

Call for probe of Aussie wireless overhaul

November 21 2005

Telstra's plans to replace its wireless telephone network in Australia have prompted calls for a government investigation.

Former Deputy Prime Minister Tim Fischer said Monday that the government should step in to ensure that Telstra's overhaul doesn't leave residents in the sparsely populated Outback cut off from their current phone service.

Telstra plans to shut off its (code division multiple access) CDMA mobile network in rural Australia and replace it with a nationwide third-generation network in 2008, a move Fischer is concerned could force customers to buy high-priced 3G phones.

The Daily Telegraph said Fischer pointed out that the CDMA network introduced in 2000 relied on a contribution of federal money, a fact he said warranted government input before the whole network is scrapped.

Telstra officials told the newspaper it would work with current CDMA subscribers and saw no need for a formal inquiry.

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Citation: Call for probe of Aussie wireless overhaul (2005, November 21) retrieved 10 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2005-11-probe-aussie-wireless-overhaul.html>

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