



BETTER CONNECTIONS. EVERYWHERE. ALWAYS.

Response to ACMA's consultation on 'Satellite direct-to-mobile services: regulatory issues'

31st Jan 2024

[PIVOTEL.COM.AU](https://www.pivotel.com.au)

Pivotel welcomes the opportunity to comment on ACMA's consultation on 'Satellite direct-to-mobile services: regulatory issues'.

CONTEXTUAL STATEMENT

- Pivotel supports more than 100,000 Australian and New Zealand satellite services operating outside of mobile phone coverage. Our suite of satellite and mobile technologies enable connectivity via satellite phones, high-speed satellite internet terminals, wireless networks, personnel and asset monitoring solutions, machine-to-machine (IoT) data terminals and specialist maritime communication systems.
- Pivotel is well placed to play a unique and relevant role in delivering improved high speed mobile coverage and fixed wireless services enabling innovation to parts of regional and remote Australia while also developing its plans to deliver public-private 5G services to metropolitan regions. This is however predicated on access to suitable spectrum at a cost that enables a reasonable return on investment.
- As a mobile operator focussed on regional and remote Australia, we observe that rural community communication needs are constantly evolving, and Pivotel is keen to see appropriate terrestrial spectrum allocation and Non-Terrestrial Network (NTN) services such as satellite Direct-To-Mobile (DTM) become available to serve the markets in new and innovative ways, now and into the future.
- In general, Pivotel is fully supportive of the introduction of satellite DTM into Australia.

Pivotal Response

- 1. Is the current spectrum management framework fit-for-purpose to manage these new satellite services? This includes spectrum-licensed bands and other bands covered by the LIPD class licence.**

Pivotal believes that the current spectrum management framework is adequate to support DTM services in Australia. However, some improvements can be made as stated in AMTA's response relating to:

- seeking permission from the incumbent spectrum licensee(s) before a DTM service is activated.
- publishing of active DTM services (i.e., satellite operator, relevant bands/channels, geographic reach) on ACMA website.

- 2. If not considered fit-for-purpose: What are your concerns? What is your proposed solution? What next steps should be taken?**

Please refer to details in AMTA's response which are summarised above.

- 3. Are there any other commercial, regulatory or public-benefit implications we should take into account?**

Pivotal advocates for an inclusive approach to satellite DTM service, emphasising the importance of not confining it solely to nationally licensed IMT spectrum bands. We believe that holders of IMT spectrum licenses, whether on a regional or AWL basis, should have the flexibility to engage in agreements with satellite operators for spectrum utilisation. Imposing restrictions on this would impede potential new entrants in the future.

The capabilities of satellite operators to transmit across various frequencies and geographies are increasingly advanced and are poised to become even more sophisticated. Therefore, decisions regarding spectrum usage should be left to mutual agreements between spectrum holders and satellite operators, guided by the applicable usage rules. This approach allows for commercial and technical arrangements tailored to specific needs, ensuring optimal utilisation of the spectrum.

In regard to ACMA's statement: "*A key feature of IMT satellite direct-to-mobile services is the need for an agreement or partnership between satellite operators offering a satellite direct-to-mobile service and MNOs who hold spectrum licences.*" we stress that an IMT spectrum holder should not be limited to being a public MNO or affiliated with one. For instance, a satellite operator could directly hold an IMT spectrum license, or a neutral host could hold spectrum accessible to both MNOs and MSS operators. This flexibility ensures a broader range of entities can participate in and benefit from the provision of satellite direct-to-mobile services without being constrained by traditional affiliations or structures.

Lastly, we must address the matter of expiring spectrum licenses. It is imperative to persist in facilitating the accessibility of expiring spectrum to accommodate new players, particularly those interested in regional spectrum. This includes satellite operators and regional carriers,

who can leverage satellite DTM services to enhance their coverage. By enabling access to expiring spectrum to non-incumbents, we foster competition and innovation, while ensuring broader access to telecommunications services across diverse geographic regions.

For any questions in relation to this response please contact:

Raminder Sahota
Chief Solutions Architect

Email: [REDACTED]

Pivotel Group Pty Limited