



## *Media Release*

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### **Bush communications coalition welcomes further work on mobile blackspots**

The Rural Regional and Remote Communications Coalition (RRRCC) has welcomed today's announcement by the Regional Communications Minister, Senator Bridget McKenzie that there will be a fourth round of the Mobile Blackspots Program.

"Despite initial disappointment that further funding was not available in this year's Federal Budget, we are delighted that the Government has made this important announcement today," National Farmers' Federation (NFF) President Fiona Simson said.

Ms Simson said the Coalition believed the re-purposing of \$25 million from existing programs would enable the fourth program to target those areas still in need of coverage.

"We acknowledge that the Blackspots Program is of significant scale, however there remain areas of regional Australia that are still without mobile phone coverage, having missed out on funding from the program so far."

"To this end, any measure that seeks to further mobile coverage in the bush will always be welcomed by us."

Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) CEO Teresa Corbin said since the RRRCC was formed in 2016, the group had been conscious that Mobile Blackspots Program needed to evolve from its current framework as coverage expanded.

"Given the breadth of the RRRCC's membership, we look forward to assisting Minister McKenzie to develop program guidelines for this round, that will ensure those regions and communities that are currently without it, get the coverage they deserve.

"Given the program is based on co-investment, we are also calling mobile network operators to buy into this process.

"This is a real opportunity to ensure the funding that was not accessed in the first rounds is put to good use. However, we cannot do this without a commitment from commercial operators as well," Ms Corbin said.

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## About the Rural Regional and Remote Communications Coalition

The Regional, Rural and Remote Communications Coalition is a group of like-minded organisations who have come together to champion better communications services for consumers and small businesses living in rural, remote or regional areas.

### RRRCC Members:

1. [ACCAN](#)
2. [AgForce Queensland](#)
3. [Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance NT](#)
4. [Australian Forest Products Association](#)
5. [BIRRR](#)
6. [Broadband for the Bush Alliance](#)
7. [Cotton Australia](#)
8. [Country Women's Association of Australia](#)
9. [Country Women's Association of NSW](#)
10. [National Rural Health Alliance](#)
11. [National Rural Women's Coalition](#)
12. [Grain Growers](#)
13. [Isolated Children's Parents' Association](#)
14. [National Farmers' Federation](#)
15. [Northern Territory Cattleman's Association](#)
16. [NSW Farmers' Association](#)
17. [Queensland Farmers' Federation](#)
18. [Rice growers' Association of Australia](#)
19. [South Australian Country Women's Association](#)
20. [The Pastoralists' Association of West Darling](#)
21. [Victorian Farmers Federation](#)
22. [WA Farmers](#)

## Who are we?

We are a unique alliance of 22 volunteer-run organisations and advocacy bodies that was formed to advocate for better connectivity in regional Australia.

## What are we seeking?

We believe there are five fundamental approaches to improving connectivity:

1. Guaranteed access to voice and data services
2. Voice and data services that meet minimum standards and reliability
3. Continued program to expand mobile coverage
4. Fit for purpose Sky Muster satellite services
5. Digital capacity building for regional, rural and remote Australia

(NB Logo from AMSANT not included)



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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.*