

Comments on draft Telecommunications Consumer Protections Code – C628:2025

CA NOTE: Received from: Private Citizen AS

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft Telecommunications Consumer Protections Code - C628:2025.

My comments relate to the issue of carriage service providers (**CSPs**) giving sufficient information to customers about data usage on a plan so as to enable a customer to make a proper assessment of the appropriateness of the plan.

In my experience, it is currently difficult for a customer to make an assessment, based on historical data usage, of whether their telecommunications services plan is the most appropriate plan for them.

For example, we have telecommunications services with the CSPs Belong, Spintel and Tangerine. It is not possible on the consumer portals of any of those 3 CSPs to view data usage for the previous months of a mobile or SIM-only plan.

Whether this is by design or oversight is immaterial because the result is the same – a consumer is unable to make an informed assessment of whether, having regard to the consumer's historical data usage, the services plan is the most appropriate plan for the consumer.

This should be rectified by the inclusion of an obligation on CSPs to include on the bill for a services plan historical data usage information for the plan for a period of up to 6 months. This will enable consumers to make an assessment of the appropriateness of the plan, having regard to their data usage.

Clause 8.4.7 should be amended to include a new paragraph (pa) substantially in the following terms after paragraph (p):

- (pa) if the bill is for a telecommunications service that has a data usage cap under a plan, monthly usage information for the service for the lesser of the following periods:
 - (i) the period during which the service has been provided to the customer under the plan;
 - (ii) 6 months;

An alternative approach, and probably a better one from a consumer's perspective, would be to adopt the same model as is used in energy retailing. That is, to require a CSP to conduct a 'better offer' check and to include a 'better offer' message on the bill in the same way as is required by Part 4 of the Better Bills Guideline (Version 2) made under the National Energy Retail Rules.

I am not suggesting the adoption of such a model for telecommunications services at this stage. However, if the telecommunications industry is unable or unwilling to voluntarily adopt a transparency measure such as the new paragraph 8.4.7(pa) suggested above, the ACMA might consider investigating other regulatory options to enhance plan comparison and switching for consumers.

Separately, the omission from the draft Code of provisions equivalent to the Key Commitments to Consumers in the Introductory Statement on page i of the current Code is a retrograde step. It would be preferable if these key commitments were retained, both to provide a clear statement of expectations from CSPs and to inform the interpretation of the Code.