

1. What telecommunications services are required in regional Australia to meet current and future needs?

Are there any things regional communities and businesses need to do, but can't, on their existing services?

*I think there's such an opportunity to enrich the rural communities, with the pandemic, people are realising they can work from home. These people can move to the country and join the community. One of the factors stopping them is the internet speed, especially the **upload**. I work for a consulting firm in the city remotely in East Gippsland and I often have to upload documents, this can take forever and decreases my productivity.*

2. What changes in demand, barriers or challenges need to be addressed when it comes to telecommunications services in regional, rural and remote Australia?

*I think there's such a divide in education between families that have internet and families that don't, because of lockdowns and kids learning from home there is going to be an even bigger gap between the city and the country.*

3. How have the Government's policies and programs affected telecommunications service outcomes in regional, rural and remote Australia? How can these be improved?

*Unsure about the government policies, but potentially could put more pressure on the telcos to provide better service. I know from the telcos perspective there's no point upgrading the infrastructure for minimal customers, it won't "increase profit to share holders" but potentially some more pressure on them from the government could help with improving the services for rural customers.*

4. How do service reliability issues impact on regional communities and businesses? How do outages, including in natural disasters, impact on communities and businesses?

*Service reliability perspective: Working remotely can be difficult, there's been times where we've had power/internet outages for days, this makes it difficult to work from home. If it rains a lot it floods the comms pit and the internet drops.*

*From the natural disasters perspective: 19-20 bushfires, no phone signal for a day or so, couldn't tell friends and family that we were safe.*

5. How might such impacts be addressed to ensure greater reliability? How can the network resilience be addressed in regional areas?

*Ensure things like the pits don't get flooded, it seems that a lot of things were rushed when they were put in. WRT cellular potentially have backup generators etc*

6. How did the use of digital services change for regional consumers and businesses during the response to the COVID-19 pandemic? What insights for future service delivery does this provide?

*Massively changed the way the internet is used, there is a lot more uploading happening on the lines. They're designed to suit mainly downloading, but with video meetings a lot more data is being sent. The network needs to reflect the different way consumers are using them.*

7. What can be done to improve the access and affordability of telecommunications services in regional, rural and remote Indigenous communities?

*Access and affordability is a huge factor in education during the pandemic when kids are learning from home, a lot of the low social economic families around here simply don't have access to these services to help enable their kids to learn. To improve this something could potentially be linked with centrelink to allow families on benefits with school age kids will be provided some internet services,*

8. How can investment in telecommunications infrastructure work with other programs and policies to encourage economic development in regional Australia?

*This is huge – investing in telecoms infrastructure can allow professionals living in the city to move to the country. They might be chasing wider spaces, more relaxed life etc. The pandemic allows them to work from home. Having these people move can help stimulate the local businesses etc. This will mean that rural communities will rely less on tourism.*

9. What role could innovation, including new models, alternative investors or new ways of doing business, play to encourage investment in regional telecommunications infrastructure? What are the barriers?

*Let's start by actually doing the NBN correctly, NO COPPER WIRE. I know there was some dodgy stuff going on with not wanting to update the network so people can use streaming services, they tried to keep customers on services like Foxtel etc. Instead of restricting the funding because there aren't many customers, let's try to grow these areas. First step is increasing push the government to invest back into the rural communities.*

10. To what extent will new technologies enable significant change to the delivery of telecommunications services in regional Australia over the next 5-10 years? Are there any barriers to accessing these technologies?

*Imagine when there's 5g rolled out and we can use self-driving cars, there wouldn't be this need to be close to the city. This links back to the other points I've already talked about. Another use of new technology is data driven farming, gone are the days of "stick a seed in the ground and hope it grows", with the ever*

*changing climate, things are becoming less and less predictable, why shouldn't farmers have access to the latest technology whether it's different sensors to tell if the ground is too dry or sound monitoring baby animals to see if there's trouble? There are a multitude of ways farming could be improved with proper telecoms services. The barriers are providing a stable, high throughput connection.*

11. How can Government better support the rapid rollout of and investment in new telecommunications solutions in regional areas?

*I guess to place money in the right areas, actually investing in communications infrastructure for these rural communities.*

12. How can different levels of Government, the telecommunications industry and regional communities better co-ordinate their efforts to improve telecommunications in regional Australia?

*We just need to ensure that everyone is on the same page – it seems there's a disconnect between different levels of government or the telcos, it's hard to fix a problem if everyone's on a different page. It's also difficult to understand a problem that doesn't affect you, e.g. sitting in an airconned office without any networks drops.*

13. What changes to Government investment programs are required to ensure they continue to be effective in delivering improved telecommunications?

*Investment in infrastructure and educating the rural communities on how they can be used, what the difference is and why it's actually important.*

14. How can regional consumers be better supported to identify, choose and use the best connectivity options for their circumstances, as well as to understand and use their consumer rights?

*It's so confusing, I have an interest in this area so have done some research to find the best options. Imagine marg and john up the road trying to understand, we need to educate these people, whether they're old or young on the importance of the internet. It seems like every second day we hear of Telstra having to pay a fine for taking advantage of customers that don't know or understand what they're buying. We need to be tougher on the telcos, so they have a proper conversation with their customers.*

15. To what extent is public information on connectivity options, including predictive coverage data and speeds, sufficient to help regional customers make informed decisions? What other information is needed?

*These are all fine and good if the customer understands them, but we need to try help the customers understand these ideas and allow them to make their own comparison.*

16. What other matters should the Committee consider in its review and why are they important?

*Just get some other perspectives, I'm happy to discuss more over a call or a meeting if you guys need some more information.*

*Thanks*