Australian Government

acma

Australian Communications and Media Authority

Response to submissions
Draft FYSO 2026–31

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Response to submissions

The ACMA invited comments on the draft *Five-year spectrum outlook 2026-31* (FYSO 2026–31) published in March 2026, including on:

- the 5-year outlook
- the future demand for spectrum
- the priorities outlined in our annual work program.

Engagement with our spectrum users on the annual work program is a valuable way in which we get contemporary advice about the technology environment and international harmonisation activity. It gives us insights into the ongoing market changes that affect current and future demand for spectrum. It also helps us to shape our work program to help ensure we continue to manage the spectrum to deliver benefits for consumers and businesses nationwide.

We thank all stakeholders who responded to our consultation.

We received 39 public submissions from industry operators, representative and peak bodies, government agencies and the public.

Our draft 2026–31 work program proposed a diverse range of projects. Feedback largely supported our draft 2026–31 work program priorities, along with suggestions for different prioritisation of specific band planning and licensing activities and additional activities to include in the work program.

We have considered all suggestions and indicated in the FYSO 2026–31 where we have adjusted the work program. While we cannot accommodate all suggestions, your feedback will inform our future work program development.

This document focuses on the major themes raised in public submissions and our response to them.

Acknowledgement of the use of artificial intelligence (AI)

This document was developed with the assistance of Microsoft Copilot and Claude, which are AI-based tools that provided support with summarising received submissions. To ensure accuracy, ACMA staff reviewed the outputs and cross-checked these against the original submissions, before we responded to submissions.

Part 1: Five-year spectrum outlook 2026–31

Our approach to spectrum management

National spectrum strategy

Five submitters called for the development of a national spectrum strategy to complement the FYSO.

These submitters argued that the FYSO's current structure is largely focused on near-term work program activities and would benefit from a forward-looking strategic framework providing long-term guidance on emerging technologies, efficient allocation and Australia's future digital technology.

Some of these submitters argued that Australia's spectrum planning must move beyond band-by-band, point-in-time decisions, with one submitter claiming that the current C-band allocations demonstrate how fragmented outcomes result when a coherent decision-making framework is not used.

Our response

The development of a national spectrum strategy is a matter for policy consideration. We have referred this proposal to the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts (the Department) for further consideration. This includes how it would fit within the government's broader communications policy framework and the FYSO.

Allocation and licensing approach

One submitter supported the ACMA's approach of considering the impacts on consumers and industry of auction-based allocation mechanisms. The submitter recommended expanding this approach to include broader public interest considerations such as maintaining safe, reliable and affordable transport systems, avoiding unnecessary public expenditure, and supporting emerging technologies including radio navigation-satellite services.

Another submitter stated consistency of licence conditions should be a high-level objective in any band planning exercise.

Our response

Consistent with the object of the *Radiocommunications Act 1992* (the Act), we look to promote the long-term public interest derived from the use of the spectrum in our decision-making, including throughout our band planning and allocation processes. Relevant public interest and licence condition considerations will vary from band to band and from technology to technology.

The policy environment and regulatory reform

Universal Outdoor Mobile Obligation (UOMO)

Eleven submitters addressed UOMO-related issues. There was broad agreement that sufficient, quality spectrum must be available to support UOMO delivery, though submitters differed on timing, eligible entities, and spectrum candidates.

Several submitters argued that spectrum frameworks must be in place ahead of UOMO commencement, with adequate lead time for device and equipment upgrades. Two submitters proposed that all potential 3GPP non-terrestrial networks (NTN) bands be considered and that spectrum rights should be tied to legal responsibilities to deliver the UOMO.

One submitter identified the 1800 MHz band as a strong candidate for initial support and the 2 GHz mobile satellite service (MSS) band as a long-term option, arguing mobile network operators (MNOs) must be the only entities with access to UOMO spectrum and must not be reliant on wholesale access through satellite licensees.

One submitter requested a new work item to review potential MSS spectrum candidate bands for satellite-to-mobile and UOMO, arguing that spectrum should be standardised for NTN and assigned with nationwide licences. Similarly, another submitter requested access to the 2 GHz MSS band to deliver widely accessible satellite-to-mobile services, including emergency voice (Triple Zero), and considered this essential to supporting the UOMO.

Two submitters raised timing concerns and suggested consideration of a later default commencement date. Two submitters encouraged the ACMA to bring the UOMO work program forward.

One noted direct-to-device (D2D) technologies remain at an early stage and encouraged consideration of a later effective date or short-term initial assignments to avoid locking in long-term market structure. Another two submitters emphasised the role of D2D MSS in extending mobile coverage beyond terrestrial infrastructure, enhancing resilience during disasters, and supporting digital inclusion objectives.

Our response

We acknowledge comments regarding the timing of the UOMO commencement date, but note that timing is a matter for the Minister to consider. We intend to proceed with developing a work program to support the delivery of the UOMO in the external territories, by publishing this work program in Q4 2026 and commencing implementation soon after. Our approach to the 2 GHz MSS allocation and its relationship with the UOMO is covered in the 2 GHz MSS (1980–2010 / 2170–2200 MHz) subsection.

Resilient communications and regional connectivity

Nine submitters addressed resilient communications and regional connectivity.

Three submitters highlighted the role of specific services in supporting resilient communications, particularly in regional, rural and remote areas and during emergencies. These submitters emphasised the value of community broadcasting for:

- emergency resilience
- local information and services for Indigenous and underserved communities
- the potential of 2 GHz MSS spectrum and space-based architecture to provide an additional, independent layer of communications capability when terrestrial networks are disrupted
- the potential role of amateur radio in providing self-reliant communications where other networks fail.

One submitter argued that regional capacity should have greater prominence in the FYSO, arguing that 600 MHz is one of the few realistic low-band options to materially improve rural and regional coverage economics. The submitter urged for an active roadmap for transition and reallocation to be developed rather than taking a passive monitoring posture.

Another submitter recommended mechanisms such as a secondary licensing framework, spectrum sharing, measurable deployment conditions, and geographically differentiated pricing to support regional connectivity.

Our response

We have provided detailed advice to government about the use of deployment and similar conditions through the spectrum framework. Broadly, the framework is not well suited to these kinds of regulatory approaches. In that advice, we noted that the existing framework facilitates spectrum sharing, but that there were potential benefits that could be realised by additional exploration of a place-based access framework.

Our consideration of this is ongoing. Network-wide requirements, such as those relating to deployment or resilience, may be better addressed through the telecommunications regulatory framework, such as mechanisms available under the *Telecommunications Act 1997*, than through spectrum licensing.

To support regional connectivity, the ACMA makes a range of spectrum bands and licensing options available. This includes class licensed frequencies suited for Wi-Fi and local area wireless broadband services, and apparatus licensed spectrum in 1800 MHz and 2 GHz in regional and remote areas.

We note the views on the desired use of the 600 MHz band as a regional and rural capacity layer. The future of the band is subject to the Australian Government's review of the future of television and any action we would take concerning the band will be initially guided by the outcome of that review.

We have recently completed an extensive body of work considering options for expiring spectrum licences (ESLs). Renewal, particularly of national low-band ESLs, supports targeted co-funding approaches to coverage issues administered by government. Every co-funded mobile site delivered to-date under programs like the Mobile Black Spot Program relies on spectrum included in these licences and renewal will facilitate ongoing operation and avoid the risk of investment becoming stranded. Renewal of national licences also provides telecommunications providers flexibility in working with satellite operators to provide direct-to-device services that are expected to enhance coverage in regional and remote Australia.

Closing the gap

Four submitters collectively emphasised the importance of access to mobile, telephone and internet services, the role of timely MSS spectrum allocation in the 2 GHz bands in contributing to Target 17 and digital inclusion, and the value of prioritising First Nations radio services and DAB+ digital radio to expand free-to-air Indigenous broadcasting. One submitter noted that improved mobile connectivity in remote areas enables access to healthcare, education, government services, economic participation and community safety.

Our response

We are favouring renewal of expiring MNO and NBN spectrum licences as part of our ESL process. Renewal ensures that First Nations peoples in regional, remote and rural areas will continue to benefit from investments in coverage and co-funded programs.

Spectrum is an enabler of digital inclusion. But research cited in our ESL policy framework notes that spectrum access is not typically the barrier to connectivity in these communities; they face many of the same challenges as other regional, remote and rural Australians, and some specific issues about affordability of access to equipment.

We are continuing to consider, with the Department, alternate options for local spectrum access that could offer targeted connectivity outcomes, such as a place-based licensing framework. Such a framework could address the use-cases where spectrum access is the last piece of the puzzle for improving connectivity in First Nations communities.

Net zero emissions

Three submitters addressed net zero emissions. One noted ultra-wide band technologies support net-zero goals through more efficient performance using less power than Wi-Fi or Bluetooth Low Energy. One supported net zero objectives but stated that non-harmonised, bespoke emission limits can reduce energy efficiency and recommended alignment with 3GPP standards. One noted that a significant proportion of regional and remote users report that nbn-enabled connectivity has helped reduce carbon emissions through enabling remote working, education, health access and online service delivery.

Our response

Spectrum can play a role in contributing to net zero. We continue to consider and contribute to, where possible, the government's policy priorities, including its net zero by 2050 commitment.

International influences

Seven submitters addressed international influences.

Several submitters emphasised the importance of alignment with international regulatory settings, including International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Radio Regulations, 3GPP standards and WRC-27 preparatory processes.

One submitter urged the ACMA to use WRC-27 and related preparatory processes to establish a clear Australian position on international mobile telecommunication (IMT) for WRC-27 agenda item 1.7.In particular, they advocate for 'no IMT identifications' in the frequency bands under agenda item 1.7 — with the possible exception of part of the lower 7 GHz range — and engage in ITU studies to protect Defence and aeronautical safety uses in Australia.

One submitter noted international standards bodies (IEEE, ETSI) provide the technical foundation for ultra-wide band (UWB).

One submitter noted the active international work on extending the upper boundary of 6 GHz and incorporating the lower 7 GHz range and urged the ACMA to remain open to WRC-27 outcomes beyond 7125–7250 MHz.

One submitter identified a need for continued access to spectrum for experimentation and innovation, including updated band planning aligned with contemporary use and international practice.

Our response

We work with the international radiocommunications community to promote and protect Australian interests in the radiofrequency spectrum. This includes spectrum harmonisation and international frequency coordination. We monitor international developments and engage in relevant international forums to inform, promote and protect our domestic interests.

With the next WRC to be held in late 2027, we will continue to provide technical, regulatory and subject matter expertise to the Department, which leads the Australian preparatory process and delegation to WRCs.

Our response to comments specific to the 7100–7250 MHz frequency range is included in the Upper 6 GHz (6425–7125 MHz) subsection.

Ongoing regulatory improvements

Three submitters raised issues relating to ongoing regulatory improvements.

One submitter advocated for an adaptive, forward-looking framework. They argued that the ACMA should retain existing priority arrangements in the Australian Radiofrequency Spectrum Plan (2025 Update) 2021 (ARSP) and ensure Defence is consulted where bands are designated principally for defence and national security.

One submitter proposed a licence-exempt model for the high frequency band, similar to citizen band radio arrangements, suggesting reduced high frequency reliance presents an opportunity for repurposing.

Another submitter called for regulatory settings facilitating timely planning decisions where community broadcasters commit to digital radio rollout, without being contingent on commercial broadcaster participation.

Our response

We continue to consider ongoing regulatory improvements, with public consultations and related timings outlined in the FYSO.

The ARSP is not planned for review until after WRC-27. Public consultation will be undertaken on proposed changes to the ARSP ahead of any changes being made.

We are providing assistance and advice to the Department about potential options that could improve access to digital radio for community broadcasters. We remain of the view that the current digital radio legislative framework does not allow community radio broadcasting licensees to roll out digital radio on their own without the participation or endorsement of the commercial radio broadcasting licensees in the licence area.

Market and technology drivers of change in spectrum demand

Wireless (mobile and fixed) broadband

Seven submitters and one joint submission mobile and fixed broadband.

Several submitters supported the expansion of broadband services and spectrum availability. One highlighted that rapid 5G growth and the emergence of 6G requires significant additional spectrum in mid-band and upper 6 GHz. One submitter supported the complementary role of

MSS in extending coverage. Similarly, another submitter stated that adequate 6G spectrum must be available and urged a long-term, whole-of-band allocation approach rather than fragmented portions, advocating for global identification of 6585–7250 MHz at WRC-27.

Two submitters raised concerns about IMT expansion into certain bands. One cautioned against introduction into bands used for aeronautical telemetry, flight testing and defence radiolocation. Another submitter recommended preserving UWB Channel 9 in 7250–8400 MHz as a globally harmonised resource.

Our response

We note stakeholder comments on the spectrum needs for the introduction of 6G and the role of MSS spectrum in providing coverage in areas not covered by existing terrestrial WBB coverage, further noting that there is also a role for IMT bands in supporting D2D rollout alongside MSS. Other comments referring to the lower 7 GHz (7100–7250 MHz) band are included in the Upper 6 GHz (6425–7125 MHz) subsection, and we are aware of incumbency issues associated with that band such as adjacent-band UWB services (among others).

Future 6G

Five submitters addressed 6G spectrum needs. There was broad agreement among stakeholders that early allocation of spectrum is essential for competitive 6G launches around 2030.

Several submitters identified the upper 6 GHz band (6585–7250 MHz) as the clearest pathway for 6G, calling for at least three contiguous 200 MHz channels of harmonised mid-band spectrum to be available by 2028–2029. One asserted that 6G will require 1.5–2.2 GHz of additional spectrum and larger channel bandwidths (200–400 MHz). Another pointed out that MNOs need reasonable time for testing and equipment updates, with rollout in 2029 and spectrum to be made available by that time.

Our response

We note stakeholder views on the spectrum needs for the introduction of 6G. Our response to comments specific to the 7100–7250 MHz frequency range and industry calls for 200 MHz bandwidth profiles to support 6G rollout are discussed in some detail in the Upper 6 GHz (6425–7125 MHz) subsection.

Wi-Fi 6/6E/7

Two submitters addressed Wi-Fi spectrum. Both supported the ACMA's work on the 6 GHz band, with one emphasising the need for robust technical, accreditation, audit and enforcement arrangements to preserve incumbent licence rights, and another supporting the efforts to enable leading-edge Wi-Fi technologies including Wi-Fi 6E and Wi-Fi 7.

Our response

Our response to comments about Wi-Fi 6/6E/7 is outlined in the Spectrum sharing subsection.

Private networks

One submitter pointed out that some rail communications needs are not well suited to higher-frequency spectrum bands, emphasising the importance of private networks supporting

extensive coverage and reliable operation, interoperability mechanisms, and resolution of barriers to accessing mobile network codes and numbering resources.

Our response
We note comments about the importance of coverage, reliability and interoperability for rail communications. Our recently finalised arrangements for rail services in the 1.9 GHz band will provide access to Australia-wide spectrum that is internationally harmonised for the next generation of rail communications technologies.

We also note that issues regarding access to mobile network codes and mobile numbers are currently being considered following the making of the Telecommunications Numbering Plan 2025.

Spectrum bands supporting wide-area wireless broadband (WA WBB) use

Three submitters addressed spectrum bands supporting WA WBB. Two submitters stressed the importance of low, mid and high-band spectrum for coverage and capacity, with one highlighting the reliance on 2.3 GHz and 3.4 GHz for fixed wireless services needing optimisation. One submitter challenged the case for additional IMT expansion into certain mid-bands, questioning the incremental benefit relative to aviation and defence impacts.

Our response
We note stakeholder views on the spectrum needs for WBB use. The consideration of future spectrum needs to support WBB services, as well as the spectrum needs of any incumbent services, is a key aspect of our band planning activities.

Satellites

Ten submitters addressed satellite-related topics.

Several submitters emphasised that D2D MSS technologies have advanced significantly, with multiple operators demonstrating direct connectivity to standard mobile devices, and that these services are entering early commercial deployment requiring timely spectrum access. Two submitters supported technology-neutral frameworks and clear regulatory environments for satellite D2D.

Another two submitters highlighted the ongoing role of geostationary Earth orbit (GEO) and multi-orbit satellite systems. One outlined reliance on satellite spectrum for obligations in the satellite footprint. While another submitter maintained that geosynchronous orbit infrastructure continues to play a critical role for national resilience and that the ACMA's focus on low-Earth-orbit does not fully reflect
investment trends.

One submitter supported progressing planning certainty for fixed-satellite services and ITU-R studies for WRC-27 items relating to Earth stations in motion (ESIM) on aircraft and vessels.

Our response
We note stakeholder comments on D2D MSS, the ongoing role of GEO and multi-orbit satellite systems, and the importance of regulatory certainty for satellite services. We will continue to monitor international and domestic developments in satellite communications and consider these through our planning, licensing and regulatory frameworks.

Spectrum sharing

Four submitters addressed spectrum sharing, with divergent views.

One submitter supported database-assisted coordination (AFC) as a model for dynamic sharing and advocated extending approaches beyond 5925–6585 MHz.

Two submitters opposed sharing in specific contexts. One did not support sharing in IMT bands, citing interference risks and reduced service quality. One argued that sharing is not feasible where safety-critical aeronautical and defence uses predominate.

One submitter referenced 3550–3700 MHz band sharing being included via spectrum sharing initiatives.

Our response

We have been proactively monitoring and researching Automatic Frequency Coordination (AFC) developments in other regulatory regimes. We recently released an options paper on how AFC might be implemented into the Australian regulatory regime. We are open to proposals on how AFC might be implemented noting our current position on broader spectrum sharing. Ideas are encouraged via responses to our options paper. While we are not actively pursuing dynamic sharing more broadly at this point, we remain open to proposals for trials.

Radio and television services

Four submitters addressed radio and television services.

Two submitters emphasised the public interest value of free-to-air broadcasting, including local and regional content, media diversity, community connection and countering misinformation.

A submitter sought prioritisation of digital radio channel planning for community broadcasters.

Our response

We will continue to contribute to a range of government broadcasting initiatives that aim to strengthen Australian media outlets, and provide equitable access to media services and content to all Australians.

We remain of the view that, given the role of commercial radio broadcasters under the current digital radio legislative framework, their participation or endorsement is necessary before the ACMA will take the necessary regulatory steps to enable community radio broadcasting licensees to roll out digital radio on their own.

Spectrum for government requirements

Five submitters addressed government spectrum requirements.

Two submitters provided detailed submissions on the primacy of government spectrum needs. One submitter emphasised radiolocation and harmonised Five Eyes/NATO-aligned spectrum. While another submitter stated that spectrum for government service delivery must be prioritised and recommended alternatives to market-based processes, a regular Commonwealth-led forum for state and territory governments, and enforceable conditions on MNO carrier licences to support emergency services.

Two submitters stressed that long-term access to 1800 MHz for public transport services is essential to operational continuity, rail interoperability, avoiding costly reinvestment and minimising environmental impacts.

Our response

We are committed to assisting the rail sector to achieve fit-for-purpose spectrum arrangements. Our preferred view on expiring spectrum licences held by rail operators is to continue supporting the current services in the 1800 MHz band through apparatus licensing, until more information is available on next-generation 5G technology, and the longer-term spectrum requirements for rail services in Australia.

The ACMA understands that, in the longer-term rail safety services are likely to be supported by an equipment market harmonised for operation in the 1900 MHz band. We are undertaking work to determine the use of the 1800 MHz spectrum currently used for rail in a way that promotes the long-term public interest, including consideration of the rail sector's future spectrum needs.

We have addressed comments about the long-term access to the 1800 MHz band for rail services in the 1800 MHz band (long-term use for rail service and outside spectrum-licensed areas) subsection.

Part 2: 2026–27 annual work program

Monitoring stage

600 MHz

Six submitters addressed the 600 MHz band.

Four submitters urged the ACMA and the Australian Government to actively progress reallocation for IMT, arguing the FYSO should indicate a more active program of policy development. One stated that steps must be taken now for reallocation as quickly as possible (ideally by 2030, no later than 2032) and urged the Government to progress the proposed Future of Broadcasting review.

Two submitters supported DVB-T2 trials and greater consideration of DVB-T2 for television services to create spectrum efficiency.

Our response

We will continue to engage with government on the band as necessary and to otherwise monitor the band. The Department recently released a discussion paper for public consultation on future options for the distribution of free-to-air television services in Australia. Upon the Australian Government's completion of the planned review of the future of television we would progress the band to initial investigation if the review recommended reallocation of part or all of the band.

40 GHz, 46 GHz, 47 GHz and Embargo 80

Three submitters addressed these bands. One stated that changes should preserve non-geostationary satellite orbit (NGSO) fixed satellite service (FSS) access as these bands are more effectively utilised for satellite services. One supported continued monitoring. One asserted that any review of Embargo 80 should preserve spectrum options for mmWave 5G and 6G, particularly at least 3 GHz from within 37.5–43.5 GHz.

Our response

We acknowledge stakeholder views on these bands, including interest in greater certainty for gateway earth stations in the Q/V bands and in preserving spectrum options for mmWave 5G and 6G.

As noted in the FYSO, we are considering whether changes can be made to the interim arrangements in Embargo 80, depending on resourcing and competing requirements. We do not propose any specific changes at this time.

7125–8400 MHz (WRC-27 agenda item 1.7)

Eight submitters addressed this band.

Three submitters emphasised the need to preserve UWB operations in this frequency range, noting that UWB is deployed in over a billion devices and has very low transmit power resulting in minimal interference. One submitter indicated support for IMT identification in 7125–7250 MHz but opposed identifications affecting UWB Channel 9. Another opposed IMT introduction, arguing it would disrupt incumbents and undermine coexistence conditions.

Four submitters stated the 7125–7250 MHz frequency range should be considered in combination with the upper 6 GHz band in a single allocation process for spectrum licencing in Australia. They argued this would avoid fragmentation issues experienced in the 3.4–4.0

GHz band and lead to a more efficient outcome. One submitter supported ongoing work while maintaining flexibility pending
WRC-27 outcomes, emphasising potential for contiguous spectrum, harmonisation and infrastructure reuse.

Our response
The Department leads Australia's participation in WRC-27 related forums. This includes the development of Australian positions for WRC-27 agenda items. Information on how to participate in Australia's domestic preparatory process for WRC-27 is available on the Department's website.

Refer to our response for the Upper 6 GHz band (6425–7125 MHz) subsection for allocation related issues raised.

5030–5091 MHz band

One submitter called for more proactive spectrum initiatives for medium/large uncrewed aerial system (UAS) and emerging aviation technologies, including broader access to 5030–5091 MHz, continued use of scientific licensing for trials, and the exploration of FSS allocations to support UAS command and non-payload communication (CNPC) and payload communications.

Our response
Our response is outlined in the Drones and emerging aviation technologies subsection.

Initial investigation

Long-term use of the 1800 MHz band for rail services

Four submitters addressed this band.

Two submitters argued for maintaining rail access to 1800 MHz. Both considered that long-term access is essential to national rail interoperability and avoiding stranded assets. One argued that uncertainty around Future Rail Mobile Control System (FRMCS) deployment should not justify restricting access and called for extended planning timelines. Another requested deferral of planning work until Q4 2027 and supported retaining rail spectrum at public-interest prices, noting access to both 1800 MHz and 1900 MHz is required.

One submitter stated that the ACMA should support transition of rail services to 1.9 GHz FRMCS and argued that 1800 MHz outside spectrum-licensed areas should be allocated to MNOs via spectrum licensing on an area-wide or regional basis, with apparatus-licensed use separated between private wireless and public mobile networks.

Another submitter mentioned that the 1800 MHz band could be replanned for nationwide spectrum licensing suitable for satellite-to-mobile services. It supported releasing a discussion paper earlier than Q4 2026.

Two submitters stressed progressing the 1.9 GHz framework is essential to support planning for major rail projects and next-generation Rail Mobile Radio business cases. Both noted concerns about lack of clarity on whether the 1.9 GHz work will continue and called for updated timelines.

Our response

In June 2026 we released a consultation paper on apparatus licensing arrangements for 1800 MHz band rail services in October 2026. These arrangements are intended to support the operation of rail services in the band for the short-medium term while we ascertain what the best long-term use of this spectrum is. We also finalised arrangements for rail services in the 1.9 GHz band in July 2026 and over-the-counter licences are now available for issue.

We have decided to delay our initial consultation on the long-term use of the 1800 MHz band for rail services. We do not intend to commence with work in the 2026–27 period, and we will consider whether the review can be commenced in 2027–28 when developing our work program for the FYSO 2027–32. For clarity, this deferral does not change our position on access to the band for rail services beyond the short-medium term nor our proposed limitations on the tenure of apparatus licences for 1800 MHz band rail services.[1]

2300–2302 MHz

Three submitters supported converting 2300–2302 MHz to spectrum licensing to improve spectral efficiency and enable full 100 MHz 5G channel bandwidths. One stakeholder suggested that the conversion should move to the preliminary replanning stage, another that direct allocation should be offered to adjacent incumbents, and the allocation completed at least three years prior to the 2.3 GHz spectrum licence expiry in July 2030.

Our response

[1] As per the new framework for 1800 MHz band apparatus licences , we have decided that apparatus licences would only be issued for a duration of up to 5 years and licences would not be issued for terms beyond 1 January 2037.

We intend to investigate and assess possible long-term uses of the band, including whether the public interest is promoted by including the 2300–2302 MHz band in 2.3 GHz band spectrum licences as part of our ESL process. Accordingly, we plan to consult on this matter, likely in Q2 2027, prior to when licensees may begin to apply for the renewal of these licences.

Our ESL preferred views framework favours renewal of 2.3 GHz spectrum licences held by Optus and NBN Co, and provides that we will update our view in relation to 2.3 GHz spectrum licences held by Telstra in mid-July 2027. We will align our assessment of the 2300–2302 band with the update to our preferred views framework.

Preliminary replanning

1.5 GHz (1427–1535 MHz)

Four submitters addressed this band with diverse perspectives.

One submitter supported the ACMA's review for terrestrial services, noting interest for WBB use aligned with other international jurisdictions.

Two submitters raised concerns about potential impacts on existing users. One submitter emphasised retaining aeronautical telemetry priority (ARSP AUS3) and noted ITU-R findings suggesting AMS/IMT coexistence is not practical. Another submitter did not support terrestrial IMT in 1518–1535 MHz which overlaps MSS allocations and noted adjacent band compatibility issues.

One submitter recommended delaying the next consultation until a public interest review of incumbent MSS licence renewals for D2D and UOMO candidate bands is completed.

Our response

We note comments from stakeholders and have decided to not progress this work item in the 2026-27 period to focus our resources on more immediate priorities. We will reassess the timing and priority of this work item in the FYSO 2027–32.

1800 MHz and 2 GHz bands outside of spectrum-licensed areas

Three submitters commented on this item. Submitters broadly supported reform of the 1800 MHz and 2 GHz bands outside spectrum-licensed areas but differed on the approach.

One submitter reiterated support for the alignment of planning arrangements with 3GPP standards and for the adoption of harmonised emission requirements. One argued that apparatus-licensed use of these frequency bands in remote Australia should be separated between private wireless and public mobile networks, with the 1800 MHz band allocated to MNOs via spectrum licensing on an area-wide or regional basis. Another submitter suggested that this work item be postponed until the 'long-term use of the 1800 MHz band' (subject to a separate work item) has been examined holistically, to ensure that planning outcomes for the band nation-wide are not constrained by planning decisions in remote areas.

Our response

We note comments from submitters on this work item and aim to consult on our revised planning options in Q4 2026.

The 'long-term use of the 1800 MHz band for rail services' work item is intended to be limited to the frequency ranges and areas that are currently subject to spectrum licences held by state rail authorities. We are of the view that our consideration of new planning options in the 1800 MHz band in remote areas can be progressed before we have determined the best long-term use of the spectrum currently held by the rail authorities.

Implementation

Upper 6 GHz (6425–7125 MHz)

Eight submitters addressed the upper 6 GHz band.

Several submitters supported prioritising replanning and allocation for IMT/WBB use. These submitters called for alignment with international practices and WRC-27 outcomes, to provide access to at least three contiguous 200 MHz channels by 2028/2029, implement a single allocation process avoiding fragmented outcomes, early consideration of spectrum above 7100 MHz (including 7125–7250 MHz), and bringing forward consultation timelines. One submitter urged reconsideration of the decision that television outside broadcast (TVOB) retain 7100–7125 MHz in favour of strategic 6G planning and suggested a new consultation on replanning the 7100–7425 MHz range.

Two submitters raised concerns about interference to incumbent satellite services. One supported standard-power radio local area networks (RLAN) with AFC outdoors in 5925–6425 MHz but warned that standard-power outdoor use in 6425–6585 MHz poses significant risk of harmful interference to safety-of-life services with sensitive GSO satellite receivers. Another proposed that operation in the 6425–6585 MHz band remain limited to low- and very-low-power use.

Our response

We acknowledge the comments about consultation and allocation timelines for WBB access to the frequency range 6585–7100 MHz (which we have previously decided will be allocated for WBB use in defined areas). We have decided to maintain the proposed timelines for our upcoming consultation on potential licensing arrangements and a draft re-allocation declaration (should spectrum licensing be the preferred view) in Q4 2026.

We also note comments about the anticipated mid-band spectrum needs to support the first 6G deployments and the suggestion that the frequency range 7100–7250 MHz could be considered as an extension of our new WBB spectrum allocation in the adjacent frequency range of 6585–7100 MHz.

Our December 2024 decision on the upper 6 GHz band will provide up to 515 MHz of spectrum that will support the first 6G deployments in Australia. This spectrum was identified for IMT use by WRC-23, is included in current 3GPP standards and subject to growing interest to be replanned for WBB use in other jurisdictions (notably in Europe). This is not the case for the lower 7 GHz band, where significant work is still needed to achieve the equivalent level of international harmonisation.

While we recognise the benefits of a hypothetical combined allocation of upper 6 GHz and lower 7 GHz spectrum in Australia (to avoid potential fragmentation of the band), several uncertainties and risks remain that need to be considered further before a new work item could be established. This includes balancing the risk of fragmentation between the upper 6 GHz and lower 7 GHz bands against the potential underutilisation of lower 7 GHz spectrum if it is ultimately replanned for WBB.

We aim to release an initial consultation paper in Q1 2027, which will help inform us of the merits or otherwise of elevating the frequency range 7100–7250 MHz to the Initial Investigation stage of our planning process.

2 GHz MSS (1980–2010 / 2170–2200 MHz)

Thirteen submitters addressed this band. This was the most responded to band planning topic.

Allocation approach

Three submitters opposed price-based allocation, arguing that apparatus licensing consistent with other MSS bands or administrative allocation is more appropriate.

Three submitters supported a competitive, multi-operator market structure with allocation open only to bona fide MSS operators with demonstrated capability. One supported 2 × 10 MHz and 2 × 15 MHz lots and recommended avoiding consolidation in the hands of a single operator, suggesting short-term initial assignments if UOMO timings cannot change.

Two submitters argued for MNO flexibility in spectrum access. One stated that access should be restricted to MNOs holding UOMO obligations, with control over spectrum necessary for effective coordination. One argued that the allocation mechanism should maintain flexibility for MNOs to change satellite network operators over time.

One submitter supported allocation limited to satellite network operators, with conditions that MNOs have access to D2D services, and suggested taking more time to work through complex issues.

Another submitter recommended prioritising design features supporting regional deployment.

Set-aside for low-power / low-data-rate applications

Three submitters argued that setting aside 2 × 5 MHz for low-power, low-data-rate applications is sub-optimal. One noted that most contemporary TVOB uses MNO terrestrial networks and new satellite technologies, and recommended a flexible, technology-neutral approach relying on coexistence mechanisms rather than pre-allocation.

Protection of adjacent services and regulatory requirements

One submitter raised protection concerns. It recommended managing out-of-band interference to adjacent MSS operations and requiring prospective licensees to have ITU frequency assignments in conformity with ITU Radio Regulations.

Our response

In the draft FYSO, we suggested that we may consult on the allocation instruments in Q2 2026 and commence the allocation in Q4 2026.

Given the market and technological complexities and rapid rate of change in the industry, the ACMA does not propose to conduct an allocation in these timeframes. Instead, we plan to conduct further consultation on our proposed approach in Q4 2026 assessing the potential implications of the allocation on competition, consumers and industry while the various technology approaches mature. We will also consider the role that the allocation may play in supporting the UOMO and its role alongside other spectrum bands.

Subject to the feedback received from this consultation, we would propose to issue allocation instruments for consultation in Q2 2027, with a proposed allocation to commence in Q4 2027, though we will continue to investigate options to allow the allocation of the spectrum as soon as possible, including for trialling or testing services.

In determining outcomes in the long-term public interest, the ACMA will consider a range of factors including encouraging competition in the band, spectrum efficiency and consumer access to services and devices, the latter in the context of the introduction of the UOMO. The ACMA will also take into account decisions made on spectrum use in international jurisdictions which may impact on the Australian market, particularly in regard to device availability.

We acknowledge comments regarding the 2 × 5 MHz segment for low-power, low-data-rate applications. We note that planning, licensing and allocation arrangements have been implemented for this segment, and given the presence of incumbent licensees, we do not plan to revisit these decisions.

Other bands

13 GHz

One submitter requested that the ACMA consider replanning 12.75–13.25 GHz, currently fragmented between point-to-point licensees and TVOB use, suggesting it could serve point-to-point services displaced from lower bands. They asked the ACMA to take a holistic view of current and future TVOB spectrum needs in the context of 6 GHz replanning.

2–10 MHz (HF)

One submitter proposed a new HF allocation of 12 single-sideband channels between 2–10 MHz with maximum 100 W PEP.

3.4–4.0 GHz

Four submitters addressed this band, advocating for improvements to spectrum utility. One submitter recommended aligning the spurious emissions domain upper edge to 4040 MHz. Another submitter reiterated previous requests to improve utility and prepare for defragmentation. Similarly, one submitter wanted regulator-led defragmentation like the 1800 MHz approach in 2013.

One submitter encouraged timely allocation of unsold lots in the 3.4 GHz band to enable more efficient spectrum use and support fixed wireless service delivery, highlighting cost, operational and transition impacts of inefficient arrangements.

One submitter asked for clarity on the status of the geographic discontinuity condition for area-wide licences in this band and whether the ACMA will retroactively review existing licences to align with this condition.

Our response

Regarding the comments about allocating the unsold 3.4 GHz lots, we will consider the merits of developing a work program to allocate unsold lots in that band and others in a subsequent FYSO.

We note comments about potential improvements to technical arrangements for 3.4 GHz band spectrum licences. We have decided not to commence consideration of these issues in the 2026–27 period. However, we will consider including this as a potential new work item in the draft FYSO 2027–32.

We have implemented the geographic discontinuity condition in RALI MS47, which will now applly to new AWLs. We may consider if and how this condition should be applied to existing AWLs at a later date.

We also note requests for the ACMA to lead a defragmentation exercise for spectrum licences in the band. Our view is that industry is best placed to undertake most of this work; however, we will engage with stakeholders in the second half of 2026 to better understand where we can assist. Agreed priorities, timeframes and stakeholder cooperation will be key to determining the scope and feasibility of any resulting work.

Forward allocation work plan

2 GHz MSS allocation

Key views on the 2 GHz MSS allocation are summarised in the 2 GHz MSS (1980–2010 / 2170–2200 MHz) subsection.

Optimising established planning frameworks

Body scanners

Twelve submitters addressed body scanner licensing. This was the topic attracting the largest number of individual submissions.

All submitters unanimously sought expansion of the *Radiocommunications (Body Scanning – Aviation Security) Class Licence 2018* (body scanning class licence) to allow next-generation devices operating in the 20–40 GHz frequency range, with several requesting action within the current year's work program.

One submitter reported that trials undertaken since March 2025 have operated with no interference incidents, complaints or objections, and noted that next-generation body scanners may operate at up to 70 GHz. They strongly opposed any change to the ACMA's position to work on this issue. Two submitters reported operational benefits from ProVision 3 trials.

One submitter noted that the current limitations place Australia at odds with comparable jurisdictions and that entities subject to the *Security of Critical Infrastructure Act 2018* cannot implement body scanner solutions. Similarly, another submitter encouraged regulatory flexibility for new emergent technology and requested consultation on implementation pathways.

Finally, several submitters are considering upgrading to next-generation body scanners and requested timely amendment of the body scanning class licence.

Our response

We acknowledge that there are a number of stakeholders interested in amendments to the body scanning class licence.

As outlined in the FYSO, we are undertaking preliminary scoping studies into the requirements of body scanners and potential new market offerings, with a view to possibly reviewing the body scanning class licence.

As it is too early in the process to indicate the timing for consultation of any potential changes that result from these studies, we will announce progress and any timings in a future FYSO.

Broadcasting

One submitter addressed AM to FM conversion planning and expressed concerns that ACMA resources should not be concentrated on commercial conversions at the expense of community broadcasting. They urged the independent assessment of alternatives including DAB+ where conversions may negatively impact community broadcasters. They supported the consultation on remaking the *Broadcasting Services (Technical Planning) Guidelines 2017* and requested alignment of licence area plan (LAP) variations and digital radio channel planning where practicable.

They also emphasised the longstanding public value of community broadcasting and supported recognition of community services as part of the mix of primary broadcasting services under the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992*.

Finally, they supported the ACMA's broadcasting priorities but argued that community broadcasters must be explicitly included in digital radio planning and policy settings alongside commercial and national broadcasters.

Our response
Our broadcast planning priorities are directed to assist all industry sectors to serve the Australian community.

Our priorities include:

- converting commercial, community and national services from AM to FM in areas where FM spectrum is readily available
- improving coverage of national, commercial and community broadcasting services where spectrum is readily available
- making digital radio channel plans for regional DAB+ where a commercial licensee or national broadcaster has committed to a rollout
- supporting trials of new broadcasting technology.

We remain of the view that, given the role of commercial radio broadcasting licensees under the current digital radio legislative framework, their participation or endorsement is necessary before the ACMA will take the necessary regulatory steps to enable community radio broadcasting licensees to roll out digital radio on their own.

The scope of any changes wider than the *Broadcasting Services (Technical Planning) Guidelines 2017* was outlined in the consultation paper released in Q3 2026.

Low interference potential devices (LIPD)

Two submitters addressed LIPD matters. One proposed refining the generic UWB listing to technology-specific applications aligned with ETSI standards for 6–8.5 GHz. One noted LIPD spectrum is suitable for small UAS but inadequate for medium/large UAS CNPC due to low power and congestion constraints.

Our response
The existing and pending ETSI standards for 6–8.5 GHz will be considered for addition during the next LIPD update. The timing of the next review of the *Radiocommunications (Low Interference Potential Devices) Class Licence 2025* will be outlined in the next FYSO.

Our response on UAS is outlined in the Drones and emerging aviation technologies subsection.

Consideration of higher-power 6 GHz band RLAN

Seven submitters addressed this topic, with significantly divergent views regarding the consideration of higher-power 6 GHz band and RLAN.

Two submitters supported extending AFC-enabled higher-power RLAN. One advocated maintaining flexibility while WA WBB deployment matures and allowing opportunistic RLAN

access with AFC where WA WBB is planned but not yet deployed. While another endorsed AFC and database-assisted sharing frameworks.

One submitter supported further consultation on AFC subject to appropriate protections for incumbent point-to-point links, noting metropolitan WA WBB allocation would cause less disruption than regional allocations.

Three submitters raised objections or significant concerns. One argued standard-power RLAN should not be authorised above 6425 MHz to protect future wide-area WBB and questioned conclusions from the WISPAU AFC trial. One requested the ACMA place further AFC work on hold until the future of 6 GHz is resolved, strongly opposing dynamic spectrum access regimes allowing pre-emption that provides insufficient certainty for long-term investment. One warned standard-power outdoor RLAN in 6425–6585 MHz poses significant risk of harmful interference to safety-of-life satellite services.

One submitter recommended prohibiting standard-power outdoor RLANs in 6425–6575 MHz even with AFC.

Our response

Our response to comments about consideration of higher-power 6 GHz band RLAN are outlined in the Spectrum sharing subsection.

Satellite planning

Seven submitters addressed satellite planning optimisation.

Two submitters pointed out the need for regulatory certainty.

One submitter pointed out that DC-MSS-IMT systems must not cause harmful interference to existing MSS services and must prioritise protection of incumbent infrastructure, including established ITU MSS interference protection criteria.

Another submitter argued for a D2D framework balancing consumer mobile broadband and industry-oriented connectivity, noting D2D Internet of Things services operate only in MSS bands and provide valuable data collection for agriculture, disaster resilience and logistics.

One submitter supported 17.3–17.7 GHz allocation to NGSO and recommended an updated business operating procedure (BOP) for NGSO ESIM in the Ka-band.

Finally, one submitter emphasised that ITU filing ownership should not be determinative but should be a pre-requisite in the national licensing process.

ESPZ

Two submitters raised concerns about Earth station protection zones (ESPZs). One highlighted that ESPZs at Uralla, Moree and Roma impose overly conservative constraints on the 3.4 GHz band, leading to underutilisation and limiting fixed wireless capacity in regional areas. Another submitter proposed reviewing ESPZs in C-Band, encouraging teleport relocation to ESPZs, and rationalising ESPZs where there is little prospect of genuine use.

Our response
We acknowledge comments on regulatory certainty for satellite services, protection of existing MSS services and infrastructure, and the regulatory settings that should apply to emerging D2D services.

The allocation of 17.3–17.7 GHz to the FSS is being considered internationally under WRC-27 agenda item 1.4. Consistent with our usual approach, we do not generally progress domestic planning action ahead of relevant WRC outcomes. We will continue to monitor international developments and consider any implications for domestic planning following WRC-27.

Regarding NGSO ESIM in Ka-band, we routinely review our business operating procedures for currency, effectiveness and clarity, and will consider an update to the relevant BOP through our usual process.

We note stakeholder comments on the impact of ESPZ on spectrum utility in relevant areas. These arrangements play an important role in protecting authorised earth station operations from harmful interference. We do not propose to undertake a broader review of ESPZ arrangements in 2026-27. We may consider these issues further as part of future work on satellite planning and coexistence frameworks, having regard to spectrum demand, incumbent services and broader work program priorities.

Q/V bands and higher frequencies

Five submitters addressed satellite planning for Q/V bands. While another submitter urged the ACMA to enable access to expanded Ka, Q/V, E-band, W-band, and terahertz frequencies, and to consider default rules that expedite satellite access in new bands with similar characteristics to existing shared bands.

Two submitters sought progression beyond interim arrangements to provide greater regulatory certainty. One encouraged moving mmWave satellite bands from monitoring to initial investigation. Another appreciated the ACMA implementing interim Q/V-band licensing and supported the planned 2026–27 review to provide certainty for gateway earth stations. Another submitter welcomed interim W-band arrangements and encourages transition toward a permanent, predictable regulatory framework for W-band and other high-frequency bands to support investment certainty and scaled deployment.

One submitter sought long-term regulatory certainty for Q/V-band, urging the ACMA to treat gateway earth stations as incumbents rather than subjecting them to short-term, non-renewable licensing arrangements. They recommend extending Embargo 49 protection to planned earth stations at Merredin and Alice Springs and commencing work on long-term arrangements including coordination with other primary services.

Our response
We note comments regarding the interim arrangements recorded in Embargo 80 for Q/V bands, including longer-term licensing certainty for gateway earth stations, incumbency status for replanning purposes, application to additional locations and development of longer-term arrangements regarding the 26 GHz spectrum re-allocation areas.

As stated in the draft FYSO, we are considering whether changes can be made to the interim arrangements recorded in Embargo 80 to provide greater certainty for gateway earth

stations, depending on resourcing and competing requirements. We do not propose any specific change to those arrangements at this time.

We also acknowledge suggestions to streamline access to emerging satellite bands through more standardised or default licensing approaches. We will continue to monitor domestic and international developments and consider these issues in future work program priorities.

Embargo 49 was established to support the development of space communications facilities in and around the Mingenew site. We do not currently intend to extend those arrangements to the sites proposed in the submission. Earth stations at these and other locations may be licensed under our usual coordination and assignment arrangements, which provide protection for coordinated services.

We acknowledge interest in progressing work on the mmWave bands in the monitoring stage of our planning process, but do not propose to advance them at this time.

Reform of equivalent power flux density (EPFD) limits

One submitter argued that current EPFD limits for NGSO systems are outdated and unnecessarily restrict performance. They urged the ACMA to apply ITU Radio Regulations Article 22.5CA to enable more flexible domestic limits ahead of global ITU reform, noting recent action by the United States to adopt a modernised framework.

Our response

We note the views on EPFD limits and the potential application of Article 22.5CA. We have included a new work item in the FYSO 2026–31 the potential implications for international developments for the Australian regulatory framework. We will consider broader stakeholder views as part of this work.

Ongoing review of spectrum planning, assignment and coordination requirements

Four submitters addressed ongoing review matters.

One submitter requested review of repeater and beacon planning arrangements including amendments to RALI LM8.

Another submitter noted the importance of providing 112 MHz channels in other bands for point-to-point links to support higher capacity backhaul.

Our response
An update to RALI LM8 has been completed and will be released shortly. Any review of repeater and beacon planning arrangements will be considered under a future update.

Review of spectrum licence technical frameworks

Three submitters addressed technical framework reviews.

Two submitters raised band-specific technical issues. One supported updating band-edge constraints in 2.3 GHz and modernising protection criteria to reflect contemporary deployment. While another proposed reviewing the 3.4 GHz registration exemption threshold to align with 3GPP specifications and advocated removing the in-band equivalent isotropically radiated power (EIRP) limit operating above 3700 MHz.

Our response
We note comments from stakeholders. We have decided not to review the technical framework for 2.3 GHz and 3.4 GHz band spectrum licences in the 2026–27 period to focus our resources toward other priorities. We will reassess the timing and priority for the possible inclusion of this work in the FYSO 2027–32.

Co-operative intelligent transport systems

One submitter supported continued monitoring and linking Australian developments with European standards.

Our response
We note the support and continue to monitor international and domestic developments in co-operative intelligent transport systems.

Licensing and regulatory development

Expiring spectrum licences (ESL)

Four submitters addressed ESLs.

Two submitters raised pricing-related concerns. These issues are discussed in the Pricing section of this paper.

Both submitters emphasised the ESL work program must continue to be prioritised and proceed to schedule.

One submitter stated that it is imperative to avoid repeating the 3.4–4.0 GHz experience, where they considered piecemeal allocations created inefficiency and fragmentation, and that the 2.5 GHz band should remain in scope for optimisation.

One submitter recommended enforceable regional deployment benchmarks as conditions of renewed licences and geographically differentiated pricing.

Our response

Stakeholder views on ESL pricing, including on geographically differentiated pricing, are addressed in the Pricing section.

In response to comments recommending enforceable deployment benchmarks, we previously undertook a comprehensive body of work and provided advice to the then Minister about the use of a range of licence conditions and regulatory approaches for promoting spectrum utilisation. Our advice concluded that the inclusion of such conditions in spectrum licences was not appropriate in the Australian context, however that a place-based secondary access framework may have the potential to promote competition and consumer choice in regional, rural and remote Australia. This work is ongoing.

Place-based access framework

Three submitters addressed the secondary licensing framework with divergent views. Questions were raised about the timing of this work and whether the framework would go ahead.

One submitter advocated for place-based secondary access to enable third parties to deliver local connectivity for agriculture, farming and bushfire monitoring.

One submitter argued that issuing additional licences across spectrum licences, even with pre-emption rights, diminishes value. They stated that if the government plans to introduce a framework, this must be revealed prior to renewal prices, and given timing constraints, suggested the framework can be removed from the work plan.

Our response

We are continuing to explore the merits of a place-based access framework and other options to improve secondary access with the Department. Pending Government consideration of next steps, we will consult on demand for place-based spectrum access.

Drones and emerging aviation technologies

Two submitters addressed this topic. One submitter called for more proactive spectrum initiatives and regulation for medium/large UAS including broader access to 5030–5091 MHz, continued scientific licensing for trials, and exploration of FSS allocations for UAS communications. They support cross-agency collaboration on UAS. Another submitter sought ongoing consultation on an agreed approach to regulation of drones and Advanced Air Mobility.

Our response

Interim Aeronautical Mobile (Route) Service (AM(R)S) arrangements are available for terrestrial line-of-sight (LoS) CNPC within the 5055–5065 MHz range. With calls for expansion of the available frequency range to support medium/large UAS use, this has not been reflected by demand for more licences – to date, only one licensee has made use of the interim arrangements.

We remain open to scientific licence applications to support UAS CNPC where the interim licensing arrangements are unsuitable, and we continue to monitor international and domestic developments in drones and emerging aviation technologies.

We continue to collaborate across government on unmanned systems. This includes on proposed approaches to Australia's drone security, on which the Department of Home Affairs consulted earlier this year.

Amateur radio

A submitter raised multiple issues including concerns about assessment resit delays, syllabi design, proof-of-licence documentation, call sign inequities, and declining effectiveness following transition to class licensing.

They also emphasised that the amateur service as a longstanding public service that supports innovation and national resilience and called for a dedicated ACMA work program to support its sustainability. It also argued that Australia risks falling behind global practice in amateur regulation and spectrum access.

Further, they raised a number of proposed reforms and offered to be an active partner in delivering them. These relate to qualification examination syllabi, high power and EME compliance frameworks, repeater and beacon licence conditions, and emission bandwidth restrictions in the 51–52 MHz segment of the 6-metre band.

Our response

We continually work to improve our amateur radio services, and welcome suggestions on ways we can improve the effectiveness of amateur radio service delivery.

Some matters raised in the submission have been addressed previously, especially those on proof-of-licence/qualification documentation. If amateurs encounter specific instances where documentation on their amateur operator status is not recognised, we encourage them to contact us, providing sufficient details so that we can work with them to resolve the recognition issue.

As outlined in the draft FYSO 2026–31, in Q1 2027 we plan to consult on changes to the amateur class licence and the *Radiocommunications Accreditation (Amateur Radio*

Examinations) Rules 2023. This consultation will, amongst other things, examine concerns about ‘island’ call signs and call sign inequities for permanent residents of VK9 locations.

In Q4 2026, we will also commence work on the syllabi for amateur radio examinations, starting with developing a Regulations examination syllabus. Syllabi consultation will occur with accredited assessors.

We note the list of further desired amateur radio reforms. In particular, the desire for high power amateur radio operation, which remains on our list of future amateur radio reforms. The timing for future amateur radio reforms will be outlined in future FYSOs.

UOMO work program

Two submitters addressed the UOMO work program. One recommended bringing the program forward to Q2 2026 and requested clarification on equitable coverage where only one primary universal outdoor mobile provider is available. One submitter emphasised collaborative consultation with industry in setting UOMO standards, noting that technology is at an early stage of maturity.

Our response

We intend to proceed with developing a UOMO work program, by publishing a consultation paper in Q4 2026 and commencing implementation soon after. This will focus on ensuring spectrum availability in the external territories. Consistent with the terms of the Telecommunications Legislation Amendment (Universal Outdoor Mobile Obligation) Act 2026, access, reliability and other standards are a matter for the Department.

Pricing

Expiring Spectrum Licences (ESL) pricing

Two submitters raised concerns about ESL pricing. One argued that benchmark-derived market pricing may not adequately account for public benefits delivered through fixed wireless services in regional and remote areas and raised concerns about the methodology and risk of inefficient outcomes. One submission claimed that ESL prices that are set too high will constrain industry capacity and result in higher customer costs, especially with required 6G allocations. Separately, one submitter supported geographically differentiated pricing to facilitate regional deployment outcomes.

Our response

As set out in detail in our preferred views on ESL pricing, we consider establishing a market price for each ESL band, derived through benchmarking, is the most effective means of promoting public interest outcomes consistent with the ESL public interest criteria (PIC), the Act and the Radiocommunications (Ministerial Policy Statement – Expiring Spectrum Licences) Instrument 2024 (MPS). Prices derived from benchmarking incorporate information about future demand expectations, anticipated technological developments and capital investment requirements.

We recognise stakeholder concern about the impacts of setting prices too high but note that these risks must be balanced against the risks associated with undervaluation, such as inefficient investment signals, spectrum under-utilisation and a potential reduction in service quality. Market prices support sustainable investment outcomes without distorting incentives or encouraging inefficient spectrum use, including in regional areas.

While some submissions advocated for lower spectrum prices on the basis that this would free up capital for network investment, we note that lower prices do not guarantee that cost savings will be reinvested in infrastructure or innovation. Investment and innovation decisions are driven by expectations of future demand, revenue and competitive positioning, rather than input costs alone.

We note that regional connectivity is an important objective reflected in the MPS and ESL PIC. We consider that prices reflecting global market benchmarks remain appropriate, including for regional spectrum. We do not support differentiated pricing for spectrum held in regional areas, particularly as $/MHz/pop pricing for spectrum licences and for some types of area-based apparatus licences means that licences in regional areas with lower population density already provides for lower prices. As spectrum prices are not a primary driver of network investment decisions, geographic price differentiation is unlikely to materially improve regional connectivity outcomes.

Spectrum Pricing Review implementation

Two submitters raised concerns about apparatus licence taxes on space and earth station licences below 5 GHz, stating these are significantly higher than comparable international jurisdictions.

Our response

We acknowledge the concerns raised by the satellite industry about taxes below 5 GHz. We note that we are reviewing prices for apparatus licence prices governed by the apparatus licence tax formula (which includes Space and Earth licences) in the 520 MHz to 5 GHz

range as part of a consultation paper we released in June 2026. This consultation paper incorporated stakeholder feedback to our earlier consultation on a pricing review of the 2.69 GHz to 5 GHz band.

Compliance priorities

One submitter supported the ongoing focus on interference activities and addressing non-compliant radiocommunications devices.

Our response
We are continuing to work with online platforms to encourage participation in the Equipment Safety Pledge, which we launched in December 2025.

The pledge aims to proactively address the risks surrounding the sale of non-compliant radiocommunications devices to Australian based consumers online, including risks of interference.

We are continuing our education and information programs to educate consumers about the risks of non-compliant and illegal devices and are monitoring signatories' progress against the pledge.

We also have established interference investigation practices, which are effective and meet the guidelines set out in the ITU Radio Regulations.