

# Compliance & Enforcement Priorities 2026-27

DTP submission to ACMA.



## March 2026

The Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) welcomes the opportunity to provide input to the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) consultation on its compliance and enforcement priorities for 2026–27. DTP’s submission seeks to improve public safety by ensuring that telecommunications infrastructure works undertaken within road reserves are conducted safely, responsibly and in accordance with applicable Commonwealth legislative requirements, as well as relevant State Acts and Regulations (such as the *Road Management Act 2004* (Vic)).

DTP considers a stronger emphasis by telecommunications carriers (and their contractors) on compliance with existing legislative obligations, improved coordination with the relevant road authorities and safe work practices in transport environments would support public safety, reduce disruption to the public, and protect critical public infrastructure.

**Specific examples of issues identified by DTP in relation to telecommunications works within road reserves are provided in Attachment 2. This material contains sensitive and confidential information and is not intended for public release.**

## Public safety


DTP has identified ongoing public safety and compliance issues associated with telecommunications works undertaken under the *Telecommunications Act 1997 (Commonwealth)* and the *Telecommunications (Low-impact Facilities) Determination 2018 (Commonwealth)* (LIFD). These issues arise where activities undertaken by telecommunications carriers (or their contractors) affect the safe operation of the transport network.

DTP has observed recurring safety and compliance concerns, including excavations within major arterial intersections without notification, installation and maintenance activities within road reserves without appropriate traffic management, and works undertaken without adequate coordination with the relevant road authority. Such activities create safety risks for road users and disrupt traffic operations.

Examples include serious incidents such as boring under roads and bridges (both rail and road) without proper authorisation, undermining the integrity of the infrastructure. There have been instances where the trench has subsequently collapsed, creating serious safety issues.

DTP has experienced the following issues recently:

- Trench collapses have occurred on major arterial roads due to LIFD works which have been conducted at insufficient depth.
- Several bridge structures (both road and rail) have been damaged by Carriers using the LIFD to install services which pass underneath, or in close proximity to, the bridge footings/abutments.

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- Carriers have excavated in the middle of major arterial road intersections and not safely protected the public because they believe the LIFD gives them exemptions from following meeting Road Authority standards. The LIFD does not sufficiently prescribe that works cannot proceed without these controls (i.e. the works still require Memorandum of Authorisation for traffic management, even if they may be exempt from the full statutory consent requirements). The LIFD does not reference where and how there are still requirements under relevant State Acts and Regulations which must be met. Currently, Carriers are confused and think they do not have to meet State requirements – at all.
  - Carriers are not making proper effort to notify DTP of Land Access and Activity Notices correctly – in many instances notices have been sent to the wrong address. Meanwhile the works are undertaken, and DTP has lost the ability to object or provide conditions. Many issues could have been easily avoided if the Carrier had met their obligation to adequately notify DTP.
  - Additionally, many installations which do not fall within the LIFD are undertaken by Carriers as being low impact, based on their misguided self-determination that the works are covered by the LIFD. In these instances, Carriers should have sought full statutory consent to undertake works, in accordance with the *Road Management Act (2004)*.

## **Disruption and travel time impacts**

Under the *Telecommunications Act 1997* (Commonwealth), Carriers are required to take all reasonable steps to minimise interference with public roads, footpaths, and the movement of traffic.

DTP has however observed numerous instances where works have been undertaken on arterial roads during peak times without appropriate traffic management or consultation with DTP, resulting in significant operational impacts on traffic flow and transport network operations.

This has significant impacts on the community. Lane closures and the occupation of traffic lanes without approval have resulted in congestion, increased travel times, and disruption to public transport services. These impacts reduce network efficiency and place additional pressure on already constrained transport corridors – impacting people’s ability to travel freely and increasing frustration.

## **Communications network reliability and protection of critical infrastructure**

Road reserves managed by the Victorian Government and local councils support critical infrastructure, including telecommunications networks that underpin digital connectivity and emergency communications services. Ensuring that this infrastructure is installed and maintained safely is essential to maintaining network reliability.

Non-compliant works, including damage to existing assets or poor installation practices as outlined above, can undermine the resilience of telecommunications networks and result in service disruptions. Improved compliance with infrastructure protection and reinstatement requirements would support both network reliability and public safety outcomes.