

New system for supplementing phone number prefixes

ACMA is proposing to change the way it rolls out new prefixes for telephone numbers in geographic areas to improve the current system and allow industry and users to better plan ahead.

The proposed new approach would identify all the new prefixes likely to be required in the next 10 years in a single variation to the *Telecommunications Numbering Plan 1997*. The variation would also include a trigger that would only make the new prefixes available when there are no existing numbers available to meet an applicant's request.

Numbers in an area are currently supplemented on an 'as needs basis'. For example, over the last three years, there have been five variations to the Numbering Plan to specify 31 new prefixes. Each variation was initiated when a particular area was believed likely to run out of prefixes in approximately 12 months' time. The current prediction of an additional 38 new prefixes needing to be specified during the next 10 years would require to two or three variations to the plan per annum during that period (see table for the areas that may require additional numbers in that period).

This method is inefficient because it does not allow industry or the public to plan according to ACMA's short-to-medium term plans for supplementing other geographic numbers, and it is time-consuming. In addition, because new prefixes are allocated before existing numbers have run out, information campaigns to raise public awareness of a new prefix while existing numbers are still available for use can cause confusion.

The proposed changes were developed in consultation with ACMA's Numbering Advisory Committee, which includes representatives of telephone companies, governments and organisations representing consumer and user interests.

While the proposed changes will have no impact on the cost of calls or existing numbers, equipment such as PABX systems will require reprogramming. ACMA will notify equipment programmers approximately 12 months before the release of the new number ranges. ACMA will also conduct public education campaigns to notify the public when the new numbers are first issued in an area.

The proposed changes were released in a draft discussion paper and variation to the Numbering Plan on 17 October 2007, with comments closing on 16 November.

THE NUMBERING PLAN

Part 22 of the *Telecommunications Act 1997* requires ACMA to make a plan for the numbering of carriage services in Australia and the use of numbers in connection with the supply of such services.

ACMA manages the Numbering Plan, which provides the framework and policies for telephone number allocation and use. The plan ensures that telecommunications service providers adopt the same approach to using telephone numbers, which means that a particular telephone number can be associated with a specific type of service and call cost.

The Numbering Plan is varied from time to time to make additional numbers available or to introduce new services. ACMA is required to consult the public for 30 days about any variations to the plan if:

- the variation will affect a number issued to a customer and is not declared by ACMA to be a minor variation, or
- it is in the public interest to consult.

Area	Existing prefix	New prefix
(02) Central East Region		
Newcastle	(02) 40, 49	(02) 41
Gosford	(02) 43	(02) 33
Bowral, Crookwell, Goulburn, Marulan	(02) 48	(02) 38
Albury, Corryong	(02) 60	(02) 50
Canberra	(02) 61, 62	(02) 51, 52
Liverpool, Sydney West sector	(02) 81, 87, 97	(02) 77
Sydney South/South East sector	(02) 83, 93	(02) 73
Avalon Beach, Dural, Terry Hills, Sydney North sector	(02) 84, 89, 94, 99	(02) 74
Engadine, Sutherland, Sydney South West sector	(02) 85, 95	(02) 75
Blacktown, Parramatta, Sydney North West sector	(02) 86, 88, 98	(02) 78
(03) South East Region		
Deniliquin, Numurkah, Shepparton	(03) 58	(03) 48
Mornington, Warragul	(03) 59	(03) 49
Burnie, Devonport, King Island, Queenstown, Smithton	(03) 64	(03) 65
Sunbury, Werribee	(03) 80, 87, 97	(03) 77
Kalkallo, Whittlesea	(03) 81, 87, 97	(03) 77
Croydon	(03) 82, 87, 97	(03) 77
Clayton, Melbourne South East sector	(03) 85, 95	(03) 75
Dandenong	(03) 87, 89, 97	(03) 77
Melbourne	(03) 90, 92, 99	(03) 70
Ringwood, Melbourne East sector	(03) 88, 98	(03) 78
(07) North East Region		
Brisbane City Centre sector	(07) 30, 322, 332, 382, 323, 333, 383	(07) 90
Brisbane South East sector	(07) 30, 34, 324, 334, 384	(07) 90
Cleveland, Beenleigh, Ipswich, Samford, Redcliffe	(07) 30, 34, 328, 338, 388, 320, 330, 380	(07) 94
Brisbane	(07) 31, 321, 331, 381	(07) 91
Charleville, Dalby, Dirranbandi, Goondiwindi, Inglewood, Longreach, Miles, Roma, Stanthorpe, Toowoomba, Warwick	(07) 45, 46	(07) 76
Caboolture, Esk, Gatton, Gympie, Nambour	(07) 53, 54	(07) 52
Beaudesert	(07) 55, 56	(07) 57
(08) Central and West Region		
Herne Hill, Kalamunda, Armadale, Spearwood, Rottnest Island	(08) 619, 629, 639, 649, 659, 929, 939, 949	(08) 529, 539, 549
Perth North/North West sector	(08) 620, 624, 630, 634, 640, 644, 920, 924, 934, 944, 930, 940	(08) 520, 530, 540
Wanneroo	(08) 620, 630, 640, 920, 930, 940	(08) 520, 530, 540
Perth City & South West sector, Fremantle	(08) 621, 622, 623, 631, 632, 633, 641, 642, 643, 921, 922, 923, 931, 932, 933, 941, 942, 943	(08) 521, 522, 523, 531, 532, 533, 541, 542, 543, 611, 612, 613
Perth North East sector	(08) 627, 37, 47, 927, 937, 947	(08) 527, 537, 547
Gawler	(08) 75, 85, 88	(08) 78
Bordertown, Mount Gambier, Naracoorte	(08) 87	(08) 77
Balaklava, Burra, Clare, Kadina, Maitland, Port Lincoln, Yorketown	(08) 88	(08) 78
Christmas Island, Cocos (Keeling) Island, Derby, Great Sandy, Port Hedland	(08) 91	(08) 51
Pinjarra	(08) 95, 97	(08) 67
Bridgetown, Bunbury, Busselton	(08) 97	(08) 67