

INTEGRATED PUBLIC NUMBER DATABASE (IPND) THE CASE FOR INCLUDING MOBILES

What is the IPND?

- Established in 1998, the IPND is a centralised database containing records of all Australian telephone numbers and associated customer data.
- Information in the IPND includes:
 - customer name, service address, phone number
 - whether the service is fixed or mobile
 - whether the service is listed or unlisted.
- Telstra currently manages the IPND under its carrier licence conditions.
- At 30 June 2016, the IPND had 67.7 million records.

The IPND Scheme

- The IPND Scheme allows the ACMA to authorise researchers to access **listed numbers** contained in the IPND for conducting research of a kind **specified by the Minister**.
- The ACMA can only authorise access to the IPND consistent with **legislation, Ministerial instruments and the IPND Scheme**.
- The ACMA plays a gatekeeper role in administering the application process.
- Access to the IPND under the IPND Scheme is subject to five Ministerial instruments and the Telecommunications Act.
- One of the five Ministerial instruments supporting the IPND Scheme is the [Telecommunications \(Integrated Public Number Database-Permitted Research Purposes\) Instrument 2007 \(No.1\)](#).
- This instrument specifies the three types of research permitted under the IPND Scheme
 - Health, Electoral and Government.
- This instrument is made by the Minister for Communications.
- The new instrument - the *Telecommunications Integrated Public Number Database Scheme 2017* - commenced 1 April 2017 and is available on the Federal Register of Legislation.

The Telecommunications IPND 2017 Scheme...

- ✓ Facilitates industry management of access to IPND data in controlled circumstances by allowing the ACMA to authorise a **research body to disclose limited (de-identified) IPND data to its members** to undertake permitted research.
- ✓ Allows the ACMA to grant individual researchers and research bodies with **ongoing access** to IPND information, subject to requirements such as completion of a privacy impact assessment.
- ✓ Permits the following research: Health, Electoral and Government.
- ✓ Allows access to listed IPND data (i.e. landlines).
- ✗ **Does not allow access to unlisted IPND data (i.e. mobiles).**

Why mobile numbers are required for permitted research purposes

The IPND Scheme (which includes both anonymised listed and unlisted numbers) represents a grossly underutilised and valuable research resource which is unique to Government and largely unavailable to researchers elsewhere.

Government clients **require** sample to contain randomly generated numbers (RGN), for the specific

purpose of including unlisted numbers in the sample, to ensure both statistically valid representation, and the opinions of those people are heard.

As mobile phone numbers were unlisted by default, as the volume of mobiles in the community and 'mobile only' (no landline) households grow exponentially, a very significant demographic is currently unlisted, and unavailable for important research.

The current mechanism to include unlisted numbers in a research sample is complex and inefficient, and contributes to higher costs on industry and government, along with less precision in research.

When RGN are used, the client research cost is increased by:

- Cost of generating the sample.
- Cost of testing the sample.
- Cost of extra research time devoted to determining the geography of the called number through questioning the subject.
- Cost of extra research time devoted to determining the status (business, residential, etc) of the called number through questioning the subject.
- Cost of increased call centre staff and time.
- Cost of decreased precision in research. It is not unusual for thousands of numbers to be generated for a particular range to get a single live number - clearly inefficient and costly.
- Unlisted landline and mobile numbers ARE currently being called, and it is a requirement of government and commercial researchers that this occurs. Privacy is not an issue, as there is no knowledge of an individual's name or address.

Summary

The usefulness of the IPND as a data source is dependent on accessing currently unlisted numbers, particularly mobiles. There is no privacy implication, as there will not be any release of name or address to the researcher.

Support for the inclusion of mobile numbers in the industry access model¹ was granted by Department of Communications and the Arts in December 2015 – see **IPND Implementation Plan, Recommendation #4** – *The Range of users able to apply for access to IPND information (including anonymised information about unlisted numbers) should be broadened to include a wider range of researchers...*

To further support this critical need, the recent [ACMA Communications Report 2015-16](#) reported an increase in mobile-only households from 29 to 31% of the total population with a staggering 59% of 25-34 year olds reported using mobile only.

The research industry therefore seeks a legislative change to include mobiles (unlisted numbers) before establishing its IPND access model – a model that promises to benefit government, research organisations and the Australian public.

Contact: Sarah Campbell, Executive Director AMSRO | T: 02 8017 6717 | M: 0417 665 144

¹ Industry Access Model – attached separately