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25 November 2016

Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
MobileRoamingInquiry@accc.gov.au

GPS Ref: OUT16/3F0D93DF
GPS File: 06-01-001

To whom it may concern

Submission – Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) Inquiry into regulated mobile roaming.

Golden Plains Shire Council is classed as a large rural LGA and has an estimated 20,809 (ERP 2015) residents across 56 communities and 16 townships. Golden Plains Shire is one of the fastest growing municipalities in Victoria, with population growth of around 2% per annum.

Access to mobile phone coverage is vitally important for Golden Plains Shire residents and business. The region's rapidly growing population, has many residents living in fire prone and remote areas, making mobile phone coverage a key safety issue for the region.

According to the Federal Government's National Map of Reported Mobile Black Spots, Golden Plains Shire has over 50 identified mobile phone black spots located in the Shire. Of particular concern are the areas of Gheringhap/Batesford, Cape Clear, Rokewood, Meredith, Shelford, Grenville and Scarsdale because they are either remote, prone to bush fire, on key transport routes or are areas where we are anticipating industry growth and job creation.

Agriculture is the Shire's main industry sector, employing 25% of the region's workforce. Our farmers, agri-business operators and support services rely heavily on telecommunications to run their businesses, and if that service is not available or unreliable, it directly impacts on business operations.

Results from a recent survey of businesses in Golden Plains Shire identified that 31% of respondents had either poor or no mobile coverage.

Council lobbies the State and Federal governments extensively as well as telecommunication providers, to continue to improve telecommunications in our region.

These are the mobile coverage issues that are faced by residents and ratepayers in our municipality and I hope that this data can be used by the ACCC in its inquiry into regulated mobile roaming.

Regards,

Rod Nicholls
Chief Executive Officer