
From: Ellie Read [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 28 June 2022 4:58 PM
To: Merger Authorisations
Subject: Telstra/TPG Merger submission

Dear ACCC,

I make this submission regarding the Telstra/TPG merger.

My name is Ellie Read and I have been a Franchisee/Licensee with Optus for 12 years. 12 years ago when I opened the store and brought choice of telco provider, the Warrnambool community were excited and happy to have the option for a true competitor with local knowledge. Today we assist people with their complex and basic telephone issues, like simply downloading the my Gov app, and we don't charge them to assist because we are part of this community; unlike other retail telco's in the area that charge a fee for basic assistance. In the past 12 years I have sponsored Football clubs, basketball, triathlons, running festivals, art works, soccer, festivals, school fetes if I am asked I generally always give to a worthy community cause. I could not do this without customers having the choice of provider and accepting the competition to Telstra that we have brought to Warrnambool. In recent years we have had our network upgraded and we finally are a challenge to Telstra, NBN brought us more options to sell whole of business to households; and business has been good, however we still battle the perception that Telstra in the leader in regional.

Currently with the Telstra/TPG announcement I am afraid... I am scared... I worry for my business... I worry about my livelihood... I am concerned about my community having choice! If the Telstra/TPG merger goes ahead they will be so powerful we may not be able to compete with them, Telstra will gain control over an unprecedented proportion of national spectrum assets; Telstra will have the ability to offer a level of service that no other Mobile Network Operator could ever hope to compete with. Prices will increase if there is no competition, the merger will only further strengthen Telstra's regional dominance, and lead them to be complacent in maintaining their networks with less investment in regional, and loss of employment opportunities in shops like mine. The telecommunications industry was deregulated in 1989, why would we not remember why that was changed in the 1980's due to limited competition; and the outcomes of what anti-competition creates.

We already face massive cost of living increases, I implore the ACCC to block this merger to protect choice and competition for Australian's, and to help small businesses like mine to continue to serve their communities.

Kind Regards,

Ellie Read
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