

Re: Australian Competition & Consumer Commission Statement of Preliminary Views: Telstra-TPG deal

The Committee for Gippsland (C4G) is pleased to be able to provide this submission into the Australian Competition & Consumer Commission's (ACCC) statement of preliminary views regarding authorisation sought by Telstra and TPG for their proposed regional mobile network arrangements.

About Committee for Gippsland

C4G is a positive and influential voice for Gippsland helping to create a thriving and sustainable future for the region.

As the region's lead representative voice to government, C4G brings together groups representing various business and industry views and interests to collaborate on regional priorities, which bring broader benefit to Gippsland communities.

Membership of C4G includes a diversity of members from across the region including well established industry sectors such as energy, agriculture and health, through to new and emerging businesses as well as organisations which provide support services, education and professional advice.

About Gippsland

Gippsland is a diverse and resource driven region. It is 4.2 million hectares in size, with a population of 283,039 people. By 2026, this is forecast to grow to over 300,000 people. With an average travel time of around 90 minutes from Melbourne; Gippsland is serviced by freeway and V/Line rail. It is one of Victoria's eight key regional growth areas, along with Ballarat, Geelong and Bendigo.

The region produces 60 per cent of Victoria's electricity, 70 per cent of Victoria's gas (40 per cent of Eastern Australia's domestic gas), around 23 per cent of Australia's milk output, and about 26 per cent of Victoria's beef production.

Mining and agriculture are key industries and drivers of a vibrant supply chain however, historically energy production has been a large driver of economic activity in Gippsland due to the high concentration of power generators in the region. The region is positioning itself to transition away from coal-based power

production and embracing new clean energy technologies. Local investment continues in solar and battery storage and the region's wind competitive advantage is likely to secure Australia's first offshore wind farm.

Gippsland has a reasonably well diversified economy with health care and social assistance, education, tourism, and public administration being the largest emerging areas of economic activity which may be an outcome of government spending in response to power generation closures. The region also has a vibrant tourism industry, from snow peaks of Baw Baw National Park, the stunning beaches of Wilsons Promontory National Park to Gippsland Lakes- largest inland lakes system in the southern hemisphere.

Digital Connectivity a priority for Gippsland

Our response to the ACCC published Statement of Preliminary Views (SOPV) in response to the Telstra TPG regional multi-operator core network (MOCN) deal are as follows:

- C4G welcomes the approach the ACCC takes in the SOPV as it helps narrow the issues relevant to the ACCC's final decision
- There will be broad ranging benefits to regional and rural Australia, including Gippsland, of enhanced service quality to Telstra customers, improved TPG service and additional choice
- It is understood, that it is unlikely telecommunication competitors will withdraw from regional and rural Australia if the Telstra-TPG MOCN proceeds

A key priority outlined in the Committee for Gippsland's Strategic Plan (2021- 2024), under Regionalisation and Liveability, is to improve digital connectivity in the region to enable workforce mobility and strengthen communities.

Regional and rural customers deserve improved telecommunications services and C4G support any opportunity to enhance access to these services.

Yours Sincerely,



Tony Cantwell
CEO, Committee for Gippsland