



MEDIA RELEASE

David Littleproud MP
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR MARANOVA

October 30, 2016

Littleproud: Mobile national roaming inevitable

Federal Member for Maranoa David Littleproud has welcomed the commencement of the ACCC's Inquiry into mobile phone domestic roaming. The ACCC will investigate whether it should force telecommunications carriers to share mobile phone infrastructure, which would mean customers of one carrier's network would be provided better coverage through access to another carrier's network for a fee.

This is now the third time since 1998 that the ACCC will consider declaring domestic roaming, only having not done so in 1998 or 2005 because it formed the view that the carriers would commercially negotiate roaming between themselves.

Mr Littleproud has been urging carriers to come together to negotiate a commercially viable solution to expand coverage across regional Australia for consumers before the ACCC is forced to regulate the industry, but has been left disappointed they have failed to do so.

Mr Littleproud said "I've made it very clear - the telcos should get a fair return for the infrastructure investment they've made in rural Australia, and I challenge them to tell consumers what that number is and let them decide whether they want to pay their provider for additional coverage, not be automatically told no".

With duplication of mobile phone towers by competing carriers in regional areas unlikely due to lower population densities, Mr Littleproud believes that national roaming would not only improve competition and coverage in voice, but also has the potential to provide much needed coverage and competition for customers in respect of data services, which he believes would significantly advance the development and liveability in regional Australia.

Mr Littleproud said Telstra has been to see him to warn of a reduction in their investment in further regional and rural infrastructure if national roaming is introduced.

Mr Littleproud said "I challenged Telstra in that meeting to tell me the extent of their own investment in regional Australia, leaving aside the tax-payer dollars that have already been provided to Telstra to allow it to increase its coverage.

"I also asked Telstra to tell me what a fair return would look like for allowing access to other carriers, but to date I've heard nothing."

Mr Littleproud said, "International experience in countries with similar population densities has shown that capital investment in infrastructure by larger carriers actually increased after domestic roaming was declared, but if Telstra believes international experience is wrong, I am happy for Telstra to tell me why that won't be the case here in Australia.

"I will be preparing a submission and I encourage anyone affected by limited coverage or with an interest in this Inquiry to either make a submission or contact my office to raise your concerns and contribute to my submission.

"It is important that the ACCC and the telcos understand how rural areas are limited when it comes to teleconnectivity."

The discussion paper can be found on the ACCC's website at <http://acc.gov.au/regulated-infrastructure/communications/mobile-services/domestic-mobile-roaming-declaration-inquiry-2016/discussion-paper>.

Submissions can be made via the ACCC's [Consultation Hub](#) or by emailing mobileroaminginquiry@acc.gov.au. To contact Mr Littleproud and contribute to his submission, please send an email marked "National Roaming Inquiry - Submission" to David.Littleproud.MP@aph.gov.au.

Submissions will be made public on the ACCC's website, with submissions closing on **25 November 2016**.

The ACCC is anticipating delivering its decision on whether it will declare mobile roaming in early 2017.

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