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22 November 2016

Mobile Roaming Inquiry
Australian Competition & Consumer Commission
Email: mobileroaminginquiry@accc.gov.au

To Whom It May Concern

iBendigo Loddon Mallee formerly NBN4 Bendigo Loddon Mallee is an organisation which has continued to advocate on behalf of our communities for better access to technologies and to educate our communities on the benefits of improving their use and innovations using modern technology. We understand the importance of how connectivity can improve people's lives, socially and economically, and believe mobile connectivity is a key utility of the digital economy - a non-negotiable for competing with other regions and other nations, and building wealth within Australia.

In the 2016 Digital Inclusion Index by Roy Morgan North Vic and North West Vic were some of lowest digital inclusion scores in Victoria (in fact North Vic was the lowest) and access was one of the main drivers of this outcome. World class mobile access contribute largely to our community's connectivity requirements and we continue to receive feedback that more is required in order to improve coverage and performance in regional areas. We are very concerned about the consequences of domestic roaming being regulated, and the likely impact of this on further investment in communication technology in rural and regional Australia.

We believe for regional areas to prosper, investment in world class networks, creation of innovative and affordable environments for businesses is essential. To do this, investment and infrastructure must be given a high priority in decisions such as this. We believe that regulated roaming could destroy many of these incentives which keep companies investing and improving the overall network and could jeopardise future upgrades in coverage and technology, without delivering additional benefits.

As stated , the lack of mobile coverage is for us who reside and work in regional areas, and regulating mobile roaming will reduce the need for telco's to invest in new coverage, further stifling advancements, increase the need for additional public funding in order to resolve the mobile black spot situation, and hinder future growth opportunities in regional areas.

Yours sincerely

Bruce Winzar
Chair - iBendigo Loddon Mallee

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