
From: John Robertson [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 30 June 2022 11:34 AM
To: Merger Authorisations
Subject: Proposed Telstra/TPG Merger

Good morning,

I am writing this submission to raise concerns over the proposed merger between Telstra and TPG. As an owner of Optus stores in regional Victoria, Optus has brought competition and choice to these regional areas, in addition to huge regional network investments. These investments, along with employing local people in our locations provide a competitive environment across regional Victoria. Optus is the true regional competitor.

Our concern is that if this merger is approved, this would lead to a decreasing competitor environment with an inevitable increase in costs to business and household customers. With competition reduced, there will be no incentive for Telstra to seek to maintain or improve network coverage and quality, and there will be no commercial viability for Optus to maintain its significant planned investment.

Having witnessed the devastating impacts of natural disasters, and the impact that fire and flood can have on network infrastructure, reduced communications infrastructure would have a profound impact on our rural communities at times when network alternatives are needed most.

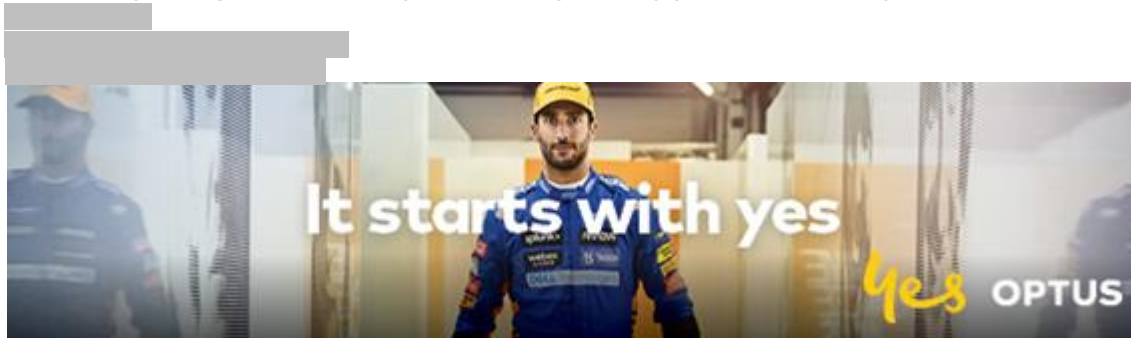
My view is that approval of the merger will increase the regional investment challenge Optus currently faces by further strengthening Telstra's dominance in regional Australia. This will regrettably lead to less investment in regional areas of the country, further increasing the already widened city/country divide.

Telstra will gain control over an unprecedented proportion of national spectrum assets. This access to a significant amount of additional spectrum will give Telstra the ability to offer a level of service that no other Mobile Network Operator could ever hope to compete with. This in turn, would have a massively negative impact on regional jobs. It's estimated that a competitive national deployment of 5G could have a cumulative impact over the decade of \$130 billion and 205,000 net new jobs created. All this is a risk if the merger is approved.

Thank you for your time.

Regards,

John Robertson
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