committee reporting to the Australian Digital and Telecommunications Industry Association) TITAB and CITT are producing options on a “future technician” to present to the new federal government to boost training - reskilling with short courses and an industry wide professional development program - and longer term with cadetships, traineeships and apprenticeships.

What’s needed - A generic set of core skills; basic electrical theory, CPR registration and system diagnostics with movement between specialised streams and IT skills needed for households or small business with new interconnected telecommunications, e.g. smart TVs, computers, gaming consoles and alarms. Consumer items are often being sold without any solid backup.

Since the privatisation of Telstra (the main source of skilled technicians for decades) there has not been a contingency training plan to skill new entrants into the industry.

Many national employer organisations want a boost in migration of skilled workers, disregarding the training/reskilling of Australians. While this may meet a short-term need, it is against the interests of Australia in the longer term. It is also a “brain drain” for some countries with emerging economies.

We need major players in telecommunications, including vendors, to work together on the common interest of training a workforce for now and the future!

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## Authority to alter facilities in residential and small business premises

NBNco have now taken over most of the former responsibilities of Telstra in the network. The Telstra Approval to Alter Network Facilities was commonly known as A2A.

NBNco have a very detailed document on their website (issue date 11 August 2020) and it is an essential reference for many of our cablers who need to carry out relatively minor alterations on the carrier side.

## Reporting faulty cabling to ACMA

All communications cabling work must be performed by a registered cabler. If a cabler is registered, they will have a card which proves that they can legally perform cabling work and must be undertaken in accordance with Australian Standard AS/CA S009:2020 Installation requirements for customer cabling (Wiring Rules).

The Wiring Rules define the technical requirements for the installation or repair of cabling that is connected to a telecommunications network.

The Wiring Rules also cover cabling practice sufficient to ensure that the installation or normal use of the cabling does not expose cablers or customers to any dangers and/or adversely affect the telecommunications network.

The ACMA does not regulate quality of work.

If a customer is unhappy with cabling work completed in the home or office, they should:

1. contact the Australian business or cabling provider; and
2. if a resolution cannot be reached, contact the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA).

The ACMA can only act if the cabler is not appropriately registered or if the wiring rules have been breached.

The matter can also be referred to the office of consumer affairs or fair trading in the relevant state or territory.

Any complaints about a cabler or cabling work should be reported to the ACMA.

- There is an Online complaint form on the ACMA website for this purpose.

This form should be used to lodge a complaint about:

- an unregistered cabler who is performing cabling work; or
- non-compliant work that has been performed by a registered cabler.

## Cablers must now comply

The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) advises that the Communications Alliance industry standard AS/CA S009:2020 Installation requirements for customer cabling (Wiring Rules), was published on 20/8/20 and sets out the requirements for the installation and maintenance of customer cabling.

The 2020 Wiring Rules were expressed to take effect on publication. The requirements of the 2020 Wiring Rules are made mandatory through the ACMA's Telecommunications Cabling Provider Rules 2014.

Cablers can **no** longer use the 2013 Wiring Rules and must comply with the new requirements. A link to the new 2020 Wiring Rules can be located on the TITAB website at [www.titab.com.au](http://www.titab.com.au)



## TITAB Registrations

As of 30 June 2022 there were 27,833 cablers registered with TITAB. The majority of cablers had the Open registration (25,873). Whilst there has been reasonable growth, TITAB are concerned about the high numbers of cablers that have not renewed in the last quarter.

Whilst TITAB has made numerous attempts to contact the cablers via email, sms or by post there are a concerning number that have let their registration lapse. Consequently, if they are unregistered they are considered to be working illegally. This could result in insurance claims being denied should anything go wrong.

Registration is easy and cheap (\$42 for 1 year and \$94 for 3 years) and it provides a wonderful safety net for both cablers and the owners of premises where cabling work is undertaken.

## Dial Before You Dig has changed its name

Dial Before You Dig has now changed its name to Before You Dig Australia (BYDA).

Before You Dig Australia is Australia's free referral service for information on the location of underground infrastructure. The service is designed to protect Australia's network of underground pipes and cables and ensure the safety of those working around this infrastructure.

Before You Dig Australia acts as a single point of contact between underground asset owners and excavators. Their website is located at [www.byda.com.au](http://www.byda.com.au)

## Regional telecommunications still expensive and unreliable, review find

*In our TELIT we try to also look at the broader industry and issues arising that may ultimately affect our members. The regional telecommunications review which started last year reported publicly this year but received very little publicity in the mass media. This is unfortunate as there is a direct public interest involved. Below is an excerpt of an excellent article about the review findings. (TITAB Editor)*

*(This article was written by Richard Chirgwin from IT News 15 Feb 2022)*

A string of natural disasters since 2018 plus the Covid-19 pandemic have exposed the inadequacies in regional telecommunications networks and services, according to a report tabled in federal parliament yesterday.

The 2021 Regional Telecommunications Review: A step change in demand was tabled by the minister for regionalisation, regional communications and regional education, Senator Bridget McKenzie.

The report noted that in addition to the pandemic, which put a premium on connectivity for remote work, the 2019-2020 east coast bushfires and 2021 eastern Australia floods both highlight telecommunications networks' failings in the face of natural disaster.

During the bushfire emergency, mobile networks often failed because power cuts lasted longer than the batteries at base stations.

And, as noted in a submission from the Macdonald Valley Association, not even Telstra exchanges can be relied on. "During power cuts Telstra landline services (and ADSL internet) now cease after six to 14 hours as Telstra has not maintained a back-up generator at the local ... exchange," that submission claimed.

To tackle reliability and performance issues in the bush, the report asked the government to implement "escalating fines" for wholesalers and retailers that don't meet minimum standards in fixed, mobile, fixed wireless, and satellite services. Because services are unreliable, the report states, regional users have multiple services, meaning they spend more than city users to stay connected; and the lack of competition means they have fewer plans and providers to choose from, so they pay a comparative premium for those services.



To address the cost of regional services, the report says government should get carriers to "zero-rate" data charges for access to federal, state and territory government services.

### Comprehensive findings

The report makes 16 key findings and offers a dozen recommendations.

The findings are:

- State and federal governments should improve both coordination and investment, to fix the "patchwork quilt" of technologies now in place (an outstanding example is the continued use of Telstra's high capacity radio concentrators, introduced in the days of ISDN and now so ancient spare parts are hard to find);
- Telecommunications service delivery is falling to under-resourced local councils and "other regional stakeholders";
- Regional competition and innovation are inhibited by a lack of access to backbone fibre and radio spectrum;
- The universal service obligation (USO) should be urgently reviewed;
- The copper network, in particular, is deteriorating, causing "significant issues" with maintenance and repair;
- Natural disasters that disrupt power and cause network outages reduce access to recovery and support;
- While mobile coverage is improving, "expanding reliable coverage to priority areas is becoming more difficult";
- NBN Sky Muster users are still "frustrated by insufficient data allowances, high latency and reliability issues";
- Emerging technologies like Starlink might meet demand, but their performance hasn't been validated;
- Providers aren't adequately addressing the "complex needs of regional users", while those users find it hard to resolve telecommunications issues;
- Those users also need independent advice and better "connectivity literacy" so they can make informed choices;
- Telcos' predictive coverage maps "don't accurately reflect on-the-ground telecommunications experience", and the report accuses the industry of "significant misinformation about the availability of telecommunications services";
- Services remain expensive for vulnerable users; and
- "Continued engagement with Indigenous Australians in regional, rural and remote communities is needed to address ongoing issues of access, affordability and digital ability". The report highlights last-mile infrastructure, and community-level wi-fi, as essential for Indigenous communities.

### Short-termism has to end

The report's recommendations highlight a need for long-term investment and planning at all levels of government (recommendation 1).

That should include a government commitment to "large-scale, multi-year connectivity investments" (recommendation 2), including new mobile coverage, and additional backbone solutions to improve regional capacity and competition.

Government should also look to establish a regional telecommunications resilience fund (recommendation 3), to improve emergency and network resilience; as well as providing extra funding for the strengthening telecommunications against natural disasters or STAND package.

To help address regional mobile coverage and performance, recommendation 9 suggests government fund a national audit of services, and conduct a feasibility study into roaming

deployment during emergencies.

The mobile hotspot program should be redesigned to encourage mobile carriers to share access infrastructure in regional and remote locations, with government to fund infrastructure that provides shared access (recommendation 10).

To improve service to Indigenous communities, the government should continue applying the National Indigenous Inclusion Plan; address national agreement on closing the gap targets; and support community digital inclusion programs, such as InDigiMOB (recommendation 11).

“Zero rated” government services (that is, the removal of data charges, particularly on mobile networks) should happen during the current myGov upgrade, and online employment services should also be introduced (recommendation 12)

## Working in a roof space – Dangers and precautions

All workers must comply with the regulations for working in Roof Spaces. It also applies to other work - not just electrical work - carried out within the roof space of residential and commercial premises that have been converted from residential premises.

This requirement does not apply to work carried out on top of the roof of a property.

Examples of work that might be done in the roof space and includes:

- electrical work (including cabling)
- telecoms and data cabling
- gas fitting;
- plumbing;

### HELPFUL CONTACTS

#### NBN

[www.nbnco.com.au](http://www.nbnco.com.au)

#### ACMA

[www.acma.gov.au](http://www.acma.gov.au)  
1300 850 115  
[info@acma.gov.au](mailto:info@acma.gov.au)

#### TRAINING PACKAGE

[www.training.gov.au](http://www.training.gov.au)  
1800 454 678

#### COMMUNICATIONS ALLIANCE

[www.commsalliance.com.au](http://www.commsalliance.com.au)  
Wiring Rules AS/CA S009:2020

- installation, upgrade or removal of insulation;
- building security, structural and vermin inspection activity;
- roof and ceiling repair; and
- any other activity in the roof space.

Some common sense advice:-

Let the home owner know you are going to “Turn Off the Power” while working in the Roof Space then take the following steps:-

ISOLATE/SECURE/TEST/Safe to commence work in roof space.

De-energising a home or small commercial premises means switching off at the meter box.

Regardless of some states and territories not being as specific on de-powering as WA and Qld. it is always good practice to de-power, as mandated in those states. Roof spaces can be dangerous enough without electrocution risks.

## New Federal Labor Cabinet



### Australian Government

The recent election has seen the swearing in of senior MP's in construction critical Ministries including:

Michelle Rowland – Minister for Communications

Catherine King – Minister for Infrastructure

Jason Clare – Minister for Education

Brendan O'Connor – Minister for Skills and Training

Katy Gallagher – Minister for Women

### UNDERGROUND CABLE LOCATIONS

[www.1000.com.au](http://www.1000.com.au)

### REGISTERED CABLERS

[www.registeredcable.com.au](http://www.registeredcable.com.au)

### SMARTWIRED

[www.smartwiredhouse.com.au](http://www.smartwiredhouse.com.au)

### Authority to Alter Facilities in Residential & Small Business Premises

<https://www.nbnco.com.au/content/dam/nbnco2/documents/authority-to-alter-facilities-on-residential-and-small-businesses-premises.pdf>

### Alteration of Telstra facilities in homes & small businesses

<https://www.telstra.com.au/content/dam/telstra/personal/help/pdf-b/012882-alteration-of-telstra-facilities-in-homes-and-small-businesses.pdf>

### ADTIA

[www.adtia.org.au](http://www.adtia.org.au)

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