

Best Effort.

The weekday briefing on Australian telecommunications, data centres and AI infrastructure.

TODAY'S BRIEFING

Wednesday 28 October 2026

- Triple Zero dominates the Australian agenda.
- The Triple Zero Custodian is testing whether direct SMS could reach emergency services, and an interim review of the regulations was released on 27 October 2026.
- Optus and SA Police disagree over whether an Angaston base station fault blocked emergency calls.
- On data centres, Commonwealth Bank economists lifted their feasible pipeline to 7GW, about \$260 billion of spending, and flagged power supply as the nearest hurdle.

11 stories · 17 min reading · 19 sources · Online at besteffort.au/editions/2026-10-28

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Triple Zero Custodian to test text messaging in simulated emergency trial

The Triple Zero Custodian is testing whether direct SMS could work as a way to reach emergency services, with Accenture Australia running a closed simulation. An interim review report on Triple Zero regulations was released on Tuesday 27 October 2026.

Best Effort desk · Wed 28 Oct 2026 · 4 sources · 1 min read

WHY IT MATTERS

A text channel would add a new access method to a service whose regulation, the minister says, was built around fixed lines, and the review is meant to give carriers and other industry players clearer requirements.

The Triple Zero Custodian is testing whether people could contact Triple Zero by direct SMS when a voice call is not possible or practical, according to a statement from Communications Minister Anika Wells on Tuesday. Accenture Australia has been engaged to run the testing in a simulated environment designed to reflect real-world operational requirements.

The public will have no access to the trial, and the live Triple Zero service will not be affected. The government said the tests will not touch actual emergency calls.

The testing runs alongside the Custodian's review of Triple Zero regulations, and an interim report was released with the announcement. The report sets out eight key themes for potential reform, drawn from a public consultation held earlier this year. The next stage of stakeholder engagement is under way to explore those themes and shape recommendations for a framework that meets public expectations and gives industry clear requirements. Wells said she expects to receive the final report next year.

Wells said the government is working with industry, emergency services organisations and state and territory governments. She said about 85 per cent of Triple Zero calls are now made from mobile devices, while much of the regulatory framework was designed for a fixed-line world. Wells said a text option "would provide another safe and effective way to contact Triple Zero if people are unable to make a call".

AAP reported that a text option could help domestic violence survivors and people with limited phone services. A Senate committee recommended text options in September, following failed triple zero calls that cost people their lives, according to AAP. The inquiry also called for Triple Zero functions to be removed from Telstra and nationalised, and for domestic roaming to be

mandated, AAP reported.

REPORTING FROM

- 1 **Canberra CityNews** · Triple zero text option to be trialled in safety push
- 2 **Yahoo News Australia** · Aussies could see major Triple Zero change in 65-year first
- 3 **AU Now** · Next step on text to Triple Zero · AU Now
- 4 **Minister for Communications** · Next step on text to Triple Zero

Written by AI from the reporting above. Quotes, numbers and names were checked against those sources before publication.

DATA CENTRES 2 OF 11

CBA lifts feasible data centre pipeline to 7GW, with \$260bn of investment by mid-2030s

Commonwealth Bank economists now see 7GW of feasible new Australian data centre capacity, up from 6GW, and about \$260 billion of spending over the next decade. They say the 23GW of announced projects overstates what will be built, and that power supply is the nearest hurdle.

Best Effort desk · Wed 28 Oct 2026 · 2 sources · 2 min read

WHY IT MATTERS

The report separates announced capacity from what CBA considers deliverable, and points to grid connection and energy supply as the factors most likely to decide which data centre projects proceed. CBA also says weaker customer demand or tighter energy, social licence and policy constraints could delay or limit delivery.

Economists at Commonwealth Bank have increased their estimate of feasible new data centre capacity in Australia from 6 gigawatts to 7GW, pointing to demand from artificial intelligence and cloud computing. On the bank's numbers, that build-out could lift total rated capacity to about 9.2GW by the mid-2030s, more than four times the current level, with construction activity peaking in the 2028 and 2029 financial years.

CBA expects roughly \$150 billion of investment by 2030, which would support about 4GW of extra rated capacity. Another \$110 billion after 2030 would bring cumulative spending to about \$260 billion by the time the central 7GW case is complete in the mid-2030s. Specialised IT equipment, rather than

buildings and structures, is expected to make up about 70 per cent of construction costs.

The feasible figure sits well below the headline numbers in project announcements. About 23GW has been publicly announced, yet most of it is a long way from construction. Some 3.6GW is being built or expanded and another 2GW has approval or is in pre-construction, which together make up 24 per cent of announced capacity. The other 76 per cent is still at the planning stage or earlier.

The Australian Energy Market Operator reported 225 projects seeking almost 67GW of connection capacity as of June 2026. CBA said that total probably exaggerates what will be delivered, because applications can overlap and developers may be chasing the same customers. More than a third of connection requests lodged in the previous year were withdrawn, and the median chance of a project advancing from its current stage to completion was put at 28 per cent. CBA Associate Economist Lucinda Jerogin said the "high degree of attrition and duplication in AEMO's connection data demonstrates even meaningful progress through the connection process does not guarantee delivery".

CBA's central case is broadly in line with AEMO's electricity demand forecasts, which imply 5.5GW to 6.5GW of additional rated capacity by the 2036 financial year. The analysis also factors in possible demand linked to OpenAI and Anthropic, assuming in the central scenario that Australia captures 10 per cent of their estimated global compute demand. CBA described these as scenario assumptions rather than disclosed commitments. In an upside case where Australia becomes a major site for AI model training and large-scale inference, additional capacity could reach between 9.2GW and 11GW.

The report identifies energy infrastructure as the most immediate constraint. AEMO estimates data centres consumed 5 terawatt hours in 2025–26, equal to 2.8 per cent of electricity supplied through the National Electricity Market, and forecasts about 15TWh in 2029–30 and 34TWh by 2035–36. Community opposition to large developments has grown, and uncertainty over copyright law could affect whether large-scale AI training is hosted in Australia. Jerogin summed up the outlook by saying "Risks are two sided".

REPORTING FROM

- 1 **commbank.com.au** · Australia's data centre pipeline growing to \$260bn in a decade: CBA
- 2 **Daily Digest Invest** · Australia's data center boom could draw AU\$260 billion, but power is the catch

Written by AI from the reporting above. Quotes, numbers and names were checked against those sources before publication.

ASIC drafts RG 267 rewrite as telcos join AFCA scam complaints scheme

ASIC has put out draft Regulatory Guide 267, its first substantive revision of how it oversees AFCA, before telcos and digital platforms come into the scheme on 31 March 2027. Submissions close at 5pm AEDT on 24 November.

Best Effort desk · Wed 28 Oct 2026 · 1 source · 2 min read

WHY IT MATTERS

Telcos will face AFCA scam complaints from 31 March 2027, with issues going to the ACMA and the ACCC rather than ASIC, so carriers will want to see how the final guidance treats reporting duties and timeframes.

ASIC on Tuesday proposed its first substantive revision of the guidance it uses to oversee the Australian Financial Complaints Authority, releasing draft Regulatory Guide 267. The changes are meant to equip the guidance for scam disputes that involve banks, telcos and digital platforms. Telcos and digital platforms join the scheme, which was first built for financial firms, from 31 March 2027.

The draft spells out which regulators receive the issues AFCA spots in scam cases. For banks, reports go to ASIC and the ACCC, the lead regulator of the Scams Prevention Framework. Telco reports go to the ACMA and the ACCC, and digital platform reports go only to the ACCC. The draft says telco and digital platform matters should not be sent to ASIC.

ASIC said it will talk to the ACCC and relevant sector regulators before it uses any powers that might touch AFCA's scam jurisdiction. A new scam example is added to the list of serious breaches AFCA must report, namely a regulated firm that gives consumers no workable way to report suspected scams. AFCA is expected to report these within 15 days, although the draft lets ASIC and AFCA agree a different period. Conduct pointing to continuing harm should be reported as soon as possible.

For licensees, the most notable edit is a removal. ASIC has dropped its detailed chapter on AFCA membership obligations and intends to cover them, including cooperation with AFCA, on its dispute resolution webpage. Material now dealt with by ASIC-approved AFCA scheme rules has also gone, as has legacy content such as compensation caps from the predecessor schemes. The draft also constrains ASIC: its general power of direction cannot be used to tell AFCA how to handle particular complaints, and neither complainants nor AFCA members can ask for a direction.

AFCA's annual review, published on 22 October, counted nearly 120,000 complaints in 2025–26, a record, with scams the top issue in banking and finance at 6,580 cases.

AFCA has finished consulting on its own scam rules, and ASIC said it may adjust RG 267 again when those are final. Feedback is due by 5pm AEDT on 24 November, and ASIC aims to issue the final guidance and updated webpages before 31 March 2027.

REPORTING FROM

1 **FXBrokerTrust** · ASIC Drafts RG 267 Update on AFCA Scam Complaint Oversight

Written by AI from the reporting above. Quotes, numbers and names were checked against those sources before publication.

DATA CENTRES 4 OF 11

Tamar vineyard owners weigh leaving as Firmus 288MW data centre goes to TASCAT

An environmental group has taken George Town Council's approval of Firmus's 288MW AI data centre at Long Reach to the Tasmanian tribunal on 12 grounds, and Firmus has launched its own appeal over limits on its diesel generators.

Best Effort desk · Wed 28 Oct 2026 · 1 source · 1 min read

WHY IT MATTERS

The case shows a large AI data centre campus facing local challenge over back-up diesel generation and planning classification in a district built on vineyards, cattle and river tourism. Firmus's own appeal indicates it sees the generator conditions as a constraint on how it can operate the site, so a TASCAT outcome could affect operating arrangements as well as the approval itself.

A planning fight over Firmus Technologies' 288MW AI data centre at Long Reach, on the Tamar River, has reached the Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (TASCAT). The Environmental Awareness Association Inc filed an appeal listing 12 grounds against George Town Council's approval, The Examiner reported on 24 October. Firmus has made a separate appeal, aimed at the conditions the council set for the site's back-up diesel generators.

The Examiner detailed two of the 12 grounds. One is that the council wrongly classed the project as a utility; the other is that the notification material behind the approval left out the risk from electromagnetic radiation. Another objector, Anne-Marie Bastian, has questioned whether the project can be handled under the state's 1993 planning legislation at all.

Firmus's appeal concerns the restrictions on its diesel generators, which apply to the 276 back-up units at the site. The company had not commented when the Examiner published its report.

Peter and Loraine Kossmann farm at Rowella, about 1.2km across the river from the site. They told the paper they are concerned that generator particulates could settle on their vines and cattle. Peter Kossmann said it would be "time to move" if the project proceeds. Nicholla Thompson, who is the association's secretary and president, said a tourism venture she planned with her daughter is on hold until the appeal is settled.

George Town Council general manager Shane Power said TASCAT is the right place to test the planning concerns that have been raised. No hearing date has been reported for either appeal. The approval and the generator conditions stay in force until the tribunal rules.

REPORTING FROM

- 1 **The Australian Developer** · Tamar vineyard owners weigh leaving over Firmus 288MW data centre · The Australian Developer

Written by AI from the reporting above. Quotes, numbers and names were checked against those sources before publication.

CDC says it met its 2030 net-zero target in FY26, four years early

CDC Data Centres told a federal parliamentary inquiry it reached its 2030 net-zero goal four years ahead of plan and reported a PUE of 1.38 for FY26. The operator also set out its views on SOCI regulation and its economic footprint.

Best Effort desk · Wed 28 Oct 2026 · 1 source · 1 min read

WHY IT MATTERS

The submission shows where a major Australian operator stands on emissions, water use and critical-infrastructure regulation as AI-driven data centre growth attracts parliamentary scrutiny, including its push to avoid overlapping compliance obligations.

CDC Data Centres says it has met its 2030 net-zero target four years ahead of schedule, according to its submission to a federal parliamentary inquiry. Writing to the Joint Select Committee on Artificial Intelligence, the operator said the goal was reached in FY26 within its own emissions boundary, which takes in Scope 1, Scope 2 and some Scope 3 sources. The company said its sustainability disclosures are prepared under Australian Sustainability Reporting Standards, AASB S2 among them, and receive independent assurance.

CDC put its operational power usage effectiveness at 1.38 for FY26. Its water usage effectiveness figure was below 0.02. The company said it has relied on closed-loop cooling since 2007, in which sealed systems are filled once and the water is recirculated for the life of the facility. CDC said that design means its sites need no continuing water consumption for primary cooling.

On regulation, CDC argued the Security of Critical Infrastructure (SOCI) framework is still fundamentally fit for purpose, although it was never built to govern AI. It supported continuing review of the framework's reach so that new technologies and business models, neocloud providers included, fall within it when they carry out nationally significant functions or support critical infrastructure. CDC also urged risk-based, proportionate rules and steps to prevent duplicated compliance burdens for organisations already covered by equivalent Commonwealth security frameworks.

On economic contribution, CDC pointed to modelling it commissioned in 2026. That work estimated CDC had supported AU\$2.5 billion in gross value added through construction since 2007, plus roughly AU\$444 million in annual economic activity and over 1,600 ongoing jobs. The company also said

community consultation should start before formal planning assessment and run through a project's development, with feedback able to influence traffic, construction scheduling, landscaping and environmental management.

REPORTING FROM

1 **W.Media** · CDC says it achieved 2030 net-zero target four years early

Written by AI from the reporting above. Quotes, numbers and names were checked against those sources before publication.

CARRIERS & NETWORKS 6 OF 11

Gippsland ISP Splice Internet to start selling NBN fibre plans from mid-November

Splice Internet, the retail business of the Rural Fibre Co Group, will offer fibre-only NBN plans through the Traralgon and Cranbourne points of interconnect, with prices starting at \$85 a month.

Best Effort desk · Wed 28 Oct 2026 · 1 source · 1 min read

WHY IT MATTERS

A retailer linked to a regional fibre builder is moving onto NBN infrastructure across two points of interconnect, giving Gippsland customers another local choice on plans from 500 Mbps to 2000 Mbps.

Splice Internet, a Gippsland provider owned by the Rural Fibre Co Group, will start selling NBN services in mid-November. Founder Phillip Britt said the plans will be fibre-only and available through the Traralgon and Cranbourne points of interconnect, which together take in all of Gippsland.

Three plans make up the core range: Everyday Streamers at 500/50 Mbps for \$85 a month, Family Fast at 1000/100 Mbps for \$109, and Maxxed Out at 2000/200 Mbps for \$189. Customers can add a boost for \$30 a month on any tier to lift upload speeds. Splice plans special offers around Black Friday.

The NBN launch brings a new website, a simpler sign-up process and a purpose-built mobile app. In the app, customers can sign up, pay with Apple Pay, Google Pay or PayTo, run several connections and reach support. Britt said it would be "very rare for a regional telco to launch with its own app from day one of NBN service". In his account, smaller operators typically provide only a web portal and a phone number.

Britt said the company built its ISP from scratch in 18 months, drawing on earlier experience and AI. He said selling NBN services will let Splice grow and reinvest in customer experience while holding prices down.

The expansion follows work by the Rural Fibre Co Group on residential fibre at its fifth Latrobe Valley site and construction of its 90 Mile Loop commercial fibre path. Britt said the group built its own network because "nobody else was going to build it out here in Gippsland".

REPORTING FROM

1 **Bairnsdale Advertiser** | · High speed, local roots: Splice Internet drives regional connectivity

Written by AI from the reporting above. Quotes, numbers and names were checked against those sources before publication.

AI INFRASTRUCTURE 7 OF 11

Anthropic files for Nasdaq IPO, disclosing US\$80.7bn loss and huge compute commitments

Anthropic has filed with the US SEC to list on the Nasdaq as ANT, reporting first-half revenue of US\$16.3 billion, a US\$80.7 billion net loss and hundreds of billions of dollars in compute commitments.

Best Effort desk · Wed 28 Oct 2026 · 5 sources · 2 min read

WHY IT MATTERS

The filing shows how much compute and cloud capacity a leading AI lab has contracted, which feeds demand for data centres and networking, including in Australia. Analysts say the pricing will influence confidence in the companies funding the AI infrastructure build-out.

Anthropic, the company behind the Claude models, has lodged a Form S-1 with the US Securities and Exchange Commission for a proposed initial public offering of Class A common stock. The shares are intended to trade on the Nasdaq Global Select Market as "ANT". Neither the number of shares nor the price range has been decided. According to Reuters reporting carried by iTnews, some current and prospective investors now value the company at about US\$1.5 trillion, compared with roughly US\$2 trillion a week earlier.

First-half 2026 revenue came to about US\$16.3 billion. Anthropic said revenue in the three months to 30 June was up 1,368 per cent on a year earlier, while cautioning that the growth rate could fall and swing over time. The net loss for

the six months widened to US\$80.7 billion, mostly because of a non-operating item linked to bonds that convert into company shares. ChannelNews reported that US\$72.4 billion of that was non-cash accounting adjustments, and that the operating loss narrowed to US\$693 million.

Anthropic said more than half of Fortune 500 companies and over 30 per cent of Global 2000 firms were customers that each brought in at least US\$100,000 over the 12 months to 30 September. ChannelNews reported that its five largest clients made up roughly a quarter of revenue in the first nine months of 2026.

Compute and infrastructure is the biggest cost line. The company said it expects those expenses to keep rising and to stay its largest operating cost. Reuters reported that it has committed more than US\$600 billion to computing deals with partners including Amazon and Google. W.Media, citing the prospectus, reported that Anthropic expects to spend as much as US\$120.5 billion on Nvidia-powered compute from SpaceXAI into 2029, and as much as US\$114.5 billion on Google capacity through 2033. The filing also says the company depends on a small number of cloud providers such as Amazon, Google and Microsoft, and on suppliers such as Broadcom, which can create "dependencies and potential vulnerabilities".

The prospectus flags safety risks, saying its models could show "self-preserving behaviours" and behaviour "resembling blackmail". It also says using AI in its own research may push model capabilities ahead of its safety work. Goldman Sachs has the lead-left role alongside Morgan Stanley. Reuters reported the listing is expected before late November, while W.Media said it reportedly targets the week of 16 November.

Analysts see the offering as a test for the sector. IPOX research associate Lukas Muehlbauer said the IPO "will establish a benchmark for valuing leading AI labs, influencing both upcoming listings and confidence in the companies funding the AI infrastructure build-out". deVere Group chief executive Nigel Green was more critical, saying: "Frankly, it's nuts,".

REPORTING FROM

- 1 **iTnews** · Anthropic's soaring sales, steep losses put AI frenzy to IPO test
- 2 **ABC News** · Anthropic files to list on stock market in potential \$US1.5tn float
- 3 **W.Media** · Anthropic's US\$2 trillion IPO is "nuts": deVere CEO
- 4 **ChannelNews** · Anthropic Reveals Explosive Revenue Growth And Massive Spending Plans Ahead Of IPO
- 5 **Anthropic** · Anthropic files S-1 with the SEC for proposed initial public offering

Written by AI from the reporting above. Quotes, numbers and names were checked against those sources before publication.

Australian AI startups urge government to trade data centre hosting for compute access

Local AI founders want Canberra to use Australia's appeal as a data centre location to secure guaranteed, affordable computing power, while the federal government develops national approval standards for the facilities.

Best Effort desk · Wed 28 Oct 2026 · 1 source · 2 min read

WHY IT MATTERS

The push links data centre approvals to a question of domestic access to compute, at a time when Australian startups rely on a few global providers and when hosting the facilities brings few jobs.

Australian AI startups are calling on the federal government to use the country's standing as a destination for data centres as a bargaining chip for access to computing power, according to a report originally published by ABC News. Industry leaders say Australia should negotiate guaranteed and affordable access to computing resources for local companies.

The founders describe two barriers: a lack of recognition in the domestic market and fierce global competition for the expensive computing capacity needed to scale. Christopher Sampson, whose AI startup Tilter took an unexpected route to success, found that customers at home only began taking the company seriously after it proved its value overseas. Fellow chief executive Michael Gately faces a constant global scramble for high-demand computing power.

Australian companies currently depend heavily on a small group of global technology giants that control the world's advanced computing capacity. That capacity runs on energy-intensive data centres, and although Australia has become an attractive place to build them, hosting them does not automatically deliver local economic gains. Once built, the facilities need relatively few staff, so their main value lies in the computing power they produce rather than the jobs they create.

Andrew Charlton, the Assistant Minister for Science, Technology and the Digital Economy, warned that Australia is at a "sliding doors" moment. He said the nation must decide whether to become a "creator" of AI technology or remain a "renter" that pays to use tools developed elsewhere.

The federal government is developing national standards for data centre approvals, working with state and territory leaders. The rules are intended to address community concerns by governing where centres are built and how they use resources such as electricity and water. The source report says the government hopes the frameworks will turn Australia from a passive host into a strategic player able to negotiate better access to computing power for local innovators.

REPORTING FROM

1 australianindustrynews.com.au · The world wants to build data centres in Australia, but we want something in return

Written by AI from the reporting above. Quotes, numbers and names were checked against those sources before publication.

CARRIERS & NETWORKS 9 OF 11

GlobalData forecasts about 1 per cent annual growth in Australian fixed internet revenue

GlobalData expects Australian fixed internet services revenue to grow at a compound rate of about 1 per cent over 2026-2031, with fibre and fixed wireless access lines offsetting a decline in cable.

Best Effort desk · Wed 28 Oct 2026 · 1 source · 2 min read

WHY IT MATTERS

The forecast suggests retail fixed broadband revenue growth will be modest even as NBN Co's fibre upgrades widen access to multi-gigabit speeds, putting the commercial emphasis on enterprise services and bundles rather than basic connectivity, according to GlobalData.

Australia's fixed internet services revenue is forecast to grow at a compound annual rate of about 1 per cent from 2026 to 2031, according to GlobalData. The research firm said the growth is mainly supported by steady increases in fibre broadband and fixed wireless access (FWA) lines. The projection comes from GlobalData's Australia Fixed Services Forecast (Q2-2026).

Cable internet services are expected to decline over the period as legacy infrastructure is decommissioned and migrated to fibre under NBN Co's network modernisation work, the forecast says. GlobalData telecom analyst Neha Mishra said fibre would remain the leading fixed broadband technology, driven by demand for high-speed services and efforts by government and

providers to improve fibre infrastructure. GlobalData pointed to a joint investment by NBN Co and the Australian Government of about A\$3.8 billion to provide upgrade paths for remaining Fibre to the Node premises. That program is expected to benefit about 622,000 homes and businesses, with more than 95 per cent of the premises eligible for a full fibre upgrade by 2030. About 577,000 premises are in detailed design, and about 254,000 of those are under construction, of which about 91,000 are eligible for the full fibre upgrade. GlobalData also said over 11 million households and businesses are expected to be able to access multi-gigabit speeds by December 2030.

FWA lines are forecast to grow at a 4 per cent compound annual rate over 2026-2031. GlobalData attributed this to continued 5G expansion, wider availability of high-speed wireless and demand from households and small businesses that want faster broadband without a fixed-line connection.

Telstra led the fixed broadband market in 2025 and is expected to keep its lead through 2031, backed by its position in fibre and its focus on FTTTH/B rollout, according to the forecast. The telco is adding up to 20,000km of new route sheaths to its national fibre network by 2027. In 2025 it completed a 5,000km intercity network, rebranded as the Aura network, connecting Sydney and Canberra. In October 2025 it began a 14,000km coastal route from Sydney to Melbourne, which is expected to be operational by 2027.

Mishra said the market was moving from legacy transition to infrastructure monetisation. She said future revenue acceleration "hinges on high-margin enterprise services, automated network slicing via 5G FWA, and premium smart-home bundles that transform enhanced fiber capacity into sustained digital ecosystem growth."

REPORTING FROM

1 **advanced-television.com** · Forecast: Fibre, FWA to sustain Australia broadband services revenue

Written by AI from the reporting above. Quotes, numbers and names were checked against those sources before publication.

Optus and SA Police differ over Triple Zero risk after Angaston base station fault

A hardware fault at an Optus base station in Angaston, in South Australia's Barossa Valley, knocked out mobile voice and data, and police warned it may have blocked emergency calls. Optus said other carriers covered the area, while police stood by their warning.

Best Effort desk · Wed 28 Oct 2026 · 1 source · 1 min read

WHY IT MATTERS

The disagreement over whether Triple Zero calls could connect, and when police were told the fault was fixed, puts the real-time outage reporting rules introduced after the 2023 outage under scrutiny.

A hardware fault at an Optus base station in Angaston, in the Barossa Valley, took down mobile voice and data services for local residents. Police issued a warning that the outage may have stopped people from reaching emergency services.

The accounts from Optus and police diverged. Optus said the area was covered by other telcos, so triple-0 calls would still have connected. Police kept their original warning in place and said they were told the outage had been resolved nearly an hour later. Optus eventually fixed the fault.

The incident follows an Optus outage in November 2023 that led to tighter federal laws. Those laws require telcos to give real-time outage information to the government and emergency services. The source also refers to a 2025 Optus outage that lasted 14 hours and resulted in two deaths, and says an independent report recommended sweeping changes to Optus' network management.

REPORTING FROM

- 1 **Custommapposter** · Optus Outage in South Australia: Police Warning, Triple-0 Concerns, and What You Need to Know (2026)

Written by AI from the reporting above. Quotes, numbers and names were checked against those sources before publication.

OpenSignal map shows satellite-to-phone use across remote Australia as UOMO becomes law

OpenSignal's new D2D Satellite Map shows direct-to-device connections in every Australian state and territory, as the Universal Outdoor Mobile Obligation pushes carriers towards satellite partners. RMIT's Mark Gregory says technical and spectrum questions could leave the market in limbo until at least next year, and possibly 2028.

Best Effort desk · Wed 28 Oct 2026 · 1 source · 2 min read

WHY IT MATTERS

The map gives an independent, usage-based view of where terrestrial coverage falls short, at a time when coverage standards and maps have been revised and the new obligation is pushing carriers to satellite partners. Gregory argues the outcome of the 2GHz MSS spectrum process could shift competitive dynamics between terrestrial carriers and satellite operators.

Mobile testing company OpenSignal has launched a D2D Satellite Map showing where phones are connecting directly to satellites, with connections recorded in every Australian state and territory. The map also confirms significant uptake in New Zealand, the US, Chile and Japan.

The technology uses antennas in compatible smartphones to talk to low Earth orbit satellites, initially for text messaging where terrestrial coverage is absent. Optus was the first Australian carrier to sign up, striking a deal with Starlink in 2023, and Telstra launched its Satellite Messaging service in June last year. When Telstra expanded its offering in July, it said more than 2.9 million customers had sent over 26 million messages, with more than 200,000 connections each day.

In Australia the clusters sit along remote roads around Mount Kosciuszko, near Dubbo and Yarrawonga, north of Blackwater in Queensland and at Iluka Resources' JA Mine in South Australia. Others appear just outside metropolitan areas, around Ballarat and at Cape Otway, where travellers have long dealt with mobile blackspots.

Because D2D connections only activate when conventional networks are unavailable, the map gives an inverse view of mobile coverage. That matters in Australia, where telcos had to redraw coverage maps earlier this year after the ACMA revised the standards for what counts as coverage. Australian Telecommunications Alliance CEO Luke Coleman told Information Age the map shows that even the very early services are getting some pickup among Australian users. Coleman believes the data is more likely to deepen

partnerships with Starlink and other LEO operators than to guide new base station builds. Coleman said the investment case for terrestrial coverage "gets very thin as you get into low population areas".

The Universal Outdoor Mobile Obligation, enshrined in law in the week before the 26 October 2026 report, is driving carriers to partner with satellite operators including Starlink, while Amazon and AST SpaceMobile are emerging as potential providers. Technical hurdles remain: latency makes acceptable voice calls difficult over LEO satellites, and technical analyses suggest performance is significantly impaired inside buildings, cars and trains.

One possible improvement is the allocation of mobile satellite services spectrum in the 2GHz band, with auctions expected before the end of the year. RMIT Associate Professor Mark Gregory told Information Age the challenges could leave the Australian D2D market in limbo until at least next year, and possibly 2028. He sees "a strong likelihood" that well-funded operators such as SpaceX and Amazon will outbid Telstra, Optus and TPG for that spectrum. Gregory also pointed to NBN Co's engagement with Amazon as something that could reshape satellite delivery to regional Australians. He said, "There's one thing that Telstra can't control," and that is the spectrum.

REPORTING FROM

1 **Information Age** · Satellites threaten Australia's telco establishment | Information Age

Written by AI from the reporting above. Quotes, numbers and names were checked against those sources before publication.