



## Proposed changes to the Numbering Plan and other instruments

February 2025

Twilio welcomes the opportunity to comment on the proposed changes to the Numbering Plan and other instruments consultation paper November 2024 (the 'Consultation Paper') published by the Australian Communications and Media Authority (the 'ACMA'). As stated throughout the process, Twilio considers that the review is critical to ensuring that Australia's communications regulatory framework supports competition, efficiency and innovation so that Australian consumers and businesses can communicate reliably, cheaply and securely.

The review of the Numbering Plan has been timely given the scale of innovation and the uptake of technology across the Australian economy in the last decade. Communications technology that challenges the status quo is being utilised by businesses economy wide with Twilio's largest customer cohorts being small or medium businesses across every state and territory.

In this context, while new technologies and use cases have emerged under the existing Numbering Plan, the review has presented an opportunity to ensure that it continues to deliver benefits to Australians by allowing numbers to be used flexibly and efficiently. Twilio has been heartened to see the ACMA's proposals laid out in the Consultation Paper reflect both the current state and future direction of the industry as well as the objects in the Telecommunications Act 1997 ('the Act').

Specifically, the proposals in the draft decision meet the aims of providing a regulatory framework that promotes the long-term interests of end-users, the efficiency and international competitiveness of the Australian telecommunications industry, and the availability of accessible and affordable carriage services that enhance the welfare of Australians.

The review also represents a key opportunity for telecommunications regulation in Australia to establish governance settings which promote the development of an Australian telecommunications industry that is efficient, competitive and responsive to the needs of the Australian community. Twilio supports this approach and is hopeful that this will lead to a period of increased collaboration within industry as we look to enhance opportunities and manage threats to the sector.



## **ABOUT TWILIO AND STATEMENT OF INTEREST**

Twilio is a global provider of cloud communications and customer engagement services to over 250,000 organisations globally. Twilio's products and services allow organisations of all sizes and across every industry – including non-profits, governments, and businesses – to embed communications capabilities in their web, desktop, and mobile applications, enabling them to communicate more efficiently and effectively with their customers.

Twilio has been operating in Australia since 2018 and powers the communications behind organisations in Australia across numerous sectors, including Westpac, Domino's Pizza, and Woolworths. We also work with not for profits such as Lifeline Australia and provide services to start-ups, small and medium businesses in every state and territory.

Twilio is committed to developing industry best practices and standards to maintain trust in the telecommunications ecosystem, and in particular to combat scam traffic. In the United States of America (US), for example, Twilio is a member of the Alliance of Telecommunications Industry Solutions (ATIS), the Communications Fraud Control Association (CFCA), the Industry Traceback Group Executive Committee and Steering Committee, and co-chaired the Robocalling and Communication ID Spoofing Group which produced a comprehensive and coordinated view of all robocalling and spamming efforts across the industry and considered the need for further standards development.

In Australia, Twilio is an active member of Communications Alliance and Commpete and contributes to working committees for both associations. Twilio's involvement in these committees as a provider of software services and as a carriage service provider ('CSP') as distinct from a carrier or mobile network operator means it has a unique and important perspective to offer.

Australia continues to be an important market for Twilio, and Twilio is continually improving its products and services for its 44,000 customers across Australia. Twilio is therefore keen to participate in policy discussions and developments, including on scam prevention, which will shape Australia's communications future.



## Twilio Comments

**Twilio has limited its submissions to the following issues:**

- Scams and use of numbers (MSP)
- Number range for nomadic services
- Specification of mobile numbers – definition and classification
- Updated definition of 'local service' to reflect that geographic numbers are not tied to specific locations
- Cancellation of enhanced rights of use ('EROU') for smartnumbers involved in scam

### **Scams and multiple use of numbers**

The ACMA stated the intent for evidence-based policy making throughout the course of the review and insights were sought through workshops, submissions and the considerable data produced under S521 requests. These undertakings have provided a much clearer picture of the use of communications technology across Australia as illustrated in the Consultation Paper.

This has allowed for policy making based not on assumptions, inference from patterns or outdated notions but verified data and use cases. It showed that MSP products are used economy wide, particularly in small and medium businesses, which rely on them for efficiency, security, record keeping, brand awareness and privacy, among other things. The same evidence also demonstrated the implementation of MSP across a diverse range of sectors, countering the misrepresentation that MSP technology is only misused by bad actors.

Various tools designed to ensure the responsible use of MSP technology have already been deployed effectively. While some disapproval has been voiced, this criticism has been anecdotal and has not been supported by concrete evidence challenging the effectiveness of these tools.

Twilio strongly disagrees that the use of MSP creates challenges to effective KYC and KYT approaches used in Australia. In fact, KYC and KYT are both valuable and effective tools for tackling scam when used in combination by the originating carrier or CSP and can be part of establishing rights of use. Such a process is far more effective than an outdated IPND, for example.

However, when patterns are used to label traffic as scam further down the communication chain, multiple issues arise including the misidentification and disruption of legitimate traffic. Actions such as this also impact deliverability which is critical to a healthy market. This imbalance of power favours the dominant terminating carriers and stifles competition from smaller challenger providers.

Often inaccurately portrayed as a device of scammers, it has now been clearly shown that small and medium businesses across Australia use MSP products to achieve efficiency, security and privacy. For this reason, Twilio support the ACMA's decision to not include changes to the Numbering Plan to prohibit the legitimate use of MSP. Twilio also supports the ACMA's proposal to consider the many tools and regulatory levers available to maintain the responsible use of MSP technology.

As the communication technology continues to evolve Twilio hopes that the management of MSP can provide a blueprint for how industry can work with regulators to assure innovative and secure products continue to be available to Australian consumers in the future.

### **Number range for nomadic services**

Twilio notes the ACMA is considering a number range for nomadic services following the remake of the numbering plan. However, with the proposed updates to the 'local service' and 'mobile number' it



is not clear what issue a new number range for geographically unrestricted/nomadic services would solve.

Twilio also notes the ACMA's has acknowledged that this new number range has mostly been suggested and supported by CSPs who are also keen to see the use of mobile numbers to services originating on mobile networks restricted in the name of scams. Evidence that such an approach would have any impact on scam is lacking, but the negative impacts on the market and end users has been seen in countries where this has been trialled.

The ACMA rightly recognises the comparison in the failure in take up of the Location Independent Communication Services 0550 number range as well as concerns around the lack of trust of new and unfamiliar numbers in the consultation paper. Twilio is particularly concerned about the impact on competition and costs to industry of a range that targets specific businesses or business practices. Noting that further work is anticipated for this issue Twilio looks forward to engaging with the ACMA on this moving forward.

## **Mobile numbers – definition and classification as a discrete number type**

Twilio supports the definition of mobile number being amended to remove 'digital' and to reflect status as a stand-alone number type. Digital mobile numbers are the second most common number type in use and are widely regarded both in industry and more generally as a distinct number type. Twilio considers that treating digital mobile numbers as a discrete number type would also enable the ACMA to provide greater clarity about the permitted use cases for mobile numbers, in circumstances where they are now crucial to many types of services that businesses (including SMEs) use to communicate with their customers.

However, Twilio supports a consistent regulatory approach across different number types, particularly mobile and local services, rather than introducing specific rules for mobile numbers. A uniform framework aligns with a principles-based regulatory approach, making the Numbering Plan clearer and more accessible for all stakeholders, including service providers and consumers. Consistency would also create a level playing field for all service providers, regardless of the type of service they offer, fostering fair competition across the industry.

Critically, a harmonised approach would enhance the plan's adaptability to emerging technologies, ensuring its long-term relevance as the telecommunications landscape continues to evolve. By applying uniform rules, consumers would benefit from consistent service quality, transparency, and protections across all telecommunications services, aligning with modern usage patterns for numbering resources.

## **Updated definition of 'local service'**

Twilio supports the amendment of the definition of 'local service', particularly the recognition of the contemporary understanding of a location being 'portable location'. Twilio considers this amendment appropriate given advances in technology and current use cases in particular, the uptake of VoIP based calling services using geographic numbers. Here too, communications technology has moved on and Australians are no longer using their services in the method contemplated by the existing iteration of the Numbering Plan.

## **Provision to cancel EROU for smartnumbers if the number is engaged in scam**

Twilio supports the ACMA enhancing scam reduction powers, through the addition of provisions to allow the cancellation of EROU where a smartnumber has been involved in scam activity.

Twilio would encourage the ACMA to ensure they are engaging with the originating CSP and are giving due consideration to the high level of misidentification of scam traffic by both other carriers / CSPs further down the communication chain. It is also important to note that scam is over reported by individuals as well.



Finally, Twilio is glad to see the additional provision includes a duty for the ACMA to withdraw the smartnumber from the carriage service provider. More information around this process would be valuable such as a what notice and when the originating CSP is provided with. Clarity will be important to ensuring this process is effective to achieve the aims.

Twilio believes five business days sufficient time for an EROU to respond to a notification of any proposed cancellation.

## **Conclusion**

Throughout this process, Twilio has emphasised the importance of this review to ensuring that Australia's communications regulatory framework fosters competition, efficiency, and innovation. A modernised framework will enable Australian consumers and businesses to communicate reliably, affordably, and securely. The amended Numbering Plan presents an opportunity to enhance use of numbers, enabling more flexibility and efficiency.

Twilio welcomes the ACMA's proposals, which align more closely with current market conditions and future industry developments, ultimately benefiting end users in the long term. Twilio thanks the ACMA for the opportunity to make comments and commits to continue engagement on issues highlighted in our response.