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TelSoc is pleased to host John Lord AM, Chairman of Huawei Technologies Australia, to give the Charles Todd Oration in 2019.

China and the broader APAC region are emerging as key drivers of technology. This is being driven by a growing and better educated middle-class in the region. For a number of different reasons Australia seems reluctant to be a central part of the rising APAC region and instead continues to take its lead from the Western Hemisphere.

What can Australia do to embrace the new possibilities offered by a rising China in the technology sector? What does Australia need to do to remain a “Smart State” in a changing World?

Huawei has built up a considerable business in Australia and has shown itself to be a significant vendor to telcos in broadband and mobile telecommunications and also has a growing presence in the consumer devices and enterprise markets.

It came as a bit of a shock in 2018 when the Australian Government banned Huawei from providing 5G technology for any network operators in Australia, especially as it is a significant player in 4G with its technology supplying services to over half the population.

Both Vodafone and Optus had major investments in Huawei equipment for 4G and were planning greater expansion for 5G. The 5G ban has also led to TPG withdrawing from the mobile market and leaves only two major vendors, from Finland and Sweden, providing 5G for 3 mobile network operators.

The NBN, which uses 4G (also called LTE) for its fixed wireless is also banned from purchasing Huawei equipment (4G, 5G or fixed broadband).

It is the stated aim of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) Australia’s regulator, to encourage - and mandate where appropriate - infrastructure competition, so it is interesting these government decisions are at odds with this very important goal.

There is little doubt that the decision to keep out the major third infrastructure provider from 5G will lead to a slower roll-out, less innovative solutions, higher prices and restricted competition.

The TelSoc Vision is:

Telecommunications plays an increasingly central and critical role in the fabric of our modern digital society. TelSoc exists to maximise the effectiveness of telecommunications in Australia.

We feel that the restriction of competition, especially based on no discernable evidence, is not in the interest of an efficient market, reduces competition and acts against the interests of telecommunications users.

Tim Herring

Executive Director  
Telecommunications Association Inc.

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