

26 August 2025

To: The On Farm Connectivity Program Team

Re: On Farm Connectivity Program Round 3 Consultation

About INCYT

INCYT is Australia's leading IoT agricultural technology company, specialising in complete smart farming solutions for irrigated cotton and mixed farming operations. With engineering headquartered in Sydney and a strong presence across the cotton and grain belt, we provide whole-of-farm sensor ecosystems that drive farm efficiency, performance, and risk management.

Our proprietary technology stack combines advanced telemetry devices, long-range XR network connectivity (LoRaWAN, LTE-M, NB-IoT), and more than 80 sensor applications for soil moisture, water levels, weather, pump control, and asset tracking. These are integrated into our INCYT App, a mission-control style platform delivering a seamless, "Apple-like" user experience with military-grade reliability.

INCYT was an Approved Supplier in both Rounds 1 and 2 of the On Farm Connectivity Program, and we are grateful for the opportunity to have participated. These programs have made a significant positive impact on the adoption of smart farm solutions, and we are pleased to see the Government preparing a third round. We strongly support the Program's goal of addressing connectivity barriers for primary producers.

Our Concerns with Proposed Changes in Round 3

While we welcome the continuation of this program, we wish to raise several concerns with the proposed changes that may disadvantage primary producers and the AgTech industry.

 +61 2 9191 1501

 enquiries@incyt.com.au

 INCYT, Gate A, Level 1
40-52 Talavera Rd
Macquarie Park NSW, 2113

incyt.com.au

1. Reduction of Scope – Limiting to Connectivity Hardware Only

The proposal to restrict eligibility to connectivity equipment only (gateways, base stations, antennas, repeaters) risks fragmenting adoption and confusing primary producers. In Rounds 1 and 2, producers could invest in end-to-end solutions (connectivity plus sensors). By contrast, Round 3 risks producers purchasing gateways that may not be compatible with their desired sensor array.

We draw attention to the NSW DPI Farms of the Future program, which demonstrated the importance of helping producers understand the whole ecosystem—from connectivity infrastructure through to sensors and applications. A partial approach risks underutilisation of connectivity assets and wasted public investment.

Recommendation: Expand eligible equipment to include sensors and end devices, or at minimum, provide clear guidance on compatibility and pathways for producers to build full ecosystems.

2. Market Distortion Due to Announcement Timing

During Round 2, the industry observed that producers paused purchasing decisions in anticipation of grant availability. This caused a slowdown in commercial activity for suppliers across the sector. With Round 3 already announced, we believe the market is again primed to “wait”—but without understanding that the rebate scope has been narrowed.

This mismatch between producer expectations and program design risks widespread frustration and lost momentum in technology adoption.

Recommendation: The Department should communicate the changes clearly and

widely—through industry channels, RDCs, suppliers, and producer organisations—so that producers understand Round 3 is focused only on connectivity infrastructure.

3. Pricing Caps on Eligible Equipment

We note the proposal for the Government to impose pricing caps based on average market values. While well-intentioned, we are concerned this approach does not reflect the diversity of connectivity solutions available. For example, prices vary significantly depending on whether solutions use LTE-M, NB-IoT, LoRaWAN, or hybrid systems, as well as on deployment requirements in regional and remote areas (antennas, range-extending repeaters, ruggedisation).

Reference to the NSW DPI AgTech Toolbox shows wide price ranges for connectivity devices. Attempting to define an “average” risks a disadvantage to both producers (who may need specialised equipment) and suppliers (who cannot meet cost recovery within capped prices). Connectivity is very much a “horses for courses” environment; blanket caps may unintentionally restrict fit-for-purpose solutions.

Recommendation: Instead of rigid price caps, adopt price bands or ranges that account for different connectivity technologies and deployment contexts.

Alternatively, allow suppliers to justify higher costs where technical requirements demand it.

4. Burden of Application Shifting to Primary Producers

We understand the rationale for shifting the application process from suppliers to producers to level the playing field. However, based on our experience in Rounds 1 and 2, even when producers were only required to complete a short declaration, they frequently sought our help navigating the Business Grants Hub portal.



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Moving the full responsibility to producers risks creating barriers to participation, particularly for those with limited digital literacy or time.

Recommendation: The Department should provide clear training materials—step-by-step guides, screenshots, and video tutorials—for primary producers. These should also be shared with suppliers, as we know from experience that customers will turn to us for support regardless of formal responsibility.

Conclusion

INCYT strongly supports the Government's ongoing investment in regional connectivity and the continuation of the On Farm Connectivity Program. However, we believe several proposed changes in Round 3 risk undermining the Program's impact by narrowing eligibility, distorting market behaviour, and creating unintended barriers for producers.

We urge the Department to:

- Reconsider the scope of eligible equipment to ensure producers can build full connectivity ecosystems.
- Communicate program changes clearly to the market.
- Replace rigid pricing caps with more flexible mechanisms that reflect real-world diversity.
- Provide robust training and support to help producers manage the application process.

We thank the Department for the opportunity to contribute to this consultation and would welcome further dialogue to ensure Round 3 delivers maximum benefit for Australian agriculture.

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