



Domestic Mobile Roaming Declaration Inquiry 2016

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Introduction

The Hunter Region has long held the reputation as the powerhouse of the NSW economy and ranks highly as one of the most valued, diverse and resilient regions in Australia.

The Hunter Business Chamber is the largest regional business chamber in Australia and is now 130 years old. The Chamber represents over 1800 member businesses to all levels of government. The Chamber is the peak industry association in the Hunter which represents all sectors of business in the region.

The Chamber welcomes the opportunity to provide this submission regarding the Domestic Mobile Roaming Declaration Inquiry 2016. Mobile phone coverage is one of the most important issues for the development of businesses and communities across regional Australia, the Hunter included.

Key Points

The Hunter Business Chamber understands that if a mobile roaming service is declared as described in the Inquiry, a mobile network operator (the host network) would be required to provide mobile roaming to another mobile network operator (the roaming network) on request.

The Chamber is concerned that this type of mobile roaming service would effectively remove the incentive for host networks to invest in rural and regional Australia. If telecommunication organisations are disincentivised to build capacity enhancing infrastructure, then the growth and sustainability of the Hunter, New South Wales and Australia will be negatively impacted.

As an example, Telstra invests 15% of their capital expenditure in improving the capacity of their host network to deliver services to the most remote 2% of Australia's population. This 2% is critical, because it enhances coverage in the Hunter and other regional areas throughout the country. Mobile service is of paramount importance for businesses of all shapes and sizes, from sole proprietors and non-employed entrepreneurs, to the largest of global enterprises.

If a mobile roaming service is declared as described in the Inquiry, the investments made by organisations like Telstra would become uneconomic, undermining the ability of telecommunication organisations to continue to invest in the regional network. Regulation in this manner has the potential to dampen economic activity and damage regional businesses and communities throughout the Hunter.

Contact

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