



# History of AMTA

## over 20 years



The Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association (AMTA) was incorporated on 20 September, 1994, through the amalgamation of the Cellular Retailers Association of Australia and the Cellular Dealers Association of Australia.

**Saturday, 20 September 2014 marks 20 years since AMTA was formally established. This provides us with a chance to consider how our organisation has evolved over the past two decades as we continue to grow to meet the needs of our members now and in the years ahead. We do so while remembering the lessons of the past and the efforts of members and staff since 1994.**

In the first annual report, AMTA President Steve Haritos, Audiovox Pacific Ltd, set the tone for our industry's strong emphasis on consensus and finding common ground among members:

*"The diversity of issues addressed and activities undertaken by the Association reflects the dynamic nature of the industry. The strength of the Association lies in its broad membership which allows for a range of views to be considered by members in addressing issues of common interest".*

Mr Haritos nominated the major issues of the day. It comes as no surprise that two decades later spectrum is still top of industry's priority list:

- Spectrum policy
- Parallel imports/grey marketing
- Taxation
- Type approvals process

He said the nature of the industry required a high level of contact and co-operation with government officials, which provided a "two-way flow of information and views between industry and Government and contributes in a positive manner towards the growth of the industry".

In 1994, Australia had the fourth-highest mobile penetration per capita in the world and it was growing faster than the top three ranked nations with an estimated 2.25 million mobile subscribers in Australia.

### Committees

In 1995-96, AMTA took another key step on its path to the organisation that we know today. It moved from "plenary sessions" to increased work groups, or committees, to handle a range of issues, including environmental matters and security concerns.

Committees remain at the heart of AMTA's work today. The CEO's Report in 2004 said committees were AMTA's engine room and provided members with the mechanism "to ensure industry contributes to and shapes public policy debates by presenting an unified voice".

AMTA appointed its first full-time Executive Director in 1996-97 and he reported that Electromagnetic Energy (EME) health issues had taken up an "enormous" amount of the secretariat's time and effort and "as more and more mobile phones are hooked up it will occupy even more time over the months and years to come".

In 2011, the then AMTA Chair, Henry Calvert (Optus) summed up "new era" challenges from an increasingly complex environment shaped by convergence, productivity and connectivity. However, he said it was important to maintain a necessary emphasis on "mature" issues, such as health and safety.



## Research and agenda setting

AMTA has commissioned research over the years to give governments and regulators new insights into the growing role and importance of mobile telecommunications and provide an evidenced-based policy approach to inform decision-making.

AMTA commissioned the Allen Consulting Group in 2004 to undertake a report to “better understand the economic significance of the mobile telecommunications industry in Australia”. It said the mobile penetration rate had grown from 64 per cent in 2001-02 to 72 per cent in 2002.

“Although it may seem unlikely, a penetration rate above 100 per cent is possible and has been achieved in a number of countries,” said the 2004 report. The latest report in the research series *Mobile Nation*, which was released in early 2013, said the penetration rate was about 135 per cent!

AMTA Chair, Warwick Bray, said at the launch of *Mobile Nation*:

*“There can be no doubt that our customers, who are at the centre of our industry, are enjoying and demanding at unprecedented levels the full range of opportunities from the intersection of mobile technology and the internet – arguably two of the most influential technologies of our generation.*

*This pervasive technology is deeply embedded in all our lives. Behind the growing importance of mobile as an enabler of national*

AMTA Chair Warwick Bray, CEO Chris Althaus and the Minister for Communications, Malcolm Turnbull in 2013.

*productivity and efficiency, people are using mobiles for a broad range of social activities outside business, including wider connection with people of similar interest, deeper connections (keeping in touch with family and friends), entertainment (music, photography and videos) and management of personal affairs.”*

## Community engagement

AMTA has introduced programs over the years to be socially responsible and in touch with community needs and expectations by offering practical solutions to consumers. MobileMuster, AMTA’s recycling program, was launched in 1999 as the industry’s official product stewardship program.

As it evolved from a national battery recycling program it became what was believed to be the only industry-wide program for electronic waste offering free recycling for all mobile phone brands in the world.

Similarly, the Lost & Stolen program was launched in 2003 to address a growing national problem of mobile phone theft. Through the use of anti-theft technology, the industry was able to send a strong signal to thieves that stolen mobiles would be made inoperable.

In the decade since the program started there was a 21 per cent fall in blocking activity against a backdrop of mobile services increasing from 16 million to 30 million.

Louise Sexton, past AMTA Chair; Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, Senator Stephen Conroy; Henry Calvert, Chair, AMTA, 2010.





## AMTA milestones

- AMTA launched in February 1994
- AMTA incorporated in ACT on 20 September 1994
- The forerunner of AMTA committee system established in 1996
- As at 1 June 1996, Australia had a cellular penetration rate of 19 per cent making it the fourth highest behind Sweden (25 per cent) followed by Norway and Finland
- AMTA's first full-time Executive Director appointed in 1997
- Expansion of AMTA's committees in 1997 with the introduction of the Health and Safety Committee
- AMTA moves into new premises with its own offices and staff of an administration assistant and part-time project/policy officer working on EME issues
- The establishment of the Lost and Stolen Mobile Phones Register in 1998
- 1999-2000 marked the introduction of "fledgling mass-market mobile data" with the launch of Wireless Application Protocol
- AMTA Directors on 24 November 1999 give the green light for the Battery Recycling Program to go national
- In 2000 AMTA established the Mobile Carriers Forum (MCF)
- Mobile Number Portability was launched on 25 September 2001. AMTA was represented on the working committee throughout the complex development process
- In 2002, David Thodey (Telstra) and Kevin Russell (Hutchison) joined the AMTA Board
- AMTA hosts a forum in Canberra on 12 February 2002 with Law Enforcement Agencies on how to tackle the growing problem of mobile phone theft
- In September 2003, the Minister for Communications, Senator Richard Alston, launches a world first digital handset blocking program at Parliament House, Canberra
- AMTA President Lynda O'Grady said AMTA's Committees were the "engine room" of the organisation
- AMTA commissioned report finds that Industry Gross Product for mobile phone industry was \$6.1 billion in 2004-05, up from \$5.3 billion in previous year
- AMTA's revamped recycling scheme was renamed "MobileMuster" in 2005

Brian Scarsbrick (CEO Landcare) and Holly Kramer (AMTA, Chair) plant the first of 75,000 trees to be planted under the "Old Phones, New Trees" campaign in 2007.

AMTA President Keir Preedy (Optus); Senator Richard Alston, the Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts; Graham Chalker, AMTA CEO, at the National Press Club lunch May 2003.





- AMTA hosted the Mobile Telecommunications Showcase at Parliament House on 14 June 2006
- AMTA, as part of an Australian Research Council Linkage Grant, commissioned a study that found the majority of Australians believe mobile phones had helped balance family and working lives
- 23 February 2007 marked 21 years since the first mobile phone was introduced in Australia with the then Minister for Communications, Michal Duffy, making the first official call
- In 2007 AMTA released an Access Economics report that found the mobile telecommunications industry “punches above its weight” because of its ability to drive productivity gains throughout the Australian economy
- In 2008 Government announces licence renewal for 15-year spectrum licences and the replan of the 2500MHz band for mobile industry use
- AMTA Chair Louise Sexton in 2009 said the mobile telecommunications industry had met the uncertainty and challenges thrown up by the Global Financial Crisis to post a robust performance under trying conditions
- In 2010, AMTA President Henry Calvert called for a sense of urgency in the policy process with a spectrum roadmap to assist critical investment decisions
- In 2010, AMTA commissioned research by Network Strategies that estimated gross productivity benefits for mobile broadband in Australia from 2013 to 2020 were around \$143 billion provided industry could access sufficient spectrum in appropriate bands
- AMTA responded to the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) which classified radio waves emitted from wireless devices as “possibly carcinogenic to humans”
- In 2012, AMTA led industry’s response to two Private Members Bill introduced into Federal Parliament that would have undermined the industry’s ability to develop networks
- 2013 marked the 10th anniversary of the Lost & Stolen program. There was a 21 per cent fall in handset blocks since 2003-04 against the backdrop of a very strong mobile phone uptake from 16.2 million subscribers in 2004 to 30.2 million in 2013
- AMTA Chair Warwick Bray launches *Mobile Nation*, which highlighted the economic enabling capacity of mobile services, particularly mobile broadband, at Parliament House Canberra on 7 February 2013, with former Communications Minister, Stephen Conroy
- AMTA Deputy Chair, Hakan Eriksson, represented AMTA at the 25 July 2014 announcement of MobileMuster as Australia’s first Federal Government accredited voluntary product stewardship scheme. The Minister for Environment, Greg Hunt, made the announcement in Sydney.



Dr Ken Joyner (Samsung) and Kelly Parkinson (kppri) at the AMTA/MCF stand at the Bioelectromagnetics Society (BEMS) conference, which was held in Australia for the first time in Brisbane in June 2012.