# Ensuring communications markets are working well for consumers

## Overview

The Australian communications sector is continually evolving, with recent changes including technological innovation, the increasing rollout of next generation networks such as the National Broadband Network (NBN) and improvements to mobile networks and services.

Australians are using more devices and services to communicate than ever before. A growing number of Australians no longer have a landline phone and rely on their mobile phone to stay in touch. Connecting to the internet has never been easier; consumers can choose to use their smartphone, laptop, computer and/or tablet to connect and communicate. Australians are also enjoying greater choice of online content, with the introduction of Netflix and local subscription video on demand services, Stan and Presto, becoming increasingly popular and driving consumers’ desire for large data quotas.

## What are we doing?

Our role is to ensure that communications markets are competitive and working well for consumers. More competition means a greater choice of suitable services and products at competitive prices and more options when selecting a service provider.

We are undertaking a market study to consider how the Australian communications sector is changing and to identify whether competition is working effectively and producing good outcomes for consumers. We are also looking to identify whether there any issues or potential issues arising that could lessen competition and negatively impact consumers.

In particular, we are seeking to better understand:

* how important communication services (or particular services) are to consumers (e.g. are any services or devices essential (or not) to consumers current or future lifestyle)
* if consumers consider factors such as cost, service quality and service provider attributes (general reputation, customer service, etc.) when deciding what service to buy or whether to switch service providers
* if consumers think the services currently on offer are suitable for their communication activities/lifestyle and if there is sufficient choice (e.g. in relation to data quotas, broadband speeds, mobile coverage, service performance and reliability and cost)
* the communications products and services consumers currently use and if/how these will change over the next five years (e.g. only using mobile phones for calls and/or internet, text and/or messaging applications more than voice calls, using different providers for different services?)
* if consumers have expectations about fixed-line next-generation network services, such as the NBN, that can provide superfast broadband services (e.g. faster speeds, less buffering, improved reliability, cheaper prices with more inclusions, more choice of products/services/service providers)
* if consumers have any expectations about developments in mobile services, such as greater coverage/availability of 4G and future introduction of 5G (e.g. faster services, larger data allowances, cheaper mobile services)
* the types of information consumers currently use when comparing communications products/services they need, and deciding what to buy, and whether this is accurate, easy to understand and readily available
* if there is any other information consumers would find useful to help them make these decisions
* how likely consumers are to choose bundle offers for their communications products/services, what is included in these bundles and whether consumers want all the products/services in the bundle
* if/how consumers compare these bundles (e.g. use comparator sites, research service provider websites, talk to friends) and whether this comparison could be made easier
* what leads consumers to change service providers and if there are any costs involved in switching service providers
* any other issues consumers have experienced in finding or obtaining communications services/products or any anticipated future issues.

## What do you think?

If you would like to participate in the market study we encourage you to provide a submission or respond to the consumer questions available on the ACCC Consultation Hub by **Friday 14 October 2016**.

Alternatively, if you would like to raise a different issue/concern or would like to be kept up to date on the market study findings, please send us an email at commsmarketstudy@accc.gov.au

You can also follow the ACCC on Twitter and LinkedIn for updates.

## Further information

If you have a complaint or enquiry about a specific communications service or product, please contact the [ACCC Infocentre](https://www.accc.gov.au/contact-us/contact-the-accc) or the [Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman](https://www.tio.com.au/making-a-complaint).