

Changes to improve payphone siting

Variations to Telstra's universal service obligation (USO) standard marketing plan are designed to improve the processes for installing, removing and relocating public payphones.

The standard marketing plan sets out how Telstra, as the primary universal service provider, intends to supply equipment, goods and services to fulfil its universal service obligation.

The changes were recommended by the ACA in its 2004 report on the review of payphone policy, as part of the government's response to the Regional Telecommunications Inquiry. They introduce criteria for payphone siting in state and national parks, and allow for increased payphone density on highways and major roads in rural and remote areas where there is inadequate mobile

phone coverage. The variations will mean greater transparency for any Telstra decision to decline a request to install a payphone in a particular location or to remove the last payphone from a location.

New processes governing the siting of payphones in remote Indigenous communities have also been introduced. Telstra is trialling new services intended to meet the telecommunications needs of remote Indigenous communities and to test their suitability for widespread deployment.

More information about payphones is on the ACMA website (www.acma.gov.au) and go to Phones > Universal Service Regime > Universal Service Obligation > Payphones). Telstra's standard marketing plan is on its website at www.telstra.com.au/universalservice/standard.htm.



Minister sets **USO** subsidies for next three years

Following consultation with the former Australian Communications Authority (now ACMA) the Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, Senator Helen Coonan, has set the universal service obligation (USO) subsidies for the next three financial years.

The USO is a core consumer safeguard that provides reasonable access to standard telephone services and payphones for all Australians, regardless of where they live or work. Setting subsidies for three years is in accordance with the USO's legislative objectives

and provides industry with certainty regarding the funding of the USO to assist with investment and planning.

The ACA was directed by the Minister in August 2004 to provide advice on USO

subsidies for the 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2007-08 years. The advice was provided in late 2004 and accepted by the government.

The ACMA website has more information about

universal service costing and funding (www.acma.gov.au) and go to Phones > Universal Service Regime > Universal Service Obligation > Costing & Funding) or email funding@acma.gov.au.

	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
Extended zones	\$21,266,489	\$19,087,175	\$17,131,189
Extended zones payphones	\$2,084,385	\$2,133,213	\$2,183,183
NSW/Qld and SA/Vic pilot areas	\$15,468,902	\$12,689,765	\$10,412,164
Payphones excluding extended zones	\$11,145,976	\$11,407,073	\$11,674,286
Standard area	\$121,438,120	\$112,374,354	\$103,675,415
TOTAL	\$171,403,872	\$157,691,580	\$145,076,237