

Andrew Broad MP

Federal Member for Mallee

Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
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To whom it may concern,

SUBMISSION TO AUSTRALIAN COMPETITION AND CONSUMER COMMISSION (ACCC)

MOBILE ROAMING INQUIRY

I welcome the opportunity to write this submission to the ACCC in order to provide the communities within my electorate a voice on the issue of mobile roaming.

My electorate of Mallee covers approximately one third of the state of Victoria. The North Western regions of Victoria that I represent share very different landscapes, weather patterns and cultures but one thing they do have in common is continuous issues with their mobile phone coverage.

Across country Victoria people struggle to make mobile phone calls or access data when required. Not only is this a big concern for the tourism industry and small business in these regional communities but it is also concerning when you talk about safety. Fire warnings, weather warnings and public safety announcements are today, spread via apps or messaging services, with many towns in my electorate suffering from extreme weather and long fire seasons it is of a real concern to me that one day someone isn't going to get the message and they won't make it out in time.

Telstra is the major retail service provider across North West regional Victoria and it has provided a submission to this inquiry and many others to protect their business model and profit making ability.

It does concern me, the way that Telstra have strong armed our regional local governments into supporting their submissions to this inquiry. Many local governments are concerned that infrastructure projects will cease if roaming is allowed and that Telstra will no longer invest in the future of regional Australia. Across the Mallee Telstra's investment in our community's futures has already stopped.

Telstra have not built a tower in my electorate of Mallee in the past four years without using subsidies provided by the Federal Government's Mobile Blackspot Program. If Telstra are not building these towers using their own money to expand their business model then I believe the amount currently paid to Telstra through the Universal Service



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Obligation from the Australian Government of \$100 million, should instead go to the Federal Government's Mobile Blackspot Program to ensure the people of regional Australia continue to receive better mobile coverage.

I also find it hard to support Telstra's argument when I have farmers and other property owners in my electorate who have to buy and carry on them, two separate mobile phones with separate service providers. No person should have to, in today's world pay for and carry two phones to be able to make phone calls whilst out on their property, this is just ludicrous.

Everywhere I go across my electorate people come to me with strong support for the idea and practicality of national roaming and are excited by the possibilities it could bring to their communities. The people of Mallee are becoming more and more disenchanted with Telstra and the services they are providing to our more regional areas. From the feedback I receive the people are sick of paying more yet receiving less.

It is time for more forward thinking by both the Federal Government and our telecommunications service providers. It is time that we all put our heads together and work out how we can efficiently and effectively use the networks to get the maximum coverage across our regional areas. Changes to both the Universal Service Obligation and allowing roaming across networks could be a great place to start preparing for the future of our regions.

Kind regards



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