RRRCC

REGIONAL, RURAL AND REMOTE
COMMUNICATIONS COALITION

Better Comms for the Bush

RRRCC PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

Since its inception in late 2016, the RRRCC has made considerable progress in raising the profile of the communications needs of regional, rural and remote Australians. Over the last three years the RRRCC has been highly effective in promoting the issue of communications in the bush. Through these efforts, regional communities have benefitted from higher data allowances and business services over SkyMuster, funding for mobile network expansion, and a new program for digital literacy.

While much has been achieved, there is still a lot of work to do to ensure equitable connectivity for regional, rural and remote consumers. The RRRCC has revised its priorities for action, and will continue to advocate for #betterbushcomms.

betterbushcomms

RRRCC Goals

RRRCC is a unique alliance of 21 like–minded organisations that are concerned about a lack of connectivity in the bush. The Coalition was formed to raise awareness of the important role of connectivity for regional Australians and ensure their voices are heard.

GOAL 1:
Guaranteed access to voice and data services

1.

Wherever Australians work and live, they should have guaranteed minimum access to data and voice services. This includes upload speeds and other specific features needed for existing and future residential, agriculture, health and education applications. Regional, rural and remote consumers and businesses need legislative rights to access broadband data and voice services.

Asks:

- That the *Telecommunications Reform Package* be prioritised by the Federal Government, and passed with bipartisan support.

- That regional Australians using ADSL are assured of continuous access to broadband, and will not be disadvantaged if transitioned to NBN.

- That the Federal Government and NBN commit to fully resource future maintenance and upgrades to NBN satellite and fixed wireless networks.

- The creation of a greater variety of SkyMuster plans and further enhancements that reflect consumer and small business needs.

GOAL 2:
Equitable voice and data services that meet minimum standards and reliability

2.

Updated telecommunication service guarantees and adequate service performance are needed to reflect the needs of consumers and businesses. Connection and repair timeframes, reliability, adequate performance levels and safeguards for vulnerable consumers must be updated.

Asks:

- Any alternative technologies for voice service delivery must be proven to have greater reliability and performance quality for rural, regional and remote consumers.

- Updated baseline telecommunication service guarantees for connection, fault repair and appointment keeping timeframes must be included in the Federal Government's report on the Consumer Safeguards Part B (Reliability) inquiry.

- Customers must be adequately and automatically compensated when baseline timeframes are exceeded.

- Introduction of adequate performance quality metrics for all services, including SkyMuster, monitored against independent benchmarks.

- Extension of ACCC Measuring Broadband Australia program to Fixed Wireless and SkyMuster services.

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GOAL 3:
Continued program to expand mobile coverage

Expansion of mobile coverage is critical in regional and rural areas. Current and previous programs have resulted in further coverage. However, there remain premises, vital community hubs and high traffic areas that are at risk from having no mobile coverage.

Asks:

- The Federal Government should commit to establishing a Rural, Regional and Remote Telecommunications Fund to resource ongoing mobile network expansion.

- Mobile Black Spot Program funded infrastructure promotes competition as well as coverage by requiring open access for all networks.

GOAL 4:
Digital capacity building for regional, rural and remote Australia

Australian society and the economy stand to gain from the benefits of having regional, rural and remote areas digitally connected. In order to realise these benefits, consumers and businesses need independent, trustworthy technical support to get connected and stay connected.

The RRRCC has previously called for the Federal Government to commit seed funding for a pilot project that aims to grow digital literacy and foster technology applications in regional, rural and remote Australia. In the 2019-20 Budget, the RRRCC welcomed the government's announced funding over two years for a Digital Tech Hub.

Asks:

- That the government work closely with the RRRCC on the design of the Digital Tech Hub.

- That the government commit to this service beyond the current two year funding period.

GOAL 5:
Affordable communications services for regional, rural and remote Australia

Regional, rural and remote Australia has much to gain through access to more affordable broadband services, to support low income families and strengthen regional communities. Providing access to affordable communications supports individuals and families to access essential services and engage in education and training in place, strengthening local communities.

Asks:

- The creation of a targeted concessional broadband service to support low income residents of regional, rural and remote areas.

- That support is provided for regional, rural and remote Australians to have access to affordable equipment options in order to allow them to maximise the benefits of the services on offer to them.

Members of RRRCC are:

Australian Communications Consumer Action Network
📍 www.accan.org.au

Australian Forest Products Association
📍 www.ausfpa.com.au

AgForce Queensland
📍 www.agforceqld.org.au

Better Internet for Rural, Regional & Remote Australia
📍 www.birrraus.com

Cotton Australia
📍 www.cottonaustralia.com.au

Country Women's Association of Australia
📍 www.cwaa.org.au

Country Women's Association of NSW
📍 www.cwaofnsw.org.au

Country Women's Association of SA
📍 www.sacwa.org.au

Grain Growers
📍 www.graingrowers.com.au

Isolated Children's Parents' Association
📍 www.icpa.com.au

National Farmers' Federation
📍 www.nff.org.au

National Rural Health Alliance
📍 www.ruralhealth.org.au

National Rural Women's Coalition
📍 www.nrwc.com.au

NSW Farmers
📍 www.nswfarmers.org.au

Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association
📍 www.ntca.org.au

Pastoralists' Association of West Darling
📍 www.pawd.org.au

QLD Farmers' Federation
📍 www.qff.org.au

Ricegrowers' Association of Australia Inc.
📍 www.rga.org.au

Royal Flying Doctor Service QLD
📍 www.flyingdoctor.org.au/qld

Victorian Farmers Federation
📍 www.vff.org.au

WA Farmers
📍 www.wafarmers.org.au

How to contact RRRCC

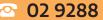If you would like any further information, or to contact Coalition members, please contact:

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