

MEDIA RELEASE

RURAL, REGIONAL & REMOTE COMMUNICATIONS COALITION

Bush communications coalition welcomes Telstra's commitment to deliver much needed landline improvements

The Regional, Rural and Remote Communications Coalition (RRRCC) welcomed this morning's announcement from Telstra about a program of works it is undertaking to bolster landline services in regional, rural and remote Australia.

Telstra's announcement addresses some of the issues around reliability of landline services identified in the November 2018 report of the Regional Telecommunications Review, such as extended faults and repair times for some Telstra customers in regional, rural and remote Australia.

National Farmers' Federation CEO Tony Mahar said as a member of the RRRCC, the Federation had consistently advocated for access to reliable voice services for people living in regional, rural and remote areas of Australia. "For many of these people Telstra's fixed voice service is the only connection to the outside world if their internet service is not working. Voice services are literally a lifeline for many people – this lifeline must be maintained."

"For this reason we welcome Telstra's commitment today to make much needed repairs and upgrades to some of its landline infrastructure, and to a regular review of aged landline repairs."

Teresa Corbin, Chief Executive of RRRCC member the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network said the RRRCC strongly supports measures that will deliver improved service repair times for regional, rural and remote customers.

"Many of our members have been adversely impacted by a deteriorating landline service that is often not fixed within the specified Customer Service Guarantee timeframe. This was recognised by the Regional Telecommunications Independent Review Committee, who said in their final report that they were 'appalled' at some of the excessive repair times reported for landline services, which extended through weeks and even months in some cases."

Better Internet for Rural, Regional and Remote Australia co-founder Kristy Sparrow said the RRRCC was pleased to see Telstra's commitment to migrate 350 customers off the ageing High Capacity Radio Concentrator (HCRC) network, which currently provides 14,000 individual voice services to remote areas. "The HCRC system's extended outages and lack of availability of parts is an ongoing issue for remote families with no access to mobile phone coverage."

"Telstra's commitment to migrate 350 HCRC customers to a NextG Wireless Local Loop service is very much welcomed. There is also an ongoing need for a strategy to deliver alternative voice technologies for the remainder of those customers serviced by the HCRC network, as identified by the Regional Telecommunications Independent Review Committee."

The RRRCC has called for the government to support and implement all 10 recommendations of the Regional Telecommunications Review, and looks forward to the government's formal response to the review.

The Regional, Rural and Remote Communications Coalition includes the following members:



Get in touch

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