

REGULATION · AUSTRALIA · 2026

The Telco Rulebook Is Becoming Law: What Changes

On 27 March 2026 the ACMA announced it will scrap the industry-written consumer protections code and replace it with a standard it writes and enforces itself.

Australia is moving telco consumer protections from industry self-regulation into direct regulation. On **27 March 2026** the ACMA announced it will replace the industry-developed **Telecommunications Consumer Protections (TCP) Code** with an **industry standard** made under **section 125 of the Telecommunications Act 1997**, in order to “move the remaining consumer protections into direct regulation so that expectations are consistent, obligations are clear and are backed by stronger and more immediately available enforcement powers for the regulator”. The **2019 TCP Code stays in force until the new standard commences**, at which point it ceases to be registered, and consultation on an industry standard must run for **at least 30 days** under section 132.

■ The short version

Registered industry code (now)	Industry standard (proposed)	
Who writes it	Industry bodies, through negotiation among providers	The ACMA , after public consultation
Who it is written for	Workability across a diverse industry	The outcome the regulator wants to see
Clarity of obligation	Negotiated language, which tends to leave room	Drafted to be enforced, so drafted to be unambiguous
Enforcement speed	Slower, the concern the ACMA named directly	“More immediately available” in the ACMA’s own words
Consultation	Industry-led drafting process	At least 30 days public consultation, per section 132

■ Also worth knowing

Priority	Why it is there	What it means for your business
Disrupting branded SMS scams	Scam messages impersonating trusted brands remain a primary vector for fraud against Australians	Your business SMS sender identity is now inside a regulated system. If you send messages to customers, registration and correct configuration matter, see the SMS Sender ID Register
Reliable access to Triple Zero	Multiple outages have affected emergency call access, with real consequences	Your phone system's emergency call behaviour is not a detail. Triple Zero from a cloud phone covers what you are responsible for and what your provider is
Protections for customers affected by domestic, family and sexual violence	Telecommunications accounts are a recognised vector for coercive control	If you employ people, the account-security practices here are worth understanding, see customer identity authentication
Regulating mobile phone equipment	Non-compliant devices create interference and safety risks	Mostly a supplier concern, but relevant if you import or resell devices
Overseeing new gambling advertising reforms	A separate policy programme landing in the same period	Not applicable to most businesses, included for completeness

Why a phone company is writing this up

Partly because it is genuinely important and badly covered. But also because it is a fair question to put to any provider, including us: **are you in favour of being regulated more directly?** The honest answer is that a provider running its own network and its own support desk has very little to fear from clearer obligations, because the rules mostly describe what it already does. The providers with something to lose are the ones whose current practices only survive because the rules are ambiguous and slow to enforce. That is not a marketing claim, it is just the structure of the situation.

■ Questions the full guide answers

- ☐ What did the ACMA actually announce about the TCP Code?
- ☐ What is the practical difference between an industry code and an industry standard?
- ☐ Do telco consumer protections actually apply to my business, or only to households?
- ☐ What should I do if my provider will not resolve a problem?
- ☐ What are the ACMA's enforcement priorities for 2026–27 and do any affect my business?
- ☐ Why is the ACMA taking Optus to the Federal Court, and what should I take from it?
- ☐ When does the new standard start, and should I do anything before then?

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**.