

NUMBERING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of Meeting 1 of 2007

Wednesday, 28 February 2007
ACMA, 360 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne

Attendees: Melbourne

1.	Chris Cheah	ACMA
2.	Chris Wong	ACMA
3.	Gina Hsu	ACMA
4.	Grant Symons	ACMA
5.	Guy Di Paola	Telstra
6.	Jonquil Ritter	ACMA
7.	Margaret Fleming	Communications Alliance
8.	Mark McGregor	ACMA
9.	Mary Stavropoulos	ACMA
10.	Michael Elsegood	Optus
11.	Robert Johnston	ACMA
12.	Robert Urquhart	ACMA
13.	Susan Horne	ACMA
14.	Suzanne Cumming	ACMA
15.	Tracey Smith	DCITA
16.	Mat Care	APWA

Attendees: Sydney

1.	Alexander Osborne	Hutchison Telecoms
2.	Geoff Brann	PowerTel
3.	Jack Singleton	APWA
4.	John Kington	ACMA
5.	Le, Van	Vodafone

6.	Mark Kubale	Commander
7.	Mark Loney	ACMA
8.	Megan McEwin	INMS
9.	Sarah Wilson	CTN

Teleconference

1.	Nikki Vajrabukka	DCITA
2.	Emily Burt	DCITA
3.	Mary-Jane Salier	Verizon

Apologies

•	John Edwards	TXT4
•	Antony North	TXT4
•	Joe Gorup	Engin
•	George Dionisopoulos	AAPT
•	Eleanor Kay	ACMA
•	Harin Perera	ACMA

1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

The Chair, Chris Cheah of ACMA, welcomed participants and tabled the apologies for the meeting. He advised that Joe Gorup is leaving Engin and that Annette Dixon will replace him as Engin's participant in the NAC. The Chair also thanked Hutchison Telecommunications for putting a paper on agenda and encouraged members to contribute to agenda items for NAC meetings.

2. BUSINESS ARISING

2.1 Minutes of previous meeting

ACMA tabled the minutes of the previous meeting. The minutes of the 8 November 2006, which were circulated before the meeting, were accepted without discussion.

2.2 Status of actions outstanding since NAC Meeting 2 of 2006

ACMA tabled a paper outlining the status of the actions arising from the NAC meeting 3 of 2006. All outstanding actions were noted as complete with the exception of action 8/2/06.

Reference	Action	Status	Comments	Action/ team
Action 8/2/06	ACMA will put the issue of using geographic numbers outside their zones	In progress	Deferred. ACMA is researching this issue and preparing a paper.	ACMA

3. STANDING ITEMS

The Chair announced the agenda items corresponding to each of the standing items.

4. REGULAR REPORTS

4.1 Report on the status of variations to the Numbering Plan

ACMA tabled a report on the status of variations to the Plan. The meeting agreed that no discussion was required for three of the six variations subject to the report. The Chair advised that ACMA staff would speak to the reports on the status of the variations related to the more complex 0550 and 12 23 issues.

ACMA staff reported that the delay in varying the Numbering Plan to make provision for the 0550 number range was due to the need to work through issues related to emerging services. The ACMA representative also reported that a paper discussing options concerning the 0550 numbering range would be presented to the Authority on 4 April 2007.

During the discussion, Optus asked about the process after the Authority paper. ACMA staff responded that this depended on the decision the Authority made. It could be to make the variation, if the Authority approved the draft with no change; or to seek further public consultation, if the decision diverged significantly from the options canvassed in the original public discussion paper. The Optus representative advised that both the market and their thinking on VoIP have changed in the year that has elapsed since the discussion paper was issued. He requested the opportunity to talk to ACMA staff to update Optus's comments. The Chair agreed to this request, which was supported by other members who also wished to update their organisation's comments.

Action 1/1/07 NAC members, whose position on VoIP has changed, to meet with ACMA staff to update their comments on the proposed numbering arrangements for VoIP services before 16 March 2007.

The Chair indicated that the Authority has approved the 1223 variation and that related information was emailed to NAC members on Tuesday afternoon, 27 February 2007. He thanked members for their comments and assured them that the issues they raised were taken into account by the Authority in the decision making process.

4.2 Report on numbering transactions

ACMA tabled a report on numbering transactions. It listed allocations for the period 8 November 2006 to 6 February 2007. ACMA staff advised that one surrender and one transfer were recorded during the reporting period.

5. UPDATE OF IN-PROGRESS ITEMS

5.1 Progress on implementation of SMS response on 13/1300 numbers

The Chair invited Alexander Osborne of Hutchison to brief the meeting on the progress of short message service (SMS) implementation on freephone and local rate numbers. Alexander reported that the steering and implementation committees were working on arrangements for a trial supporting up to twenty customers. At this stage, Optus and Telstra are looking into some technical issues that require further investigation. The trial is expected to launch on 2 April this year and will run for six months. It will focus on technical issues and their impact from a customer and inbound carrier perspectives. Alexander advised that a realistic time frame for a commercial launch would be early to mid 2008, by which time a full production system should be ready for the market.

In response to a question, Alexander advised that a marketing campaign would commence in early May this year. At this stage, working groups are concentrating on technical and network issues.

During the discussion, the Consumers Telecommunications Network (CTN) representative raised concerns about the billing method. Alexander Osborne responded that billing would be the same as for SMS messaging.

The absence of Vodafone in the trial was also raised during discussion. The Vodafone representative responded that they were taking a wait and see attitude towards the business

case for SMS on freephone and local rate numbers, but that no negativity towards the trial was intended.

In the process of discussion, Mat Care of the Australian Phone Word Association (APWA) asked about types of numbers to be used in the trial. Alexander Osborne responded that the trial will start with local rate numbers and later trial freephone numbers, because there are slightly more technical issues associated with the latter.

5.2 Progress on data integrity working group

At its last meeting, the NAC agreed to establish a working group with the purpose of providing advice to ACMA and carriage services providers (CSPs) on the processes CSPs use for ensuring and maintaining the accuracy of geographic numbering records. ACMA spoke to a paper, distributed prior to the meeting, to report progress made by the working group and seek comment on its draft terms of reference.

The Communications Alliance requested that it receive copies of the working group's correspondence for information on its activities.

Action 2/1/07 NAC members to provide comment on the draft terms of reference of the NAC working group on integrity and use of geographic allocation records by 30 March.

Action 3/1/07 Communications Alliance to be included in the email distribution list for the Numbering Integrity Working Group.

5.3 ENUM trial update

ACMA staff reported verbally on the current status of ENUM trial. NAC members were advised that the Australian ENUM Discussion Group (AEDG) had met twice since the last NAC meeting, most recently on 21 February 2007, and that ENUM registrations had remained static at 266. The Australian ENUM Day seminar was staged successfully on 15 November 2006, with 70 organisations represented.

ACMA staff advised that there are three major issues under discussion within the AEDG. These are:

1. the Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA);
2. authentication/validation processes to enable geographic and mobile numbers to be included in the ENUM trial; and
3. infrastructure ENUM.

ACMA staff reported that ACMA is currently undertaking an internal review of the Privacy Impact Assessment report prepared by a PIA consultant prior to distribution to the AEDG. The implementation of processes for authenticating registrants and validating rights of use requires some changes to the agreement between ACMA and the Registry operator; these have been drafted and are currently under discussion. The AEDG is also currently discussing whether infrastructure ENUM, which is able to facilitate peering between VoIP service providers, should be considered in the context of the Australian ENUM trial.

During discussion of the report, Telstra requested an update on the terms of reference and timeline for the trial. ACMA staff undertook to include the update in the report to the next NAC meeting.

Action 4/1/07 ACMA to include a brief update of the terms of reference and timeline of the ENUM trial in the next progress report.

5.4 Smartnumbers® update

ACMA staff reported verbally on the project to make minor enhancements to the **smartnumbers®** system. The consultation period for the public discussion paper on the enhancements, released at the last meeting, closed on 5 February 2007. No objections to the proposals were received. ACMA staff will recommend to the Authority in early April 2007 that they be implemented.

6. SYNCHRONISING THE RELEASE OF ADDITIONAL GEOGRAPHIC NUMBERS WITH NUMBER RUN-OUT

ACMA staff delivered a PowerPoint presentation on how ACMA monitors and handles shortages of geographic numbers. They advised NAC members that ACMA estimated that the stock of geographic numbers is sufficient for 30 years; mobiles numbers for 20 years; and freephone, local-rate and premium numbers for 20 years. ACMA staff proposed that as it is predicted that telephone numbers will be replaced by internet protocol numbering, naming and addressing within the next 20 years, it would be prudent to develop number conservation strategies to ensure current number ranges are not exhausted in that time frame. This will avoid the costs to industry and government of increasing the number of digits in telephone numbers. The proposed strategies for conserving numbers include:

- extending the very effective 100 number allocation policy for VoIP providers to all policy and geographic areas to reduce demand;
- utilising the proposed 055 number range to the greatest extent possible for VoIP services; and
- reducing the specificity of the geographic numbering plan around capital cities by removing sector boundaries, thereby increasing the existing supply.

Telstra commented that the presentation is a good start to providing direction for the future; but cautioned that while 100 number blocks would be adequate in regional areas they would not like to see the policy extended to metropolitan areas. ACMA staff responded that they will work with CSPs to refine the strategies.

Action 5/1/07 ACMA to work with CSPs to refine suggestions for conserving the supply of geographic numbers.

ACMA staff presented a paper, circulated to NAC members prior to the meeting, discussing a proposal for synchronising the release of additional geographic numbers with run-out of particular geographic number prefixes. Under this proposal ACMA will specify greater than 10 years supply of geographic numbers in all areas and arrange for the new prefixes to become immediately available on the occurrence of a specified run-out trigger.

Optus commented that it is a good proposal.

ACMA staff indicated that, subject to NAC member comments, the next step in the process was to develop a draft variation to the Plan to implement the proposal, and then seek approval from the Authority to release it for public comment.

Action 6/1/07 NAC members to comment on the proposal to specify new prefixes that provide ten years supply of geographic numbers in all areas, and on the prefixes identified, by 30 March 2007.

7. PROPOSAL FOR A REVIEW OF THE NUMBERING PLAN

The Chair thanked Alexander Osborne again for submitting a paper to support this agenda item.

Alexander Osborne stated that the purpose of the paper is to trigger discussion. In speaking to his paper, he made the following points:

- the ACA previously commenced a project to review the Numbering Plan but it was overtaken by other priorities and did not proceed;
- the Plan has served the industry well in the past, but it may not meet the needs of the future;
- the Plan should be more generic, referring to categories of services to avoid the need to open a new range for every new technology; and
- the Plan should be tidied-up to make it easier to read.

The Chair posed the following questions to stimulate comment:

- How fundamental a review is required, e.g. is it sufficient to simplify the Plan to make it easier to read without changing policies, or is a fundamental review of the underlying principles required?
- Will we need a formal review or should we address particular issues?
- Should the review be industry or ACMA driven?

The Vodafone representative supported increased industry involvement. She observed that in New Zealand an industry-based third party manages the numbering plan.

The INMS representative agreed that the Numbering Plan needs simplification. She said it currently micro-manages numbering by prescribing the allocation process in too much detail, sometimes impeding innovation.

The Powertel representative supported a fundamental review but recognised this would take time because of the need to address policy issues. He suggested that there was scope to clean-up and simplify the Plan in the meantime.

The CTN representative cautioned against making the Numbering Plan too generic. She pointed out that consumers have different quality expectations of different technologies and it was for this reason that CTN supported a separate numbering range for VoIP.

The Chair agreed that a fundamental review would confront basic policy issues, e.g. much of the current Plan is predicated on supporting untimed local calls. Additionally, he observed that Austel extensively researched consumer expectations of information embedded in geographic numbers when the Plan was first developed and that a fundamental review would need to retest these underlying assumptions.

Alexander Osborne reiterated his preference for a fundamental review but said that it could be kept within the bounds of existing policy. He supported Powertel's two-stage approach because of the long time frame required for a fundamental review.

The Optus representative stated that Numbering Plan should allow industry to provide what the market wants rather than dictate to industry. On the other hand, he remarked that it is necessary to keep the PSTN standard zone unit (SZU) concept because the policy on untimed calls is not likely to be changed in the near future. He argued that it is too early for a fundamental review because we do not yet understand the marketplace trends, e.g. how those concerning VoIP and internet protocol numbering, naming and addressing will develop.

Telstra suggested that there are parts of the Plan that can be simplified immediately and that we also need to check whether clauses are still relevant. He warned that transitional arrangements will be required if fundamental changes, e.g. to SZUs, are made.

ACMA staff observed that there is a lot of procedural detail in the Plan that could benefit from the addition of a plain English description, but cautioned that the Plan is a legal document that must be enforceable. Removing the procedural detail would require a policy decision to turn the Plan into a different type of document. They proposed that plan can be simplified without fundamental change with the assistance of a NAC working group rather than a formal review.

The Chair summarised the developing consensus as follows:

- fundamental change to the Numbering Plan will be required in the future once trends driven by changing technology are clear; and
- in the interim, the Plan can be simplified and clarified within the existing policy framework via a NAC working group.

Hutchison Telecoms, PowerTel, Vodafone, Commander, INMS, CTN, Telstra, Optus, APWA and the Communications Alliance expressed interest in being involved in the working group.

Action 7/1/07 **ACMA will form a NAC Numbering Plan Review working group. The WG will consider issues and options for refining the Numbering Plan and promoting its readability.**

Action 8/3/06 **NAC members to register their interest in being involved in the Numbering Plan working group to Mark McGregor, if they have not already done so.**

8 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ONGOING OPERATION OF THE NUMBERING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Chair advised that ACMA has reviewed each of its advisory committees to determine whether they continue to provide the most effective means of engaging with the agency's stakeholders on particular issues. He invited ACMA staff to provide a progress report on the review of the NAC.

An ACMA staff member spoke to a paper, circulated prior to the meeting, summarising written comments received from NAC members about the committee's ongoing operation,

ACMA's response to issues raised, and proposals for the future operation of the NAC. He advised that NAC members' comments were generally supportive of the existing committee arrangements. They agreed that NAC should continue to operate as a formal advisory committee, essentially under its existing terms of reference and working arrangements. He then outlined the more substantial proposals for change, listed in the table in Attachment B to the paper.

Row 4:

1. Suggestion for a broadly attended annual meeting to develop an agenda of work items for the coming year

ACMA will work with the Communications Alliance and other organisations to consider how this suggestion could be implemented. The Communications Alliance representative advised that her organisation is happy to do so.

2. Encourage small industry players to become involved with the NAC

ACMA will invite smaller organisations to join a mailing list to receive information about NAC meetings so that they are informed about issues being considered by the NAC and can become involve in those of particular interest to them. It was proposed to post a standing invitation on the ACMA website and, in addition, to identify and invite candidate smaller organisations individually.

Row 5: Membership

ACMA staff will recommend that the Authority appoint the APWA, Powertel and Communications Alliance as members of the NAC.

Row 9: ACMA should formally adopt NAC recommendations where there was policy consensus among members

ACMA staff advised that they are unable to pre-empt Authority decisions but would ensure that consensus views are reflected in Authority papers. The Chair advised that as a full time member he was able to communicate industry consensus to the Authority.

Row 10: International numbering & addressing developments

While there was no disagreement with the proposal that the NAC should contribute to the development of Australia's position in international fora, there was also little support. Comment indicated a belief that a more structured approach to international issues may not achieve benefit. ACMA staff proposed that current arrangement for the NAC to consider international numbering issues—i.e. the opportunity for members to nominate any numbering issue as an agenda item—continue unchanged.

Row 11: Numbering Principles

This issue was canvassed during discussion on reviewing the Number Plan, during which there was general agreement that the NAC should address the principles behind particular cases. The Chair invited NAC members to propose items involving the development of principles for meeting agendas.

During general discussion of the proposed changes to the ongoing operation of the NAC, Vodafone requested that ACMA circulate agreed action items with two weeks of a meeting, if minutes are not available in that time frame. This was agreed.

Action 9/1/07 ACMA to implement the practice of circulating a list of an agreed action items within the two weeks following a NAC meeting.

Action 10/1/07 ACMA to initiate implementation of the agreed changes (listed at Attachment A) to the ongoing operation of the NAC.

7. NEW ISSUES FOR NEXT MEETING

The Chair called for industry initiated agenda items for the next meeting. The Optus representative responded that he will prepare a paper proposing that the NAC to examine the need for sector boundaries in capital city inner charge zones.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

Hutchinson Telecommunications asked if media releases about numbering issues could be emailed directly to NAC members. The Chair agreed but suggested that members subscribe to ACMA's free update service, available through its website, to receive an email alert whenever ACMA releases new telecommunications media releases.

Action 11/1/07 ACMA to distribute media releases concerning numbering issues to NAC members.

9. NEXT MEETING

The Chair announced that he will chair the next meeting on 23 May from Sydney.

The meeting closed at 12.50 pm

NAC REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations, arising from the review of the operation of the NAC, endorsed by members at meeting 1/2007 on 28 February 2007, are that:

1. **ACMA staff consider implementing a broadly attended annual meeting to develop an agenda of work items for the coming year.** A meeting of this type could be used not only to generate a NAC work program but also to help disseminate information about numbering and addressing issues to organisations not normally involved in the NAC process. The meeting could be held collaboratively with other organisations such as Communications Alliance or .auDA.
2. **ACMA amends its NAC webpage to invite smaller organisations to request to be added to a mailing list to receive NAC agendas and minutes,** so that they are aware of issues discussed by the NAC and can become involved in those of particular interest, without the need to attend all meetings.
3. **ACMA staff identify candidate smaller organisations and contact them directly to determine their interest in being added to the mailing list.**
4. In recognition of the increasing diversity of the supply side of the industry, **ACMA staff give consideration to expanding the representation of carriage service providers,** while maintaining a balanced membership and manageable numbers.
5. **ACMA staff recommend that the Authority appoint to the NAC observers that have indicated a desire to become members:** i.e. the Australian Phone Word Association (APWA), Powertel and the Communications Alliance.
6. **The TIO should be invited to attend on a needs basis to address specific issues,** or report on its numbering-related activities.
7. **NAC considerations should extend beyond the contexts of particular cases, to address the principles at stake also;** and that ACMA staff provide NAC members with a regular ongoing opportunity to identify issues that should be subject to such consideration.
8. **ACMA aim to circulate a draft action list within two weeks of a NAC meeting, and minutes no later than within four weeks (within two weeks whenever possible).**
9. **A strategy is required to better inform VoIP providers about Numbering Plan issues and get them involved in the regulatory debate.**