

TELCO NEWS · MID-AUGUST 2026

Telco News Australia, Mid-August 2026: Six Items

An ombudsman calling for structural reform, a competition regulator reopening a question settled a decade ago, a communications regulator in the Federal Court, and a public league table of complaint handling.

Six developments, late July to mid-August 2026. The Ombudsman published a systemic report on regional, rural and remote telecommunications built from nearly 28,000 complaints and called for reform of the framework. The ACCC opened a twelve-month inquiry into regulating wholesale mobile access, including **domestic roaming**, a question the industry considered settled. The ACMA is in the Federal Court against Optus Mobile over the September 2025 emergency call outage. It also published a report ranking **33 telcos** on complaint handling, which you can look up. Its 2026. 27 enforcement priorities name branded SMS scams, Triple Zero reliability and consumer safeguards. And two rule changes went live under everyone's feet, standardised coverage maps and public outage information from 30 June, and the SMS Sender ID Register from 1 July.

■ The short version

Date	What happened	Who
13 August 2026	Systemic report on regional, rural and remote telecommunications published, drawing on nearly 28,000 complaints, with a call for reform of the regulatory framework	Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman
5 August 2026	Mobile services inquiry launched under Part 25 of the Telecommunications Act 1997, running roughly twelve months	ACCC
30 July 2026	Federal Court proceedings commenced against Optus Mobile over the 18 September 2025 outage affecting emergency call access	ACMA
29 July 2026	Telecommunications Consumer Complaints report published for the January to March 2026 quarter, ranking 33 telcos	ACMA
22 July 2026	Tabcorp paid more than \$2.7 million in penalties over spam and telemarketing breaches	ACMA
1 July 2026	SMS Sender ID Register commenced; unregistered branded sender IDs now labelled "Unverified"	ACMA
30 June 2026	New telco transparency rules in force covering mobile coverage information and network outages	ACMA

■ Also worth knowing

What the inquiry will examine	Why it is contested
How mobile coverage and consumer needs are changing	Satellite direct-to-device and network sharing arrangements have altered the landscape since this was last seriously examined
Current and potential competition in mobile services	Whether customers in regional areas have any meaningful choice, or only a nominal one
How regulation would affect investment in networks	The core objection: if you must share the tower, the argument runs, why build the tower
The role of low earth orbit satellite services	Starlink has partnered with both Telstra and Optus; NBN Co has favoured Amazon's Project Kuiper. This is genuinely new

Why the source matters more than the conclusion

Plenty of organisations argue that regional connectivity is poor. The Ombudsman is different in one specific way: **its evidence is the complaints themselves**, made by real customers about real services, collected as part of a statutory dispute resolution role rather than gathered to support an argument. When a body that exists to resolve individual disputes concludes that the framework producing those disputes needs reform, that is a considerably stronger claim than a submission from someone with a commercial position.

■ Questions the full guide answers

- ☐ What did the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman report on 13 August 2026 say?
- ☐ What is the ACCC mobile services inquiry and could domestic roaming become mandatory?
- ☐ How can I check how well my phone provider handles complaints?
- ☐ What are the ACMA's enforcement priorities for 2026–27?
- ☐ What changed for business SMS on 1 July 2026?
- ☐ Why is the ACMA taking Optus to the Federal Court, and does it matter to my business?
- ☐ What should an Australian business actually do about all of this?

This is the summary. The guide has the detail.

Every point above is worked through in full on our site, with the Australian context, the numbers and the exceptions. If you would rather talk it through, call **1300 881 662** or visit **unidenvoice.com/get-started**.