



Comms Group Limited

Growth while continuing to invest globally

Comms Group Ltd (ASX:CCG) has reported FY23 earnings and provided a more detailed and narrower range for both revenue and EBITDA guidance in FY24. The result was largely in-line with expectations with guidance already provided. Revenue increased 27% and adjusted EBITDA ~17% as the onPlatinum acquisition contributed for a full 12-months and investment was made in the Global business for future growth. FY24 revenue is expected to fall in a narrow range of \$53m-\$55m, +2.5%-6.0% on FY23 and highlights the predictability and recurring nature of CCG revenue. EBITDA guidance of \$6.5m-\$7.0m represents 35%-45% growth on FY23 and is underpinned by recent restructuring (the June 2023 run-rate is said to be ~\$6.3m). Applying the average FY23 (profitable) peer EV/EBITDA multiple of 7.6x to CCG FY24 guidance implies a price of \$0.14/share which incorporates continued investment in the Global division. Our DCF is \$0.16/share and implies 7.4x FY25 EV/EBITDA, which should be more reflective of the global opportunities. Results from the strategic review announced in June are due in the next three months.

Business model

CCG operates three largely independent divisions, but all operate in the broad communications space. The Global division is a niche player in the corporate voice market, predominantly offering wholesale solutions for users of Microsoft Teams across the Asia Pacific. The SME Telco division is essentially a telco service provider to Australian corporates with under 500 employees, while the ICT Services division provides ICT managed services to mid-tier Australian corporates.

Investing for future growth

The Global division is CCG's growth vehicle, providing a range of voice solutions to Microsoft Teams users and other wholesale carriers across a number of regions. An established global network is being strengthened with the prospect of new regional licences while the Teams Calling option is a fraction (~5%) of total Teams monthly users with increasing functionality (mobile and operator connect). Despite this opportunity Global EBITDA declined ~20% in FY23 and had a lower run rate exiting June 2023 as investment for future revenue opportunities continues. Restructuring across the ICT and SME divisions are key drivers of the forecast EBITDA uplift in FY24, but the Global division is the key to medium-term growth. The recent Symbio (ASX:SYM) takeover approach by Superloop (ASX:SLC) highlights the interest in this space and is supportive of the investment by CCG. FY24 multiples for CCG are attractive despite this investment.

Valuation of \$0.16/share or \$61m market cap fully-diluted

From a peer multiple perspective using FY23 estimates CCG is trading at a 5% discount to the average listed (profitable) peer (7.6x EV/EBITDA). Using FY24 EBITDA guidance and FY23 peer multiples the discount is closer to 40%, with a peer average implying a share price of \$0.14/share. Our DCF is reduced to \$0.16/share (down from \$0.18/share) due to a higher RFR, but underpinned by the recent cost reductions, Microsoft Teams calling penetration and modest revenue growth/stable gross margins/lower costs across the ICT/SME businesses. As a sense check, our DCF implies an FY25 PER of 14x and EV/EBITDA of 7.4x based on our estimates.

Historical earnings and RaaS' estimates (in A\$ unless otherwise stated)										
Year end	Revenue	EBITDA adj.	NPATA adj.	EPS adj.	PER (x)	EV/EBITDA (x)	EV/EBIT (x)			
06/22a	41.0	4.1	2.8	0.008	8.9	7.5	9.5			
06/23a	51.8	4.8	2.4	0.006	11.6	7.1	9.2			
06/24f	55.5	7.1	3.6	0.009	7.8	4.5	5.3			
06/25f	58.7	8.1	4.4	0.011	6.4	3.5	4.0			
Source: FY	′22 actual, Ra	ıaS estimates	FY23f, FY24f a	and FY25f						

IT Services & Software

29 August 2023



Share Performance (12 Months)



Upside Case

- Microsoft Teams and wholesale voice services uptake of voice telephony across APAC
- Additional product/services revenue across SME and ICT
- Complementary acquisitions

Downside Case

- Competition from new telephony products
- Loss of key SME/ICT contracts
- Integration of acquisitions

Board of Directors

John Mackay

Peter McGrath

Claire Bibby

Benjamen Jennings

Rvan O'Hare

Non-Executive Director

Executive Director

Non-Executive Director

Non-Executive Director

Company Interview

Comms Group RaaS Interview 29 August 2023

Comms Group Contact

Peter McGrath (CEO) investors@commsgroup.limited

RaaS Contacts

John Burgess +61 410 439 723

john.burgess@raasgroup.com

Finola Burke +61 414 354 712

finola.burke@raasgroup.com



FY23 Result Summary

Highlights from the FY23 result release are presented in the table below and include:

- Revenue growth of 26%, driven by a full 12-month contribution from the onPlatinum acquisition and solid (8%) growth in the Global division with minimal contribution from Vodafone or KDDI.
 - SME sales declined 1% to \$24.2m, with H1 flat and H2 declining 2%.
- Gross margin was steady at 46.5%, with H1 FY23 margin at 46.9% and H2 FY23 at 46.2%.
- Adjusted EBITDA growth of ~17% was lower than the rate of revenue growth due to investment in the Global division in anticipation of growth, particularly from Vodafone.
 - Divisionally, management accounts (before corporate costs) suggest SME EBITDA increased ~5% to \$3.9m, ICT delivered \$1.7m in the first full year of ownership against \$0.4m in the pcp (four months' ownership), and Global EBITDA declined ~20% as the business scales and expands into new regions.
- **D&A** was higher due to the onPlatinum acquisition contributing for a full 12 months, as was interest expense for the same reason.
- RaaS estimates adjusted NPATA of \$2.4m, 16% below the pcp and against a reported NPAT of -\$0.6m.
- Net debt of \$6.7m, with covenants clearly covered and \$0.6m headroom in the CBA facility remaining.
- Adjustments included share-based payments of \$932k (\$723k in FY22) and acquisition, integration, establishment and restructuring costs of \$2.0m (\$1.5m in FY22).

Variable (A\$000')	FY22	FY23	% CHG	Comments
Sales	41.0	51.9	26	
Global	10.0	10.8	8	Solid growth
SME	24.4	24.2	(1)	
ICT	6.7	16.9	154	onPlatinum for a full 12 months
Gross profit	19.1	24.1	26	
GP%	0.465	0.465	0	Gross margins held
Operating costs	15.0	19.3	28	12 months of onPlatinum
Adjusted EBITDA	4.1	4.8	17	
Depreciation	1.8	2.2	19	
Amortisation	1.6	2.0	28	
EBIT	1.7	1.7	5	Higher D&A
Interest expense	0.1	0.6		Higher interest due to acquisition
Pre-tax	0.9	0.3	(65)	·
Adjusted NPATA	2.8	2.4	(16)	
Reported NPAT	(1.0)	(0.6)	(41)	



FY24 Guidance And Strategic Review

FY24 guidance

Revenue has been guided to fall within a tight range of between \$53m-\$55m compared to previous RaaS estimates of \$55.5m, highlighting the predictability and recurring nature of CCG revenue. This implies growth of between 2.5% and 6.0% on FY23.

Underlying EBITDA has been guided to a range of between \$6.5m-\$7.0m, which implies growth of 35%-45% on FY23 and compares to a previous RaaS estimate of \$7.4m, now revised down to the top-end of the range (\$7.0m). The June 2023 EBITDA run rate is said to be \$6.5m, underpinned by recent restructuring across the SME and ICT divisions.

Divisionally this run rate assumes:

- SME EBITDA of \$4.9m;
- ICT EBITDA of \$2.5m;
- Global EBITDA of \$1.0m;
- Head Office/Corporate costs of -\$2.0m; and
- Group EBITDA of \$6.3m, at the top of the \$6.0m-\$6.5m run rate proved in June, mainly due to SME and ICT.

Strategic Review

The Board commenced a Strategic Review of the group's portfolio in June to consider all options available to maximise shareholder value, believing the sum of the parts is worth more than the group's current market valuation.

By definition the RaaS DCF valuation of \$0.16/share also suggests this, with much of the upside forecast in the Global division given a small near-term EBITDA contribution but significant long-term opportunities.

Value could be extracted by selling one or more of the divisions well above the current group multiple and at the same time improving the group's balance sheet.

Findings from the review are due within the next three months.

Vodafone Update

Initially announced in March 2022, the Teams offering went live in October 2022 but has seen slow uptake due to the imminent release of Microsoft Operator Connect, which brings a more simplified, customer-focused and enhanced environment at a more competitive price. Operator Connect allows Vodafone to manage the PSTN connection to Teams and bring true enterprise telephony to customers.

Vodafone is an example of a wholesale UCaaS client, meaning the CCG provides the interface for Teams as part of Vodafone's customised Teams offering to its own customers.

CCG will provide advanced orchestration and automation capabilities to automate many processes, with solutions including Microsoft Teams calling (direct-routing), SIP trunking, and value-added services (including call recording, call reporting, contact centre and Teams-to-text messaging).

Key terms to the revised contract include:

- Five-year minimum commitment period, after which the service will be provided on a month-to-month basis and may be terminated by either party with a minimum notice period of 12 months;
- Services will be provided to Vodafone's Business Enterprise team which services multinational corporations as well as Vodafone UK and Germany;
- Revenue for CCG will be based on the number of users onboarded; and
- Vodafone will pay CCG a minimum A\$30k/month beginning October 2023.



Our revenue assumptions for FY25 include \$3.2m from Vodafone (against the minimum \$360k), which implies ~150k users or ~2.5% of Vodafone's total unified customers globally by our estimates.

Peer Comparisons

Exhibit 2 below summarises some key financial variables for our selected peer group with a mixture of FY22 and FY23 financial years, and will be updated post the FY23 reporting season.

Exhibit 2: Peer group FY23f financial comparison (in A\$m unless otherwise stated)											
Company name	Ticker	Share price (A\$/share)	Mkt. cap.	Net debt (cash) @ Dec-22	Adj. EBITDA	Revenue	FY22 working capital/sales (%)	FY22 GP margin (%)	Capex/ sales (%)	EV/ EBITDA (x)	
Symbio	SYM	2.47	209	-38.1	26.6	203	0.07	0.47	3	6.4	
Dubber	DUB	0.12	35	-56.7	-40.0	42	(0.12)	0.07	12	0.5	
Field Solutions	FSG	0.04	33	-5.3	4.6	60	(0.05)	0.53	27	6.0	
SOCO Corporation	SOC	0.26	33	-6.4	3.0	20	0.02	0.38	1	8.9	
Pentenet	5GG	0.09	27	-5.7	-3.3	23	(0.16)	0.44	56	-6.4	
Spirit Technology	ST1	0.04	27	9.4	9.0	128	(0.01)	0.50	2	4.0	
Activeport	ATV	0.10	29	0.2	-4.0	17	(0.11)	0.41	0	-7.3	
Cirrus Networks	CNW	0.04	40	-9.5	3.5	110	(0.05)	0.32	0	8.7	
Vonex	VN8	0.03	10	19.0	7.5	42	(0.18)	0.49	0	3.9	
					AVERAGE		(0.07)	0.40	11	7.6	
Comms Group (FY23)	CCG	0.07	27	6.7	4.8	51.8	0.03	0.47	0	7.1	
Comms Group (FY24)	CCG	0.07	27	3.5	7.1	55.5	0.03	0.47	0	4.4	

Sources: Company financials, Refinitiv Eikon; Prices as of 28 August 2023; # SYM, FSG, ST1, CNW, VN8, BCC, SOC

Looking at CCG relative to the peer group we would highlight the following:

- Six of the eight are profitable;
- Based on FY23 estimates CCG is trading at a 5% discount to the estimated 7.6x adjusted peer EBITDA multiple (of those with positive-adjusted EBITDA);
- If we apply the FY23 adjusted EV/EBITDA average peer multiple to our forecast FY24 CCG estimates the discount widens to 40%. A peer multiple would imply a share price of \$0.14/share;
- The majority have a net cash position, with only VN8, ST1, and CCG having net debt, supported by positive adjusted EBITDA;
- The capital intensity (as measured by FY22 capex/sales) varies significantly between peers, with 5GG and FSG relatively high as they are building physical networks, while the balance of peers (and CCG) is very low as they utilise third-party networks, with the cost in the COGS line;
- The average share price of the peer group since June 30 has declined 2% against a 4% increase for CCG;
- The average peer FY23 EV/EBITDA multiple has increased from 4.9x to 7.6x over the past four months, with the sector particularly hard hit from tax loss selling and benefitting recently from the Symbio (ASX:SYM) bid by Superloop (ASX:SLC); and
- On August 1 SYM announced it had received a proposal to acquire the company at \$2.85/share by Superloop (ASX:SLC) before any dividend payments, a 47% premium to the three-month VWAP at the time. SYM's UCaaS and CPaaS business (the majority of its earnings) is similar in nature to the Global division within CCG and is likely to provide some valuation guide for this division down the track.



Investment Case Revisited

CCG has established a solid earnings base from which to expand organically and via acquisition. Consider the following:

- Management has forecast FY24 revenue between \$53m-\$55m, + 2.5%-+6.0% above FY23, and EBITDA of \$6.5m-\$7.0m, +35%-45% on FY23 despite limited contributions from the Vodafone deal.
- Significant growth is expected in the Global division, with management divisional valuation assumptions in FY22 assuming at least 8% medium-term revenue growth. This growth is driven by UCaaS wholesale deals for Microsoft Teams into the likes of Vodafone and KDDI, and other CPaaS deals, with FY24 likely to be the first material year with the introduction of Microsoft Operator Connect.
- CCG is piggy-backing Microsoft Teams in the Asia Pacific, the most popular meetings tool worldwide with ~300m monthly users in Q3 FY23 according to Microsoft, up from just 2m active daily users in 2017. With only ~20m Teams calling users currently and the recent introduction of <u>Teams Phone Mobile</u> and <u>Operator Connect</u> there is ample growth for UCaaS Teams voice solution providers like CCG.
- The SME Telco and ICT Services divisions offer more modest growth but recurring revenue of ~95% under three-year+ contracts provide some revenue/earnings security. There is upside from cross-selling, an extension of services offered, and strengthening regional positions in the key states of NSW, VIC, and QLD.
- CCG is trading at a 7% discount to the (profitable) peer average using FY23 EV/EBITDA multiples-based consensus estimates, and closer to a 42% discount using FY24 estimates.
- Our DCF valuation is \$0.16/share.
- Key management is incentivised by both tenure and the share price reaching and maintaining levels between \$0.125/share and \$0.20/share medium term. This implies a minimum of 95% share price upside should performance hurdles be met.



Comms Group Limited (AS	X:CCG)					Share price (28 August 20)23)				A\$	0.073
Profit and Loss (A\$m)						Interim (A\$m)	H122A	H222A	H123A	H223A	H124F	H224F
Y/E 30 Jun	FY21A	FY22A	FY23A	FY24F	FY25F	Revenue	17.3	23.7	26.0	25.8	27.4	28.1
Revenue	25.1	41.0	51.8	55.5	58.7	EBITDA	1.9	2.2	2.4	2.4	3.1	4.0
Gross profit	11.4	19.1	24.1	25.8	27.5	EBIT	0.9	0.7	0.9	0.9	1.5	2.5
GP margin %	45.3%	46.5%	46.6%	46.5%	46.9%	NPATA (normalised)	1.4	1.4	1.1	1.3	1.5	2.
Adj. EBITDA	2.6	4.1	4.8	7.1	8.1	Adjustments	(0.9)	(1.3)	0.6	(1.5)	0.0	0.0
Depn	(0.0)	(0.1)	(0.1)	(0.1)		NPAT (reported)	(0.5)	(0.8)	0.6	(1.3)	0.5	1.2
RoU	(0.3)	(0.8)	(1.0)	(1.0)	(1.0)	, ,	, ,	()		()		
Amortisation	(0.8)	(1.6)	(2.0)	(2.0)	. ,	EPS (adjusted)	0.004	0.004	0.003	0.003	0.004	0.006
EBIT	1.5	1.7	1.7	4.0		Dividend (cps)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Interest expense	(0.1)	(0.5)	(1.0)	(0.9)		Imputation	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Tax	(0.1)	0.1	(0.3)	(1.5)	. ,	Operating cash flow	na	na	na	na	na	na
Equity accounted assoc	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	. ,	Free Cash flow	na	na	na	na	na	na
NPATA normalised	2.1	2.8	2.4	3.6		Divisionals	H122A	H222A	H123A	H223A	H124F	H224F
Adjustments	(0.8)	(2.0)	(1.0)	0.0		Revenue	17.3	23.7	26.0	25.8	27.4	28.1
NPAT (reported)	0.5	(0.7)	(0.6)	1.6	2.6		5.2	4.8	5.6	5.3	6.0	6.4
Cash flow (A\$m)	0.5	(0.7)	(0.0)	1.0	2.0	SME	12.1	12.3	12.2	12.0	12.6	12.8
Y/E 30 Jun	FY21A	FY22A	FY23A	FY24F	FY25F	ICT	12.1	6.7	8.3	8.6	8.5	8.7
			3.7	6.1	7.1	Other		0.7	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2
Adj EBITDA (after rent)	2.2	(0.2)					0.1	11.2	12.2	11.9	12.6	13.2
Interest	(0.1)	` '	(0.7)	(0.9)	. ,	Gross profit	7.9				-	
Tax	(0.0)	0.0	(0.3)	(1.5)	. ,	Gross Profit Margin %	45.7%	47.1%	46.9%	46.2%	46.1%	46.9%
Working capital/other	(1.7)	(1.7)	(1.2)	(0.1)	(0.1)							
Operating cash flow	0.4	1.4	1.6	3.6		Employees	4.3	6.8	7.3	7.7	7.0	6.9
Mtce capex	(0.0)	(0.2)	(0.0)	(0.0)	. ,	Administration	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.5
Capitalised Software	(0.5)	(0.7)	(0.2)	(0.3)	. ,	Other	1.2	1.6	1.9	1.2	1.9	1.7
Free cashflow	(0.2)	0.5	1.3	3.2		Total costs (ex SBP/1-off)	6.1	9.0	9.8	9.5	9.6	9.2
Acquisitions/Disposals	(2.7)	(10.7)	(1.9)	0.0	0.0							
Other	0.0	(0.2)	0.0	0.0	0.0	Adj. EBITDA	1.9	2.2	2.4	2.4	3.1	4.0
Cash flow pre financing	(2.9)	(10.4)	(0.7)	3.2	4.0	EBITDA margin %	10.7%	9.3%	9.2%	9.4%	11.2%	14.2%
Equity	5.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	Margins, Leverage, Returns	3	FY21A	FY22A	FY23A	FY24F	FY25F
Borrowings(repayments)	0.0	8.1	0.5	(1.0)	(1.0)	EBITDA margin %		10.3%	9.9%	9.3%	12.7%	13.8%
Net Dividends paid	0.0	(0.1)	0.0	0.0	0.0	EBIT margin %		5.8%	4.1%	3.4%	7.2%	8.8%
Change in cash	3.0	(2.3)	(0.2)	2.2	3.0	NPAT margin (pre significan	nt items)	8.2%	6.9%	4.6%	6.5%	7.6%
Balance sheet (A\$m)						Net Debt (Cash)	-	5.50	5.18	6.70	3.49 -	0.55
Y/E 30 Jun	FY21A	FY22A	FY23A	FY24F	FY25F	Net debt/EBITDA (x)	(x)	-2.1	1.3	1.4	0.5	-0.1
Cash	5.5	2.9	1.9	4.1	7.2	ND/ND+Equity (%)	(%)	(21.3%)	16.6%	20.5%	10.5%	(1.6%)
Accounts receivable	4.1	4.9	5.6	6.0	6.3	EBITDA interest cover (x)	(x)	45.5	8.4	4.7	8.3	12.4
Other receivables	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	ROA	,	nm	nm	2.9%	6.9%	8.7%
Other current assets	0.8	1.9	2.1	2.1		ROE		nm	nm	(1.8%)	4.9%	7.4%
Total current assets	10.4	9.8	9.6	12.2	15.6					(110,11)		
PPE	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.1		NTA (per share)		0.02	-0.05	-0.03	-0.02	-0.01
Capitalised Software	8.1	25.1	22.0	19.8		Working capital		2.1	1.9	1.9	2.0	2.1
Goodwill	15.6	20.6	21.7	21.7		WC/Sales (%)		8.5%	4.5%	3.6%	3.6%	3.6%
Right of Use Asset	1.5	3.2	2.3	1.3		Revenue growth		0.570	63.4%	26.2%	7.1%	5.7%
Other non current assets	2.0	2.5	1.8	3.5		EBIT growth pa		(3.5%)	13.5%	4.6%	130.8%	28.7%
	27.3	51.6	48.1	46.4		Pricing		(3.5%) FY21A			FY24F	FY25F
Total non current assets						-	()		FY22A	FY23A		
Total Assets	37.7	61.4	57.7	58.6		,	(m)	340	361	381	386	393
Trade payables	2.0	3.1	3.7	4.0		-	(m)	258	348	378	385	392
Deferred revenue	1.0	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.8		40	0.0046	(0.0010)	(0.0015)	0.0040	0.000-
Borrowings	0.0	0.8	1.0	1.0		EPS Reported	A\$ cps	0.0018	(0.0019)	(0.0015)	0.0042	0.0067
Other	2.8	9.6	4.5	4.5		EPS Normalised/Diluted	A\$ cps	0.0080	0.0082	0.0063	0.0093	0.0113
Total current liabilities	5.8	14.2	9.9	10.2		EPS growth (norm/dil)			2%	-23%	48%	21%
Borrowings	0.0	7.4	7.6	6.6		DPS	cps	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Deferred tax	2.4	7.0	6.9	6.9		DPS Growth		n/a	n/a	na	na	na
	1.5	2.8	2.0	2.0	2.0	Dividend yield		0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other	0.0	17.2	16.5	15.5	14.5	Dividend imputation		0	0	0	0	(
Other Total long term liabilities	3.9			05.7	25.0	PE (x)		9.2	8.9	11.6	7.8	6.4
Other Total long term liabilities Total Liabilities	9.7	31.4	26.4	25.7								
Total long term liabilities		31.4 30.0	26.4 31.2	32.9		PE market		15.0	15.0	15.0	15.0	15.0
Total long term liabilities Total Liabilities	9.7							15.0 (39.0%)				
Total long term liabilities Total Liabilities Net Assets	9.7 28.0	30.0	31.2	32.9	35.5	PE market Premium/(discount)		(39.0%)	15.0 (40.4%)	15.0 (22.7%)	15.0 (47.9%)	(57.1%
Total long term liabilities Total Liabilities Net Assets Share capital	9.7 28.0 45.6	30.0 47.8	31.2 48.9	32.9 48.9	35.5 48.9	PE market Premium/(discount) EV/EBITDA (x)	A cps	(39.0%) 7.3	15.0 (40.4%) 6.3	15.0 (22.7%) 5.7	15.0 (47.9%) 4.0	(57.1%) 3.5
Total long term liabilities Total Liabilities	9.7 28.0	30.0	31.2	32.9	35.5 48.9 1.4	PE market Premium/(discount)	A cps	(39.0%)	15.0 (40.4%)	15.0 (22.7%)	15.0 (47.9%)	15.0 (57.1%) 3.5 0.010 7.1

Source: Company data for actuals, RaaS estimates



FINANCIAL SERVICES GUIDE

RaaS Advisory Pty Ltd ABN 99 614 783 363 Corporate Authorised Representative, number 1248415

of

ABN 92 168 734 530
AFSL 456663

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- how we are paid, and
- complaint processes

Contact Details, BR and RaaS

BR Head Office: Suite 5GB, Level 5, 33 Queen Street, Brisbane, QLD, 4000

RaaS. 20 Halls Road Arcadia, NSW 2159

P: +61 414 354712

E: finola.burke@raasgroup.com

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 - Securities

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Website: www.afca.org.au; Email: <a href="mailto:info@afca.org.au; Telephone: 1800931678 (free call)
In writing to: Australian Financial Complaints Authority, GPO Box 3, Melbourne, VIC, 3001.

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