

Media Contact:

Sean Brogan | 0409 966 931 | media@accan.org.au

Media Release

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Federal Government set to trial unmetered data in the bush

The Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) welcomes the Federal Government's announcement of a trial which will give up to 10,000 regional Australians on NBN Sky Muster Plus access to unmetered monthly data allowances and faster speeds in a bid to boost internet quality in the bush.

Beginning in March and running through to May this year, the trial aims to deliver faster download speeds of up to 100 Mbps for regional customers. Faster satellite services without data allowances is very good news for households and small businesses in regional and remote Australia.

"This really is a game changer for these regional communities. Without access to a home internet service, children can struggle to complete homework online after school, and families can find it extremely difficult to access online services such as Telehealth, banking, and important government services to name just a few," said ACCAN's CEO, Andrew Williams.

The trial will allow 120,000 premises to migrate from the satellite footprint to fixed wireless, freeing up capacity on the Sky Muster satellite service and, if successful, will be made available to all customers across the satellite footprint.

"Covid19, floods and bushfires that severely impacted regional communities during the last few years have highlighted and heightened the need for access to reliable, resilient and affordable telecommunications services. This trial will, hopefully, go a long way to making that happen," said Mr. Williams.

If Australia is to be a leading digital economy and society by 2030, at a minimum Governments need to make sure that all consumers, regardless of where they live, are able to access what's needed to get them online and stay connected. This initiative supports the Government's election commitment to examine ways to boost monthly satellite speeds and allowances for regional and remote communities.

"We know that households on NBN Sky Muster have often had less than ideal connectivity, so this is an exciting time for these communities. We will follow the trial with interest and look forward to seeing the results later in the year," said Mr. Williams.

The Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) is Australia's peak communication 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.
