

With the Telecommunications Act (1991) Australia opened competition to the government owned domestic carrier, Telecom. Other elements of government policy include:

- The implementation of pro-competitive safeguards, including equal access and interconnection between the carriers;
- The introduction of unrestricted network competition starting in 1997;
- Full resale of domestic and international capacity;
- The issuing of three service operator licences for public, mobile telecommunications;
- Open competition in public access, cordless telecommunications services;
- A mandate for AUSTEL, the independent regulatory body, to promote competition;
- A requirement that *Telstra*, continue to provide a standard telephone service to all residential and business customers, with a price cap applied to its charges to ensure that the benefits of competition are shared equitably.

2.2.2 Technical Profile

- 5000 national and international telephone exchanges (3000 digital)
- Extensive voice-data cable network (more than 1 million km optical fibre, 60 % of population will have fibre within 600 metres of homes by end of 1994; analog)
- Australia-wide microwave radio network (digital and analog)
- Separate ISDN network
- Rapidly expanding cellular mobile network (more than 560,000 customers end June 1993, 27% annual increase)
- Large scale data processing and billing facilities
- Telephones in more than 95% of Australian homes.

A broad range of ISDN and digital facilities has been established. The optical fibre network program links all capital cities and there is a major upgrade of exchanges to digital switches.