



# JULIAN LEESER MP

Federal Member for Berowra

Department of  
Infrastructure, Transport,  
Regional Development and  
Communications

4 November 2020

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing today in response to the Mobile Black Spot Program Draft Round 5A Guidelines.

As the Federal Member for Berowra I deal with issues relating to inadequate telecommunications and in particular, mobile black spots, every week. In my electorate, the peri-urban suburbs of Arcadia, Middle Dural, Annangrove, Kenthurst, Galston, Glenorie, Dural and Maroota all have large areas without mobile phone reception and there are no plans in place from telecommunications providers to resolve these blackspots. There are also many other areas of the electorate that are more rural with no mobile reception.

I welcome changes being made to the program to prioritise coverage in High Priority Natural Disaster Prone Areas but remain concerned that the program continues to focus on regional and remote areas and does not prioritise outer-metropolitan areas that have the same—or greater—issues with inadequate mobile coverage.

In areas such as the Berowra electorate, geography has meant that telecommunications providers are unwilling to provide adequate mobile coverage for areas that have relatively large population sizes. This means that large numbers of people have no ability to access mobile reception through any provider. This needs to be rectified urgently. The guidelines should explicitly include black spot locations in outer-metropolitan areas.

The Draft Guidelines rightly encourage greater competition through the Mobile Black Spot Program. However, it is important that new coverage is prioritised much more highly than overlapping coverage. Overlapping coverage should only be considered when new coverage options, including in outer-metropolitan areas, are thoroughly exhausted. Mobile Coverage Solutions should provide a minimum amount of new coverage in order to be granted. Competition should be encouraged through prioritising solutions using multiple network operators, rather than through extending overlapping coverage.

I propose the guidelines be adjusted to:

- Specifically include outer-metropolitan areas that currently lack mobile reception and where the commercial case for telecommunications providers is inadequate for them to build without the support of the Mobile Black Spot Program.
- Prioritise new coverage much more highly than overlapping coverage, so that ensuring access to a mobile network is the highest priority of the program.

If my response has raised any questions, please feel free to contact my office on (02) 9980 1822.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Julian Leeser', with a large, stylized initial 'J'.

Julian Leeser MP