

Australia
Australian Communications Authority
Bob Horton, Acting Chairman

1. Equity of Access

The primary objective of regulation should be to secure fair and reasonable access for all. In the Australian environment, the market will be the major determinant in the delivery of broadband services which requires a pro-competitive regime to promote facilities and services based competition.

The Government will act through regulation and/or direct funding in areas where the market does not provide services at fair and reasonable prices within an acceptable time (eg because of factors such as location, culture or social disadvantage).

2. Improving cooperation and partnerships locally, nationally and internationally

Activity needs to be integrated from the "grass-roots" of identification of local needs through to the "tree-tops" of international law and involve governments, business and non-government organisations. Regulatory action needs to recognise that communications has local, national and international implications which need to be addressed. Many issues such as standardization and interoperability, Internet governance, combating SPAM, fighting cyber-crime can only be addressed effectively through wide-ranging cooperation.

3. Respecting Cultural, Social and Economic Diversity

Regulation should permit and encourage the development of services that reflect diversity in culture, language and social interests. Relevant local content is likely to be a major driver for adoption. While encouraging the availability and adoption of broadband, people should not be excluded from effective participation in the economy or society by lack of access to or failure to adopt broadband services.

4. Building Trust and Confidence

Regulation should provide assurance for both providers and users of services that there is protection against misuse of intellectual property and information, including concerns about protection of privacy. Education and information about the nature and use of Broadband services is also important in building user confidence.

5. Broadband is an Enabler

Regulation should be directed at improving the long term interests of citizens. Broadband can contribute to this through the opportunities it can enable to educate and inform, increase efficiency, reduce costs, overcome distance, open up markets, enhance understanding and create employment. Provision and adoption of Broadband services are means to achieve outcomes rather than ends in themselves. Governments should use their position as leading purchasers of telecommunications services to underpin demand aggregation strategies and share associated improvements in price and delivery with communities.