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8 June 2017

Rod Sims  
Chairman  
Australian Competition and Consumer Commission  
GPO Box 3131  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Mr Sims

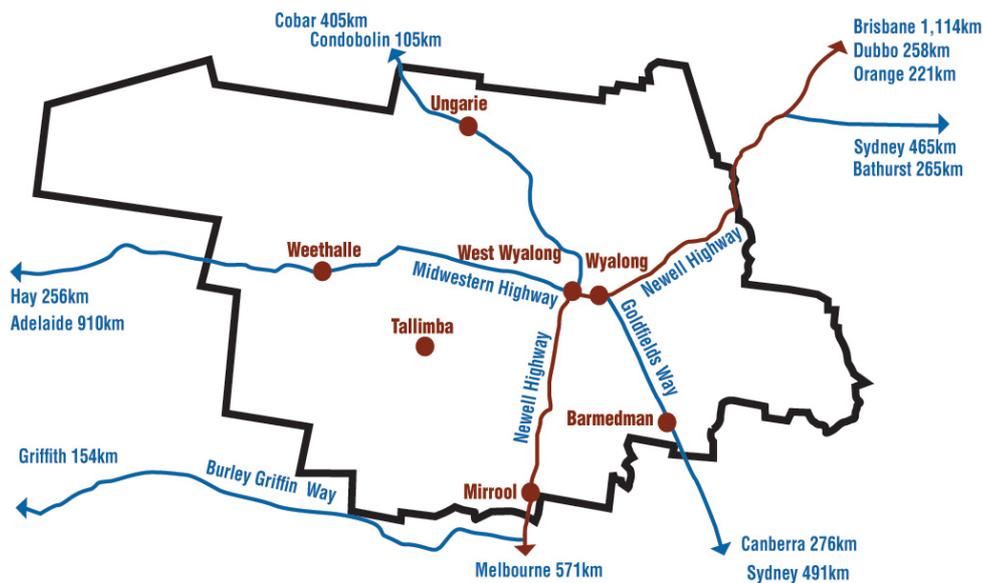
Thank you for the opportunity for Bland Shire Council to provide a submission to the ACCC's Draft Decision Proposing Not to Declare a Domestic Mobile Roaming Service.

### **Background**

The Bland Shire was proclaimed on 6 March 1906. The Bland Shire, West Wyalong is centrally located in regional New South Wales at the junction of the Newell and Mid Western Highway and Goldfields Way.



**The Bland Shire and West Wyalong central location**



### The Bland Shire

The Bland Shire has a population of 5,865 and covers an area of 8,558 square kilometres. The Bland Shire Council has one of the largest New South Wales Local Government road networks of 3,248 kilometres which is made up of 879 kilometres of sealed roads, 2,369 kilometres of unsealed roads. Towns and villages in the Bland Shire include West Wyalong, Wyalong, Barmedman, Mirrool, Naradhan, Tallimba, Kikiora, Ungarie and Weethalle.

The Bland Shire is surrounded by the Shires of Lachlan, Forbes, Weddin, Young, Temora, Coolamon, Narrandera and Carrathool.

The Bland Shire’s history is deeply engrained in agriculture and gold production and exploration which continues through to today. The Barrick Cowal Gold Mine commenced construction in 2004 with gold production in 2006. In 2015 the Barrick Gold Corporation sold the Barrick Cowal Gold mine to Evolution Mining and the Evolution Cowal gold operation is forecast to produce between 215,000oz and 240,000oz in FY16. Mining and exploration companies that are currently undertaking activities in the Bland Shire include:

- Evolution Mining - <http://evolutionmining.com.au/>
- Argent Minerals - <http://www.argentminerals.com.au/>
- Thomson Resources - <https://www.thomsonresources.com.au/>
- Sandfire Resources - <http://www.sandfire.com.au/>
- St Barbara Limited - <http://www.stbarbara.com.au/>

Agriculture is the major economic driver in the Murray-Murrumbidgee and Central West and Orana regions. The following table provides the 2011 Gross Value of Agricultural Production (GVAP) from the Murray-Murrumbidgee (MM) <http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Plans-for-your-area/Regional-Plans/Riverina-Murray/Resources>, and Central West and Orana (CW&O) regions <http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Plans-for-your-area/Regional-Plans/Central-West-and-Orana/Resources>, with the Bland Shire being the most productive with a GVAP of \$328 million:

<b>LGA</b>	<b>Area sq KM</b>	<b>2011 Census</b>	<b>GVAP Millions</b>	<b>Region</b>
<b>Bland</b>	8,560	5,865	328	Murray-Murrumbidgee
<b>Griffith</b>	1,640	24,364	281	Murray-Murrumbidgee
<b>Carrathool</b>	18,933	2,587	276	Murray-Murrumbidgee
<b>Lachlan</b>	14,965	6,476	260	Central West & Orana
<b>Narromine</b>	5,260	6,585	216	Central West & Orana
<b>Greater Hume</b>	5,749	9,815	194	Murray-Murrumbidgee
<b>Berrigan</b>	2,066	8,066	187	Murray-Murrumbidgee
<b>Cabonne</b>	6,024	12,821	178	Central West & Orana
<b>Parkes</b>	5,955	14,592	173	Central West & Orana
<b>Forbes</b>	4,718	9,170	172	Central West & Orana
<b>Narrandera</b>	4,116	5,902	169	Murray-Murrumbidgee
<b>Wakool</b>	7,521	3,692	164	Murray-Murrumbidgee
<b>Corowa</b>	2,329	11,000	161	Murray-Murrumbidgee
<b>Coonamble</b>	9,916	4,030	152	Central West & Orana
<b>Wagga Wagga</b>	4,826	59,458	150	Murray-Murrumbidgee
<b>Warren</b>	10,754	2,758	149	Central West & Orana
<b>Temora</b>	2,802	5,776	147	Murray-Murrumbidgee
<b>Weddin</b>	3,409	3,665	134	Central West & Orana
<b>Coolamon</b>	2,431	4,099	126	Murray-Murrumbidgee
<b>Lockhart</b>	2,896	2,998	120	Murray-Murrumbidgee
<b>Urana</b>	3,356	1,159	115	Murray-Murrumbidgee
<b>Warrumbungle</b>	12,371	9,588	113	Central West & Orana
<b>Jerilderie</b>	3,373	1,496	112	Murray-Murrumbidgee
<b>Murray</b>	4,344	6,957	104	Murray-Murrumbidgee
<b>Conargo</b>	8,738	1,540	102	Murray-Murrumbidgee
<b>Murrumbidgee</b>	3,507	2,261	99	Murray-Murrumbidgee
<b>Junee</b>	2,030	5,878	95	Murray-Murrumbidgee
<b>Bogan</b>	14,601	2,900	94	Central West & Orana
<b>Leeton</b>	1,167	11,037	91	Murray-Murrumbidgee
<b>Cowra</b>	2,809	12,147	86	Central West & Orana
<b>Gilgandra</b>	4,832	4,368	86	Central West & Orana
<b>Hay</b>	11,326	2,956	84	Murray-Murrumbidgee
<b>Tumut</b>	4,567	10,934	80	Murray-Murrumbidgee
<b>Wellington</b>	4,110	8,493	72	Central West & Orana
<b>Mid Western</b>	8,753	22,318	63	Central West & Orana
<b>Cootamundra</b>	1,524	7,334	61	Murray-Murrumbidgee
<b>Bathurst</b>	3,816	38,519	56	Central West & Orana
<b>Tumbarumba</b>	4,393	3,358	55	Murray-Murrumbidgee
<b>Dubbo</b>	3,426	38,805	54	Central West & Orana
<b>Gundagai</b>	2,457	3,662	42	Murray-Murrumbidgee
<b>Deniliquin</b>	143	7,120	39	Murray-Murrumbidgee
<b>Blayney</b>	1,525	6,985	38	Central West & Orana
<b>Oberon</b>	3,627	5,040	31	Central West & Orana
<b>Lithgow</b>	4,512	20,160	19	Central West & Orana
<b>Orange</b>	284	38,057	16	Central West & Orana
<b>Albury City</b>	306	47,810	5	Murray-Murrumbidgee

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). ABS undertake an Agricultural Census of farm businesses every five years and an Agricultural Survey in the interim years reporting estimates for Statistical Local Areas (SLA's), the smallest spatial unit of the Australian Standard Geographic Classification (ASGC 2006). The 2011 Census data and 2012 and 2013 surveys were collated by Statistical Area Level 2 (SA2). SLA and SA2 boundaries do not line up exactly but for most parts of the region they are close enough to generate meaningful time series data sets.

Eucalyptus oil production started in 1907 and the West Wyalong area has become one of the major world exporters of Eucalyptus oil in Australia <http://www.grdavis.com.au/>.

Recent investments in the Bland Shire include:

- Evolution Mining \$694 million
- GrainCorp \$14 million
- Royal Freemasons Benevolent Institution (RFBI) Masonic Village \$9 million refurbishment
- Sandfire Resources \$8.5 million
- GrainFlow \$4 million
- Hanlon Enterprises \$1.1 million

### **ACCC Draft Decision Proposing Not to Declare a Domestic Mobile Roaming Service**

Bland Shire Council supports the ACCC's Draft Decision Proposing Not to Declare a Domestic Mobile Roaming Service.

Bland Shire Council believes that it is critical that any decisions regarding mobile roaming in Australia do not jeopardise future investments in mobile phone and telecommunication infrastructure in regional and remote areas including the Bland Shire.

Bland Shire Council believes that regulated roaming could destroy many of the incentives which keep companies investing and improving the overall network and could jeopardise future upgrades in coverage and technology, without delivering additional benefits. Expanding access and improving the connectivity of the Bland Shire is extremely important, and if investment is discouraged it is hard to see how funding can be provided to increase coverage and improved services if there is no incentive for the Telecommunications companies.

Once again Bland Shire Council thanks you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the ACCC's Draft Decision Proposing Not to Declare a Domestic Mobile Roaming Service.

Should you require additional information then please do not hesitate to contact either Ray Smith on (02) 6972 2266 or [rsmith@blandshire.nsw.gov.au](mailto:rsmith@blandshire.nsw.gov.au) or Jeff Stien on (02) 6979 0244 or [jstien@blandshire.nsw.gov.au](mailto:jstien@blandshire.nsw.gov.au).

Yours sincerely



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