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MEMBER OF



Director, Mobile Investments – Roads & Resilience
Communications Services & Consumer Division
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development,
Communications and the Arts
GPO Box 594
Canberra ACT 2601

Lodged online at www.infrastructure.gov.au/have-your-say

30 May 2025

Dear Sir/Madam,

The AAA thanks the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts for the opportunity to provide a submission on the National Regional Roads Australia Mobile Program.

The AAA is the peak organisation for Australia's motoring clubs and their 9.5 million members. The AAA's constituent clubs are the NRMA, RACV, RACQ, RAA, RAC, RACT and the AANT. The AAA regularly commissions research and develops in-depth analyses of issues affecting transport systems, including affordability, road safety, and vehicle emissions.

The AAA supports the National Regional Roads Australia Mobile Program's objective of improving multi-carrier mobile coverage on highways and major roads in regional and remote Australia. This is expected to deliver associated benefits in improved safety, economic growth, social connectivity, and regional development.

When developing the guidelines for the grant funding under the Program, the needs of the consumer/user must be a central consideration.

The AAA notes that the consumer experience will be enhanced when connectivity does not require the consumer to obtain additional specialised equipment to access the network, and there are no barriers to access, such as the need to provide personal information when connecting to Wi-Fi hotspots.

The AAA anticipates safety and convenience benefits for consumers, including calling emergency services in the event of a crash¹; contacting motoring support services such as roadside assistance; improved navigation, traffic flow and road closure information; enabling of payment systems for EV recharging; and social connectivity.

The AAA supports the concept of Wi-Fi hotspots at strategic locations along highways and major roads and the use of emerging technology, such as low-earth-orbit satellites and direct-to-device technology.

When selecting projects for grant funding under the Program, the grant guidelines may need to consider the longevity and possible obsolescence of technology to ensure that the required 10 years of operation can be delivered by the grant applicants. A shortened period of operation would have a negative impact on consumers if the original technology has been phased out and consumers cannot access a suitable alternative to provide ongoing operation.

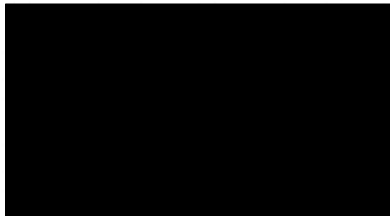
¹ The AAA notes that ANCAP will encourage the fitment of e-call in vehicles from 2026.

The AAA supports the identification of eligible roads for funding under the Program and considers that there may be situations where an applicant may wish to propose locations for investment that are not on eligible roads. To ensure a level of rigour for expenditure of public funds, a set of robust criteria for such applications should be developed and any application for funding not on eligible roads would need to argue a compelling case against these criteria to be considered for selection.

The AAA looks forward to the Program helping people living, working and travelling in regional Australia to stay connected.

Should you wish to further discuss this matter, my office can be contacted on 02 6247 7311.

Yours sincerely,



Michael Bradley
Managing Director