

Proposed amendments to the Telecommunications (Customer Communications for Outages) Industry Standard 2024

Consultation paper

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Canberra

Level 3
40 Cameron Avenue
Belconnen ACT

PO Box 78
Belconnen ACT 2616

T +61 2 6219 5555
F +61 2 6219 5353

Melbourne

Level 32
Melbourne Central Tower
360 Elizabeth Street
Melbourne VIC

PO Box 13112
Law Courts
Melbourne VIC 8010

T +61 3 9963 6800
F +61 3 9963 6899

Sydney

Level 5
The Bay Centre
65 Pirrama Road
Pyrmont NSW

PO Box Q500
Queen Victoria Building
NSW 1230

T +61 2 9334 7700
F +61 2 9334 7799

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Introduction

We are seeking feedback on proposed amendments to the [Telecommunications \(Customer Communications for Outages\) Industry Standard 2024](#) (the CCO standard).

The proposed amendments are in response to the [Telecommunications \(Customer Communications for Outages Industry Standard Amendment\) Direction 2025](#) (the outages register direction) issued by the Minister for Communications to the ACMA, which commenced on 12 December 2025. The outages register direction is to introduce rules for the establishment of public registers of significant local outages and major outages.

The Telecommunications (Customer Communications for Outages) Industry Standard Variation 2026 (No. 1) (the draft instrument) gives effect to the outages register direction by inserting a new Part 4 into the CCO standard. It sets out requirements for carriers to establish and publish publicly available outages registers and obligations for carriage service providers (CSPs) to ensure visibility of these registers. The instrument also sets out:

- the minimum information the outages registers must include
- accessibility requirements (including Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.2 compliance)
- extractability requirements
- obligations to keep information updated and accurate
- minimum retention periods for information
- clarifications of certain definitions.

We invite submissions on the attached draft instrument.

Under the [Telecommunications Act 1997](#) (Telco Act), compliance with industry standards is mandatory. A range of enforcement options apply to non-compliance with industry standards, including infringement notices and civil penalties.

The outages register direction requires the amendments to be made and **commence by 31 March 2026** and for the outages registers to be **operational by 30 June 2026**.

In April 2025, the ACMA announced its intention to review the effectiveness of the new Triple Zero-related rules, including the CCO standard, after they had been in operation for 12 months. In light of recent network failures, and alongside our work to implement the outages register direction, we are taking this opportunity to invite early views on issues related to the effectiveness of the CCO standard. These early insights will help inform the broader review that will occur later in 2026.

Background

The CCO standard was established in response to a ministerial direction issued to the ACMA in August 2024 (the 2024 ministerial direction), following recommendations from the [Review into the Optus outage of 8 November 2023 – Final Report](#).

The CCO standard contains requirements for customer communications during major outages and significant local outages. In accordance with the 2024 ministerial direction, rules for major outages commenced on 31 December 2024. Additional rules for significant local outages were introduced in April 2025 and commenced on 30 June 2025.

On 11 November 2025, the Minister for Communications made the *Telecommunications Service Provider (Network Outages Register) Determination 2025* (SPD), requiring CSPs who are mobile carriers to establish and publish an outages register containing information about significant local outages and major outages affecting the supply of a public mobile telecommunications service.

On 12 December 2025, the Outages Register Direction was issued to the ACMA to amend the CCO standard to introduce similar requirements to those in the SPD, but expanding the obligations to all carriers, and applying to outages affecting all carriage services, not just mobile services.

Issues for comment

We invite comments on the draft instrument, including:

1. Implementing the **outages register direction** – objectives and scope

Section 6 of the outages register direction sets out the objectives and content requirements of the amendments. These are intended to be additional to, and not in substitution for, the objectives set out in the 2024 direction. The draft instrument seeks to give effect to the outages register direction by introducing obligations for carriers to establish and publish outage registers and for CSPs to ensure visibility of these registers. These obligations are intended to meet the objectives set out in section 6 of the **outages register direction**, including timely publication of accurate information, standardised presentation, accessibility requirements (WCAG 2.2 compliance), and extractability of information for analytical purposes.

We are seeking views on whether the draft instrument achieves these objectives and whether there are any gaps or if any improvements should be considered.

The outages register direction also allows the ACMA to deal with matters differently for different classes of carriers or carriage service providers, or to exempt certain classes from particular requirements. We are interested in whether stakeholders consider this flexibility should be reflected in the draft instrument and, if so, in what way.

Question 1

Do the proposed amendments to the CCO standard (as set out in the draft instrument) give effect to the objectives and minimum content requirements of the outages register direction? If not, please explain why, and suggest wording that would better meet the objectives of the **outages register direction**.

Question 2

Are there any additional matters aligned to the objectives that should be included in the draft instrument, including whether the flexibility to treat different classes of carriers or CSPs differently or exempt certain classes should be applied? Please explain your position and, provide evidence and suggested wording where relevant.

Question 3

Should the obligation for CSPs to display a link to the outage register apply only to CSPs who are not carriers (as currently drafted to reflect the outages register direction), or should it also apply to carriers that act as CSPs to ensure transparency for consumers? We are interested in whether this might be a gap and what approach would best meet the objectives of the outages register direction.

2. Timing for register publication and alignment with notification requirements

The draft instrument requires information to be included in the outage register “as soon as practicable” after the information comes to the knowledge of the carrier and prescribes periodic update intervals. These intervals (every 6 hours for the first 24 hours, then once during each subsequent 24-hour period) are aligned with the timing requirements for notifications under the existing CCO standard. This approach was adopted to create efficiencies for carriers and CSPs while maintaining clarity through standalone rules.

Question 4

Do you consider the timing requirements for updates to the outage register (including periodic review) to be clear and workable? If not, please explain why and suggest improvements.

3. Minimum content requirements and standardised presentation

The outages register direction sets out additional content requirements for the CCO standard, to be included in the register. These are *additional* to, and not a replacement of, the content referred to in subsection 6(2) of the 2024 Direction (reflected in section 13 of the CCO standard).

The draft instrument specifies the register must include, to the extent that it is known by the carrier, information about relevant outages, including: the outage type, start date and time, duration, impacted geographical areas, types and numbers of services affected, number of premises impacted (where practicable), and the responsible carrier or CSP (if appropriate). It also prescribes a form in Schedule 1, reflecting the *outages register* direction’s objective of a standardised presentation of outage information in a manner that allows the information to be extracted by external entities for analytical purposes.

While the draft instrument focuses on implementing the outages register direction, we are seeking views on whether the content requirements for outage registers and notifications under section 13 of the CCO standard should be aligned now (in this amendment process) to improve consistency and reduce duplication. The content requirements for the outage register under the *outages register* direction differ from the content requirements for notifications under section 13 of the CCO standard, which were informed by the 2024 direction. While some fields overlap, others do not. If alignment is to be pursued, a single form could potentially be used for both purposes, with subsets of fields required for each.

Question 5

Are there any additional content elements aligned to the outages register direction’s objectives that should be included in the outages register? Please list these and provide reasons as to why they ought to be included.

Question 6

Should the content requirements for outage registers and notifications under section 13 of the CCO be aligned to reduce duplication and improve consistency and usability? If so, would a single form or data structure (such as that proposed at Schedule 1 but with additional fields) achieve this? If not, please suggest an alignment format that would be most practical that is also aligned with the objectives of the outages register direction.

Question 7

Do you have any concerns about the proposed format in which the information is required to be presented at Schedule 1? If so, what changes would you suggest to improve clarity, usability, or consistency (noting the accessibility requirements imposed by the outages register direction)?

4. Extractability and accessibility

The draft instrument requires outage registers to be published in a manner that allows extracts for analytical purposes by the Custodian, emergency service organisations, and other relevant stakeholders.

Currently, the draft instrument does not prescribe a structured format (such as CSV, JSON, or API). We are seeking feedback on whether carriers should have flexibility to choose their own format, or whether the CCO standard should specify a minimum structured format to ensure consistency and usability. Your feedback will help us decide whether to address this through guidance or amendments, and whether it would be useful to harmonise the format of outage registers with the format used for outage notifications in the longer term.

Question 8

Noting that information in the outage register needs to be extractable, should the CCO standard specify a minimum structured format (for example, a downloadable file or machine-readable format such as CSV), or allow flexibility for carriers to choose their own approach? What benefits or challenges would each option create?

The draft instrument requires outage registers to be presented in plain English, and to comply with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.2.

Question 9

Are there existing challenges in presenting content that complies with WCAG 2.2 standards? If so, please outline what, if any, support or guidance would assist to achieve this.

5. Commencement

The [outages register](#) direction provides that the amendments to the CCO standard be made and commence in full no later than 31 March 2026, and that the outages registers be operational by 30 June 2026.

The information on the register must include information about outages that have occurred, or have continued, on or after 31 March 2026.

Question 10

What is the earliest practical date industry could have the amendments fully implemented and the outages register operational, ahead of the mandated timelines?

6. Broader operation of the CCO standard

To help shape the review of the CCO standard that will take place later in 2026, we invite early submissions on the following matters alongside feedback on the draft instrument.

Since the commencement of the rules for outages, we have received feedback from industry and the public raising concerns about the operation of some of the provisions. This feedback has been recorded and will be considered as part of the review of the CCO standard. While

this paper is focused on implementing the outages register direction, we are seeking early input on matters that may inform the broader review later this year, including the application of the existing definitions of significant local outage and major outage, arrangements for natural disasters, and whether rules should apply to planned as well as unplanned outages.

Question 11

In relation to significant local outages and major outages, please comment on the following matters, and where relevant, include examples:

- (a) How do providers currently assess what constitutes a major outage and a significant local outage?
- (b) How are the words “likely to affect” in those definitions applied in practice?
- (c) Are there any parts of the definitions that would benefit from further clarification?
- (d) Are the current thresholds appropriate and, if not, what alternative thresholds would better achieve the objectives of the 2024 direction and why?

Question 12

Are the current arrangements for communicating with customers about outages caused by natural disasters appropriate and effective? In particular:

- (a) Do existing rules support timely, accurate and accessible information to the public about outages in disaster contexts?
- (b) Have there been any challenges in applying the definition of ‘natural disaster’ (for example, meeting the time thresholds for significant local outage or major outage that trigger notification obligations) in determining the cause of an outage?
- (c) Should there be any changes to the current provisions regarding outages caused by natural disasters? If so, please provide reasons and evidence where relevant to support your response.

Question 13

Should the CCO standard be extended to include communications with customers about planned outages, noting that these can cause impacts to triple zero connection? Please provide reasons. If so:

(a) Which elements (for example, timing, minimum content, accessibility requirements) should apply to communications about planned outages?

(b) Should the obligations for planned outages differ from those obligations for unplanned outages? If so, how?

(c) How do/should providers balance proactive communication for planned maintenance with clarity about potential impacts on access to critical services (including triple zero)?

Question 14

Are there any other issues or gaps relating to the operation of the CCO standard you consider should be examined in the 2026 review (for example, opportunities to reduce duplication, improve consistency or strengthen accessibility)? Please explain your views and provide evidence where relevant.

Invitation to comment

Making a submission

We invite comments on the issues set out in this consultation paper.

- [Online submissions](#) can be made by uploading a document. Submissions in PDF, Microsoft Word or Rich Text Format are preferred.
- Submissions by post can be sent to:
Paul Nicholas
National Interests Section
Australian Communications and Media Authority
PO Box 13112
Law Courts, Melbourne Victoria 8010

The closing date for submissions is COB, **18 February 2026**.

Consultation enquiries can be emailed to national.interests@acma.gov.au.

Publication of submissions

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