



Media Release

For immediate release 10 May, 2018

Budget's failure to fund Mobile Black Spots Program stalls #betterbushcomms

The Rural Regional and Remote Communications Coalition (RRRCC) is disappointed the Federal Government failed to commit to funding subsequent rounds of the Mobile Black Spot Program in this week's Budget.

Improved mobile coverage is essential for Australia's agriculture sector to become a \$100 billion industry by 2030 and is critical for the health and economic well-being of regional communities.

"Mobile coverage is a major problem for a lot of our members.

"The Government's failure to commit additional funding to the Mobile Black Spot Program is a let-down for regional communities," Derek Schoen, NSW Farmers President said.

The RRRCC recognises that some mobile black spot towers, funded under previous rounds of the Program, are yet to be built, and urges the Government and industry partners to expedite the roll-out of this vital infrastructure.

"We are huge supporters of the Program. It is delivering for regional communities and businesses, and will continue to do so with current funding," Australian Communications Consumer Action Network CEO Teresa Corbin said.

"However, a lack of commitment to further funding will leave many areas without mobile phone coverage. It is fair to say we are disappointed.

"What is needed is a long term commitment from the Federal Government that this, or similar programs, will continue.

"We will be raising this as a priority in the upcoming Federal Regional Telecommunications Review, due to kick off in the coming months."

The RRRCC welcomes the Government's \$260 million commitment to improve GPS and satellite imagery. This will assist farmers investing in technology to improve data gathering capabilities.

"However, without mobile coverage farmers will be unable to leverage the benefits," Ms Corbin said.

Further, the \$2.4 billion investment in science and technology to improve agricultural output and innovation in production will greatly benefit the sector. Connectivity will be key to achieving the productivity gains on offer from new technologies.

MEDIA CONTACT

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The Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) is Australia's peak communications consumer organisation. The operation of ACCAN is made possible by funding provided by the Commonwealth of Australia under section 593 of the Telecommunications Act 1997. This funding is recovered from charges on telecommunications carriers.

"The importance of high quality voice and data access by the agricultural sector should not be underestimated as we strive to improve economic output, access international markets, and enhance productivity," Ms Corbin said.

For more information, contact Martin James on martin.james@accan.org.au or 0409 966 931. For the latest updates, follow ACCAN on [Twitter](#) or like us on [Facebook](#).



Members of the Coalition are:

- [ACCAN](#)
- [AgForce Queensland](#)
- [Australian Forest Products Association](#)
- [Better Internet for Rural, Regional & Remote Australia](#)
- [Broadband for the Bush Alliance](#)
- [Cotton Australia](#)
- [Country Women's Association of Australia](#)
- [Country Women's Association of NSW](#)
- [GrainGrowers](#)
- [Isolated Children's Parents' Association](#)
- [National Farmers' Federation](#)
- [Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association](#)
- [NSW Farmers](#)
- [The Pastoralists' Association of West Darling](#)
- [Queensland Farmers' Federation](#)
- [Ricegrowers' Association of Australia](#)
- [Victorian Farmers Federation](#)
- [WA Farmers](#)

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