

# Spectrum Management Policy

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## 1. Purpose

The Telco Authority (the Authority) is committed to ensuring that there is a coordinated and strategic sector-wide framework for the management of government radio spectrum allocations. This policy is a key component of this framework, and will allow NSW Government agencies to deliver services to the New South Wales community enabled by effective and efficient telecommunications services now and into the future.

## 2. Context

- 2.1 The NSW Treasury and Finance Circular *OFS-2014-02 NSW Government Radio Communications Strategy* issued in September 2014, requires the Authority to ensure that a coordinated and strategic approach to radio spectrum allocation is undertaken.
- 2.2 The Spectrum Management Office (SMO) has been created within the Authority to oversee the efficient allocation, assignment and ongoing administration of spectrum for NSW Government entities. This includes all Government licences in the 400 MHz Harmonised Government Spectrum (HGS) as well as any other spectrum allocations as required.
- 2.3 The Authority's Spectrum Management Office Guidelines outline the procedures that guide the operation of the SMO. These guidelines are followed by officers of the Authority and are the primary reference tool for agencies to understand the Authority's management of spectrum.
- 2.4 All policies, guidelines and procedures implemented by the SMO will be in line with any Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) requirements, the Commonwealth *Radiocommunications Act 1992* or any other state or federal government policy or direction as appropriate.
- 2.5 The Authority represents NSW on the National Coordinating Committee for Government Radiocommunications (NCCGR) and performs the functions of the NCCGR representative under the ACMA guidelines and policies.

## 3. Objectives

The policy objectives are:

- 3.1 Managing spectrum resources to ensure that spectrum is put to best use, to ensure NSW Government continues to have access to critical telecommunications services
- 3.2 Providing high level direction on the allocation and assignment of HGS frequencies in NSW
- 3.3 Improving the efficiency and transparency of the spectrum management process
- 3.4 Minimising unnecessary licensing costs to the NSW Government by surrendering redundant licences and through the removal of duplicated services.

## **4. Principles**

In managing Government Spectrum, the Telco Authority will:

- 4.1** Support the NSW Government's goal of improving efficiency and effectiveness of operational telecommunications across the sector
- 4.2** Be committed to a coordinated and strategic approach to the allocation of radio spectrum
- 4.3** Be committed to providing access to dedicated spectrum that best supports the operational requirements and business needs of NSW Government
- 4.4** Support agencies in achieving their business objectives
- 4.5** Be transparent on its operating model and report on its performance
- 4.6** Be committed to continual improvement
- 4.7** Be committed to maintaining strategic partnerships with NSW radio users
- 4.8** Continue to maintain engagement at the national level through forums and peak body activities
- 4.9** Be committed to maintaining a strategic partnership with the ACMA.

## **5. Scope and Audience**

In accordance with NSW Government policy, all NSW Government agencies are required to comply with the Spectrum Management Policy. To ensure appropriate allocation of spectrum, all negotiations with the ACMA on behalf of any NSW Government agency will be conducted by the Telco Authority, unless exempted.

- 5.1** The Authority will manage all HGS spectrum in NSW.
- 5.2** With regard to non-HGS spectrum, the Authority
  - 5.2.1** will manage spectrum for NSW Government Sector entities with wireless networks in NSW, unless exempted by the Authority
  - 5.2.2** will manage spectrum within any band for private organisations under exceptional circumstances, such as during a transition phase where a state owned entity is transferred to private ownership, or where a private sector organisation is engaged to provide a service wholly for government use
  - 5.2.3** If required, will assist community serving, not-for-profit entities on spectrum related matters.

## **6. Spectrum Management**

### **6.1 Spectrum Planning**

Spectrum is a finite resource and in order to meet community needs, its allocation must be well planned so that the NSW Government maximise the benefits.

**6.1.1** Spectrum allocation will be undertaken with consideration given to the operational requirements driving its use. Unless duly warranted under exceptional circumstances, spectrum will not be allocated for use with proprietary technologies.

**6.1.2** The Authority will manage spectrum efficiently and ensure it is provisioned for current and future requirements, in alignment with the Spectrum Plan. This plan will be published on the Telco Authority website [www.telco.nsw.gov.au](http://www.telco.nsw.gov.au).

**6.1.3** The Spectrum Plan will be updated at least annually and will outline the following:

- Agencies that will transition in and out of the HGS, including the number of licenses with a transition requirement and transition timeframe for each agency.
- Frequency assignments that are not currently located within their dedicated HGS bands.
- Frequency assignments that are subject to transition requirements.

**6.1.4** The SMO will report compliance against the Spectrum Plan.

**6.1.5** Should there be a requirement to create new or replace existing licenced frequencies that are necessary to meet an operational need; the Authority will be involved in the planning phase to determine the appropriate spectrum in accordance with the Spectrum Plan.

**6.1.6** Prior to any other planning or procurement related to any new site and or wireless equipment being undertaken, the Authority must be consulted to determine whether there is appropriate spectrum available for assignment.

**6.1.7** The Authority will determine whether there is available spectrum as part of the planning process prior to an equipment replacement program. The Authority may grant exemption to this requirement under exceptional circumstances. For example, where equipment is replaced at short notice due to an outage, or other emergency replacement situations.

## **6.2 Allocation and Assignment**

**6.2.1** Services or functions that NSW Government agencies provide will be classified into the following tiers and spectrum assessment and allocation will be prioritised accordingly.

- Tier 1 – Emergency response, law enforcement and public safety (Public Safety Agencies)
- Tier 2 – Direct support (Essential Services)
- Tier 3 – Other NSW Government services

**6.2.2** Unless an exception is granted by the Authority, spectrum will not be allocated to stand alone conventional networks when prospective sites fall within the current or planned footprint of a shared network.

**6.2.3** Should an application not be compliant with Authority Policies and Guidelines or ACMA Regulations, the SMO will inform the applicant of the reasons for not meeting the conditions.

**6.2.4** All negotiations with the ACMA in relation to a spectrum allocation on behalf of any NSW Government agency will be carried out by the Telco Authority, in consultation with the relevant agencies as appropriate.

**6.2.5** HGS spectrum allocations will conform to the nationally agreed and endorsed 400 MHz Band Plan and associated government licensing instructions (RALI GS1).

**6.2.6** Spectrum may be allocated to non-government entities where it is utilised to provide a service that supports government operations or objectives. For example non-profit entities that provide a service to the community.

**6.2.7** If the relevant HGS segment(s) has insufficient spectrum, the SMO may recommend assigning non-HGS. Written advice will be provided outlining the reasoning behind this recommendation.

**6.2.8** For new license assignments that support NSW agencies but are located in another state or territory, the SMO will consult with those jurisdictions through their nominated representative.

**6.2.9** The SMO will be responsible for the proposal, assessment, endorsement and submission of all licence applications to the ACMA for supporting government operations in NSW.

## **6.3 Telco Authority Held Licences**

The Telco Authority is undertaking the following process to ensure efficient demand management of spectrum that supports government operational requirements. Further details around responsibilities will be captured in the relevant service agreement.

- 6.3.1** Licences should be held by the Authority and third party provisioned to the operational entity with an identifier in the licence that enables auditing and management of assignments.
- 6.3.2** The current identifier in the ACMA Register of Radiocommunications Register (RRL) is at Client Number and Trading Name level – for example, the Authority held licences the support RFS operations are held as Client Number: 20005985; Trading Name: Telco Authority (RFS).

#### **6.4 Monitoring and Review**

- 6.4.1** The Authority will regularly monitor and review spectrum use to ensure it is used in accordance with existing requirements and the Spectrum Plan for the HGS.
- 6.4.2** The SMO will advise impacted agencies of any issues arising out of the review process.

#### **6.5 Renewal and Surrender**

- 6.5.1** All redundant spectrum assignments must be surrendered when sites are decommissioned or rationalised/consolidated.

#### **6.6 Governance**

- 6.6.1** The Authority has delegated the responsibility for the day to day management of spectrum to the SMO.
- 6.6.2** The SMO is governed by a steering committee comprised of stakeholders from within the Authority.
- 6.6.3** The SMO steering committee monitors performance, and addresses any escalated risks and issues.
- 6.6.4** The SMO steering committee has accountability to the Authority's Executive and Board.

#### **6.7 Dispute Resolution**

- 6.7.1** The SMO will operate within this Policy and the SMO Guidelines.
- 6.7.2** If an applicant is not satisfied with a determination made by the SMO, they may request a review of the decision.
- 6.7.3** The SMO will outline to the applicant the basis and rationale for the original decision. If the applicant is still not satisfied then a request for review can be made to SMO Steering Committee.
- 6.7.4** The Steering Committee will review the decision and provide a determination. In order to assist in the determination, the Steering Committee may request a review independent of the SMO.

## **7. Further Information**

Telco Authority Spectrum Management Office: [telco.spectrum@finance.nsw.gov.au](mailto:telco.spectrum@finance.nsw.gov.au).



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