



LEETON SHIRE COUNCIL

Preserving the Past, Enhancing the Future

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ACCC

mobileroaminginquiry@acc.gov.au

Dear Sir / Madam

Leeton Shire Council thanks the ACCC for the opportunity to submit feedback into the Domestic Mobile Roaming Inquiry. Leeton Shire Council is not an expert in mobile roaming, however what we can tell the ACCC is;

- General mobile phone coverage is good in Leeton Shire Council
- There are areas which have limited and patchy mobile phone service which Council continues to advocate for mobile phone black spot funding (areas such as Whitton, Wumbulgal and parts of Gogeldrie)
- There is limited competition in terms of mobile phone carriers / providers in the region. This is due to coverage.

Leeton Shire Council does have some concerns about regulating roaming services for regional customers. These concerns relate to introducing regulation which we see to some extent as not being conducive to carriers investing more technology and coverage into regional areas and instead utilizing the infrastructure of existing carriers. If one carrier has existing infrastructure there will be no reason for other carriers to invest in their own infrastructure.

The government may think that there is nothing wrong with that. If the existing coverage was at best patchy and three other carriers entered the market –it is a great result if competition is being driven by the new roaming regulation, however, there is absolutely no incentive for these carriers to improve the current service if regulated mobile roaming was introduced. This does not drive improved services.

If the ACCC wishes to increase competition into the marketplace, there needs to be a strong commitment from government and willing partners to create an environment to cultivate a culture of investment and improved access and equity for all.

Access and equity is most important for regional customers in relation to mobile phone coverage. Coverage is king and choice is not always an option for regional customers.

Leeton Shire Council would like to see active investment into new technology to deliver same if not similar services in regional and remote areas that the metro markets enjoy. Regional customers do not

want to pay more for the services which should be enjoyed by all Australians. Regional customers are already the poor cousins in terms of higher fuel, power and gas costs, why should customers again be slugged with higher mobile phone costs driven by new regulation?

The pace of new innovation and technology is driving new product in the marketplace. The ACCC needs to look beyond price and competition in terms of coverage for regional customers in this inquiry and understand other factors which will impact consumers.

Leeton Shire Council would like to question if regulation is required? Regulating mobile roaming may increase competition, but at what cost to regional customers? If the service is no different to the existing service currently being offered (coverage, service, quality, price, bundling) is there any benefit to regulating mobile roaming?

For more information in relation to this submission, please contact Manager Economic Development, Tourism and Events, Nicola James on 0269 530 911.

Yours sincerely



Nicola James

MANAGER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM AND EVENTS