

RRRCC Members

- ACCAN
accan.org.au


- Australian Forest Products Association
ausfpa.com.au


- AgForce Queensland
agforceqld.org.au


- Better Internet for Rural, Regional & Remote Australia
birraus.com


- Cotton Australia
cottonaustralia.com.au


- Country Women's Association of NSW
cwaofnsw.org.au


- South Australian Country Women's Association
sacwa.org.au


- Country Women's Association of Australia
cwaa.org.au


- Grain Growers
graingrowers.com.au


- Isolated Children's Parents' Association
icpa.com.au



- National Farmers' Federation
nff.org.au


- National Rural Health Alliance
ruralhealth.org.au


- National Rural Women's Coalition
nrwc.com.au


- NSW Farmers
nswfarmers.org.au


- Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association
ntca.org.au


- Pastoralists' Association of West Darling
pawd.org.au


- QLD Farmers' Federation
qff.org.au


- Royal Flying Doctor Service QLD
flyingdoctor.org.au/qld


- Ricegrowers' Association of Australia Inc.
rga.org.au


- Victorian Farmers Federation
vff.org.au


- WA Farmers
wafarmers.org.au





**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, and has been highly effective in promoting the issue of communications in the bush. Through these efforts, regional communities have benefited from higher data allowances and improved business services over nbn Sky Muster, funding for mobile and regional network expansion, and a new program to help regional Australians get connected and stay connected.

The events of 2019-20 reinforce what regional communities already know - telecommunications services are essential. While much has been achieved, there is still more 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

Contacts

If you would like any further information please contact our Coalition members

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RRRCC Goals

RRRCC is a unique alliance of 21 like-minded organisations with the aim of improving 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

Wherever Australians work and live, they should have guaranteed minimum access to data and voice services. This includes services that meet the specific needs of all consumers in regional areas. Regional, rural and remote consumers and businesses need guaranteed access to voice and data services at all times, including during natural disasters.

Asks

- The Federal Government commit to establishing a Rural, Regional and Remote Communications Fund to resource ongoing investment in regional telecommunications through the Mobile Black Spot Program, Regional Connectivity Program and State/Territory co-investment programs.
- The Federal Government ensure there are adequate upgrade plans and pathways for regional Australians using ADSL services that provide access to higher quality or equivalent fixed broadband services.
- The Federal Government and nbn Co commit to fully resource future maintenance, upgrades and delivery methods of NBN satellite and fixed wireless networks to ensure they meet the growing needs of RRRCC consumers.
- Further enhancements of nbn Sky Muster that reflect consumer and small business needs, including more affordable plans, and a mobility product.
- Telecommunications is legislated as an essential service in all states and territories, and that telecommunications providers are recognised as 'essential users' in natural disaster areas.
- nbn Co and the Federal Government ensure the rollout of NBN Disaster Satellite Services appropriately complements MBSP 5A upgrades to power supplies at base stations.

GOAL 2

Equitable voice and data services that meet minimum standards and reliability

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. Reforms must ensure rapid rectification of services when natural disasters occur.

Asks

- Any alternative technologies for voice service delivery must be proven to have greater reliability and performance quality for regional, rural and remote consumers.
- The Minister for Communications and Federal Government create appropriate minimum service guarantees and performance benchmarks for connection, fault repair and appointment keeping timeframes for NBN and other Statutory Infrastructure Providers. The obligations and timeframes must support maximum connectivity during natural disaster events.
- Customers must be adequately and automatically compensated when baseline timeframes are exceeded.
- Introduction of adequate performance quality metrics for all services, including nbn Sky Muster, monitored against independent benchmarks.
- The Federal Government continue to fund the ACCC Measuring Broadband Australia program, including its expansion to NBN fixed wireless and SkyMuster services.
- nbn Co use data from network performance monitoring companies to support its diagnosis of network issues when they arise.

#betterbushcomms

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. In addition, mobile network upgrades must allow regional, rural and remote Australians to harness the opportunities they offer.

Asks

- The Federal Government commit to ongoing mobile network expansion through the Mobile Black Spot or similar programs.
- Mobile Black Spot Program funded infrastructure continues to promote competition as well as coverage by requiring open access for all networks.
- Mobile Black Spot Program funding be expanded to subsidise mobile coverage extension equipment.
- The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) should investigate and monitor widespread mobile outages in regional and remote Australia, and reliability of mobile infrastructure.
- Ensure no user is disadvantaged by 3G network turnoffs, with on the ground testing to guarantee a smooth transition to 4G and no loss of service.
- Policy settings to promote investment in regional 5G network coverage, to ensure fair and adequate access where needed.

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, strengthening local communities. Reforms are needed that recognise remote communities pay a higher cost for less compared to those in urban areas.

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. 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

- The Federal Government commit to fund the Regional Tech Hub service beyond the current one-year funding period.
- The Federal Government work with the RRRCC, local and state governments to identify and deliver digital capacity building needs beyond the remit of the Regional Tech Hub project.
- nbn Co and the telecommunications industry work with the RRRCC to identify areas where industry can support digital capacity building and simple, effective information for regional, rural and remote consumers.

Asks

- The creation of a targeted concessional NBN broadband service to support low income residents of regional, rural and remote areas
- The Federal Government reconfigure the existing telecommunications allowance to meet the needs of low-income mobile only consumers
- Support is provided for regional, rural and remote Australians, in particular Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities, to have access to affordable equipment options in order to allow them to maximise the benefits of the services on offer to them, such as medical services.
- The Federal Government require RSPs to be transparent about the limitations of the more affordable services they provide.