

ALDI MOBILE: Surges ahead in customer satisfaction survey

BEVAN SLATTERY: 3 of his firms in Brisbane top 50

TELSTRA: Delivers mobile coverage inside Geelong rail tunnel

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Comms sector red tape cuts slump to 0.3% of gov't total

The federal government's much-vaunted red tape reduction agenda has virtually ground to a halt as far as the communications sector is concerned, with the portfolio accounting for just 0.3% of the value of overall government deregulation in the 18 months to July 2017.

In its 'annual' report into red tape reduction covering the year-and-a-half period, the Communications and Arts portfolio accounted for just \$4.2 million of net savings. This compared to a whole of government net saving of \$1.1 billion over the same period. Indeed, while the net savings in the portfolio were made up of 11 separate decisions the report did not explain or itemise any of them, deeming them too trivial for explanation given they were less than \$10 million in quantum.

By contrast, some \$580 million worth of savings were recorded in the employment portfolio, \$185 million in Treasury, \$119 million in industry and \$77 million in human services.

The last two years have seen a dramatic increase in the regulatory burden on telecom carriers measures as the \$7 Regional Broadband Scheme levy, competition and customer service standards, data retention and the telco sector security reform regime. It is unclear to what extent these impositions are quantified in the reporting regime, especially given that not all of them are imposed by the communications ministry but also by Home Affairs and Treasury.

Commenting on two telecom bills currently before Parliament, which in part implement the \$7 RBS charge, number two fixed telco TPG said that "governmental intervention in the telecommunications industry appears to be reaching all-time highs. These bills evidence that the re-regulation of the telecommunications industry is in full swing. Far from striving to achieve its stated ambition of reducing red tape and 'being open for business', these bills evidence that the government appears set on pushing ahead with legislative initiatives that have the outcome of motivating the reduction of fixed line infrastructure-based competition."

Speaking last month at CommsDay Summit, Superloop founder Bevan Slattery observed that "the level of government intervention here is actually unique to Australia. I have never seen a regulator prescribe to carriers 'this is how you're to advertise your speeds, this is how you're to do these things, this is pretty much how you're to offer your product'... it's quite extraordinary the level of intervention that has actually occurred here and it's continuing." He added that it would take the equivalent of four fulltime employees to simply respond to all the reports issued by government in the

must purchase US parts and pay a US\$1.3 billion fine.”

The conditions for the apparent deal should come as no surprise since CommsDay had already reported similar settings, such as the penalty for and mandatory leadership changes, being evaluated last week by the Trump administration..

That said, any Trump action will have to gain the approval of the US congress, many members of which do not like Trump’s policies.

“Most members of Congress have come to understand the threat China poses,” said Republic Senator Marco Rubio. “There’s a growing commitment in Congress to do something about what China is trying to do to the United States. And this is a good place to start.”

Rubio is leading the opposition to Trump,, asserting majority support to continual to block ZTE. “I believe it’ll have a supermajority. I think most members of Congress have come to understand the threat China poses.”

Tony Chan

Startup promises to disrupt fibre components

A new Israel-based startup is promising to reduce the cost and complexity of photonic networking component to create massive disruption to the industry. According to Dustphotonics, it has come up with technology that can reduce the cost of fibre-based connectivity by 90%, similar to previous innovation that disrupted technologies such as the production of aluminium.

“In 1850, aluminium was US\$17,000 per pound; by the turn of the century, it was a nickel (5 cents) a pound. This enabled vast new industries,” said DustPhotonics sales VP John Mein. “Dust Photonics is doing exactly the same thing to the cost of optical connectivity by reducing [it by] 90%.”

The company has developed a technology that simplifies one of the most difficult and costly processes in the production of optical networking equipment – the manufacture of optical transceivers.

“We are reducing a complex device to a very simple device by automating and simplifying the manufacturing process for building and perfecting that interface where the fibre interfaces with the laser diodes and the photo detector. Today everyone uses active alignment where they have to actually line [up] the fibre, align it with the laser or the photo detector to get the maximum sensitivity,” said Mein. “We have completely automated that process.”

Further, the company’s solution promises significant savings because it tackles several core cost elements of optical transceivers, namely manufacturing yield.

“As it turns out, actually 70% of the building of an optical transceiver is in that assembly process because of the equipment required, the yield and the time it takes to do that,” said Mein. “In our factory, in the same floor space, we can produce thirty times as many optical transceivers per hour as our competitors. We have patented a little plastic micro-assembly that contains micro-lenses, prisms and mirrors that is manufactured for us to micron tolerances and that is our intellectual property. We have 100% yield.” Mein stressed yield percentage as a key differentiator, particularly when it comes to higher capacity gear.

According to Mein, the production and manufacturing advantages of DustPhotonics allows the company to drive down the cost of fibre to US\$1 per Gbps for a 100Gbps