Australian Government | acma Australian Communications and Media Authority

SMS Sender ID Register

Consultation on proposed cost-recovery arrangements

NOVEMBER 2026

Background

Scams are a significant and increasing threat to the economic and social wellbeing of Australians. The short messaging service (SMS) is a key channel used by scammers to reach Australians. From 1 January to 7 October 2026, 21,695 text message scams were reported to Scamwatch, with reported losses of over $11.7 million[1].

Many text scams involve impersonation, where scammers try to convince recipients that a message is from a legitimate entity. A common tactic has been to send SMS messages with sender IDs (shortened brand or agency names that appear at the top of messages) imitating well-known brands and government agencies, such as the National Australia Bank, Commonwealth Bank of Australia and myGov.

On 23 April 2023, the Australian Government announced that, as part of its Fighting Scams initiative, the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) would implement an SMS Sender ID Register (the Register) to prevent these types of scams. The Register commenced on 1 July 2026.

The Register impacts all businesses, organisations and agencies that send SMS and multimedia message services (MMS) with sender IDs, as well as consumers who receive these messages. Entities who send communications using SMS and MMS with sender IDs need to register their sender IDs to avoid their messages being disrupted. If an SMS or MMS is sent with an unregistered sender ID, the sender ID will be replaced with 'Unverified', indicating to recipients to exercise caution, as the message may be a scam.

The Register protects:

- consumers from receiving SMS and MMS scams with sender IDs that impersonate entities, such as banks, retailers, road-toll companies and government agencies
- businesses and organisations subject to SMS and MMS impersonation scams.

While many scams originate overseas, there are also many legitimate, time-sensitive and critical messages sent to Australian consumers from international entities. The Register provides an avenue for international entities to send messages with appropriate safeguards.

When the Register started on 1 July, 39,562 sender IDs were registered by 27,361 businesses and organisations. There were also 400 participating telecommunications providers. These numbers have continued to increase. On 19 October 2026, there were 62,406 registered sender IDs, 42,148 participating businesses and organisations, and 499 unique participating telecommunications providers.

Legislation and consultation

On 30 September 2025, the Minister for Communications (the Minister) amended a direction to the ACMA to determine a standard under the *Telecommunications Act 1997* (the Act). The amended direction required the ACMA to determine a standard by no later than 7 October 2025 and for the Register to be implemented by no later than 1 July 2026.

[1] Scam statistics | Scamwatch

The ACMA accordingly made the *Telecommunications (SMS Sender ID Register) Industry Standard 2025*[2] (the Standard) on 7 October 2025. The Standard sets out rules for the telecommunications industry to give effect to the Register. The ACMA has also made the *SMS Sender ID Register (Application, Access and Administration) Determination 2025* (the Determination) under section 484L of the Act. The Determination sets out the operational rules for the Register, including application and registration requirements.

This consultation is being undertaken to support settling the approach to cost recovery, consistent with the Australian Government Charging Policy[3].

The proposed charging arrangements are based on the ACMA's preliminary assessment of options, and final arrangements will be subject to consideration of stakeholder input.

It is noted that the former Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts[4] completed a cost-benefit analysis in October 2024, which anticipated the Register would operate on a 'user-pays' basis, and that participating entities will be charged fees to recover government costs from operating the Register.[5]

Further details and our proposed approach are set out in this consultation paper. We will consider and use the feedback received from stakeholders as part of this consultation process to prepare a charging model for government consideration which, if approved, will be administered by the ACMA. Before charging commences, details relating to cost recovery will be documented in a Regulatory Charging Statement (RCS)[6] for consultation.

[2] *Telecommunications (SMS Sender ID Register) Industry Standard 2025*
[3] What is the Australian Government Charging Framework? | Department of Finance
[4] Following machinery of government changes in May 2025, the Department is now known as the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts.
[5] SMS Sender ID Register CBA Report
[6] RCS replace the former Cost Recovery Implementation Statements (CRIS) from 1 October 2026.

Cost recovery

The ACMA and the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts (the Department) were provided $10.9 million ($10.5 for ACMA and $0.4 for the Department) over 4 years from 2023–24 (plus $2.2 million a year ongoing from 2028–29) to establish and enforce the Register.

The recovery of costs will be consistent with the Australian Government Charging Policy, which helps government agencies to plan, implement and review their charging activities. The underlying principle is that, where an identifiable individual or group creates extra or specific demand for a specific regulatory activity, they should be charged for the activity.

Key considerations for government regulation include whether:

- there is an identifiable individual or group
- it is efficient and effective to charge
- the activity is consistent with the Australian Government policy objectives.

Subject to further government decisions, we are proposing to recover operational and administrative expenses (that is, ongoing costs incurred).

We propose that the ongoing operational costs associated with running the Register will be recovered from entities that participate in the Register and register their sender IDs. This would include telecommunications providers who register their own sender IDs.

Participating entities are organisations that have been approved by the ACMA to participate in the Register and register sender IDs. Further information on types of participating entities is outlined in the Register Applicants section below.

Register applicants

Under Part 24B of the Act, the following entities may apply to the ACMA for approval to participate in the Register and to register sender IDs:

a) an individual
b) a body corporate
c) a corporation sole
d) a body politic
e) a government entity (within the meaning of the A New Tax System (Australian Business Number) Act 1999)
f) a partnership
g) any other unincorporated association or body of persons
h) a trust
i) superannuation fund (within the meaning of the *Superannuation Industry (Supervision) Act 1993*).

In accordance with the requirements of the standard, entity applications are initiated by a telecommunications provider (including messaging providers) on an entity's behalf.

Charging type

The ACMA is exploring a sender ID registration application fee, charged up front – and the same fee to apply for re-registration annually. An application fee is recoverable under section 60 of the *Australian Communications and Media Authority Act 2005* (the ACMA Act), as the cost of the activity can be attributed to a single entity.

Please note that under the Australian Government Charging Policy, costs associated with administration of the Register rules and compliance and enforcement cannot be recovered via an application fee (as the effort is broad and cannot be directly attributed to single entities). Accordingly, and separate to this consultation, the ACMA is also considering the extent to which these costs can be recovered via levy. We may conduct targeted consultation on this matter in due course with potentially impacted participating telecommunications providers.

Sender ID registration application fee

Part 24B of the Act states that an application for approval to participate in the Register (made under section 484F of the Act) and an application to register a sender ID (made under section 484G of the Act) must be accompanied by the applicable charge (if any) fixed by a determination under section 60 of the ACMA Act.

Starting from 1 July 2027, the ACMA proposes to:

- charge entities a sender ID registration application fee for the purposes of section 484G of the Act, to be paid at the time of application, for each sender ID. The ACMA will not register (or re-register) a sender ID until the fee is paid
- apply a 12-month registration period for sender IDs.

At the end of each 12-month period, owners of registered sender IDs will be required to re-register each sender ID if they wish to remain on the register, using a new application

process that will be included in the Determination. The ACMA will separately consult on any changes to the Determination.

The sender ID registration application fee will therefore be charged to entities every 12 months. The fee will likely vary from year to year depending on the number of sender IDs that are registered in any given year.

If the charging type is taken forward in the form proposed, the indicative costs for participating telcos and entities who have registered (or are re-registering) a sender ID, noting the exact costs will be subject to ongoing analysis and related data, would likely be between approx. $17 ($1,600,000 / 89,600 anticipated registered sender IDs at 30 June 2027 = 17) and $25 ($1,600,000 / 62,400 registered sender IDs as at 19 October 2026 = 25.4) per application, where $1,600,000 is the estimated annual operational cost.

For completeness, if the number of registered sender IDs decreases, then the costs per application would rise beyond the indicative amount of $25.

The sender ID application fee is intended to recover the ACMA's ongoing operational costs for:

- responding to enquiries about the Register and registration
- assessing and approving registration applications to make sure that sender IDs are only registered by legitimate entities and their authorised contacts
- operating and maintaining the Register.

The fee would be charged at the time of registration. It would apply irrespective of whether or not the sender ID is ultimately approved for registration, and would not vary based on the length of time an approved sender ID is subsequently registered. For example, if someone registers a sender ID with an expiry period of 3 months, the fee would be the same as sender ID registrations that do not specify an expiry date.

Similarly, the ACMA is also considering whether, instead of a sender ID registration expiring 12 months after a sender ID is registered, all sender IDs registrations would expire on 30 June each year. An advantage of this approach is there would be no need for entities and telcos to keep track of or be reminded about registration dates for individual sender IDs.

The sender ID registration application fee will not be applied retrospectively. The ACMA proposes that, when the new fee arrangements commence on 1 July 2027, owners of registered sender ID that are already on the Register will be required to re-apply using a new application process and pay the applicable fee.

The ACMA proposes to make a determination under section 60 of the ACMA Act to fix this fee. In addition, we will also amend the Determination to provide for a specific registration period.

While permissible under Part 24B of the Act, the ACMA does not propose to charge an application fee for approvals to participate in the Register under section 484F of the Act. The ACMA's view is that charging 2 separate application fees would introduce unnecessary additional administrative complexity for all parties.

Related issues for consideration

The ACMA is considering the most efficient way to recover the sender ID registration application fee. As the vast majority of applications to register sender IDs are made through telcos, the ACMA is seeking submissions about whether the application fee could be provided to the ACMA by the participating originating telcos when submitting applications.

The way a telco obtains a fee from an entity would be a matter for each telco - whether it requires the payment up front, or if the telco pays the fee to the ACMA and subsequently bills the entity (prepaid or in arrears).

This approach may particularly be prudent for applications received from certified telcos, as entities who apply through certified telcos generally do not have any direct contact with the ACMA or our systems. Telcos already have a commercial relationship with entities who apply via telcos to register sender IDs, and the ACMA is aware that telcos already charge fees associated with sender ID services.

The ACMA is also considering if there should be any exemptions or lower costs for certain types of entities, such as charities, not-for-profit organisations and government agencies. Requiring all entities to pay the same amount may have an adverse financial impact on some entities and there is a risk that the charges may affect participation in the Register and, as a result, reduce consumer protections.

Other options considered

To recover the ongoing operational costs, the ACMA must comply with the Act, which sets out that a charge fixed by the ACMA must accompany an application under either section 484F or 484G. Consequently, the ACMA could charge fees for applications to participate in the Register in addition to, or instead of, charging for applications to register each sender ID (as proposed).

When charging a fee for an application to participate in the Register, the ACMA could charge different fees for telcos compared to entities (as the applications are different in nature) or could consider setting pro-rata fees, or different fees for registration and re-registration.

These options are not being proposed as they would create unnecessary complexity and burden to participants and the ACMA. However, we welcome any feedback on these matters.

Cost recovery implementation date

The ACMA will prepare a regulatory charging statement in accordance with the Australian Government Cost Recovery Policy before any charging can commence.

The ACMA will not be able to commence charging until cost recovery arrangements and implementation processes are approved. This will likely be during the 2027–28 financial year.

Financial forecasts

Forecast revenue

On 19 October 2026, there were 62,406 registered sender IDs and 42,148 participating entities. The number of sender IDs registered will continue to change over time, as additional users sign up to the Register and some entities deregister their sender IDs. We expect the numbers to stabilise. Seasonal demand will be clearly understood once the Register has been in operation for a few years.

Current application numbers are currently at around 800 per week, meaning there may be another 27,000 sender IDs registered before 30 June 2027. We note that registration numbers may also increase in peak periods, such as leading into Christmas.

The application of fees may also influence downward demand drivers in terms of de-registration of current sender IDs, consolidation of sender ID use (by entities that have multiple sender IDs registered) and general movements to other platforms to transact with customers (such as apps).

Therefore, the initial fees are likely to change in future years, as more reliable data is gathered for financial modelling. On balance, we expect application fees to reduce in future due to their being more sender IDs registered.

Forecast costs

Forecast costs to operate the Register will be reviewed annually. Forecast costs may be adjusted for estimated changes in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and other changes.

At this stage, the ACMA's indicative forecast costs and revenue for the operation of the Register are set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Register forecast indicative costs and revenue

Charging type	Component	Forecast 2027–28	Forecast 2028–29	Forecast 2029–30	Total
		($m)	($m)	($m)	($m)
Fees	Operational expense related to sender ID registration applications **(Type A)**	1.6	1.7	1.7	**5.0**
	Total revenue to be recovered	**1.6**	**1.7**	**1.7**	**5.0**

Relevant legislation and impact analysis

The following documents are relevant to the operation of the Register:

- Telecommunications Amendment (SMS Sender ID Register) Act 2024
- Telecommunications Act 1997
- Telecommunications (SMS Sender ID Register) Industry Standard 2025
- SMS Sender ID Register (Application, Access and Administration) Determination 2025
- Explanatory Memorandum - Telecommunications Amendment (SMS Sender ID Register) Bill 2024
- SMS Sender ID Register | The Office of Impact Analysis.

Specific areas for comment

We are seeking views from stakeholders, particularly from entities that communicate with consumers via SMS and MMS using sender IDs to help inform the recovery of ongoing operational Register costs. We welcome submissions on any aspect of the proposal, however we are specifically requesting views on the following questions. Please provide detailed explanations and an evidence base to support views where applicable.

Question 1

Does the proposed model provide an appropriate mechanism to recover the ongoing operational costs of the Register under the Australian Government Charging Policy? If not, please explain why.

Question 2

Provide detail about any alternative model(s) that could be used to recover the ongoing operational costs of the Register, including in relation to the proposed charging type.

Question 3

In relation to the application fee, do you agree with the proposed administration arrangements, including:

- only charging for applications to register a sender ID (and not charging for applications to participate in the Register)?
- not charging pro-rata amounts for registrations?
- telcos providing the fee with an application and recouping any costs from their customers who register sender IDs?

Are alternative options available?

Question 4

Do you agree that applications should remain current for 12 months before requiring re-registration? Should an alternative period by considered? If so, why? Should there be a common date each year when every registration ends or should each registration remain current for the 12-month period from the date of registration?

Question 5

Should the application fee include exemptions or lower costs for certain entities, such as charities, not-for-profit organisations and government agencies? On what basis? What cost or exemptions should apply?

If so, what other criteria or approach should be considered when determining which entities should be given a lower fee or charge or an exemption?

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:
  Manager – Reducing Scams Section
  Australian Communications and Media Authority
  PO Box 13112. Law Courts Melbourne VIC 3000
- The closing date for submissions is COB, 4 December 2026.

Alternatively, submissions and enquiries can be emailed to:
SenderIDRegister@acma.gov.au.

Publication of submissions

We publish submissions on our website, including personal information (such as names and contact details), except for information that you have claimed (and we have accepted) is confidential.

Confidential information will not be published or otherwise released unless required or authorised by law.

Privacy

View information about our policy on the publication of submissions, including collection of personal information during consultation and how we handle that information.

Information on the *Privacy Act 1988*, how to access or correct personal information, how to make a privacy complaint and how we will deal with any complaints, is available in our privacy policy.