



MEDIA RELEASE

David Littleproud MP

FEDERAL LNP MEMBER FOR MARANOA

September 6, 2016

Federal Maranoa MP calls for better mobile phone coverage in the bush, welcomes ACCC's decision to investigate

Federal Member for Maranoa David Littleproud strongly supports the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's (ACCC) announcement that it will investigate the concept of national roaming, a move which could force telecommunications companies to provide mobile phone coverage in the bush.

"The ACCC is right to look at this because it's a matter of competition. We need to examine the extent of current infrastructure because national roaming would mean telcos could use each other's towers to strengthen the network, providing better coverage for rural Australians," Mr Littleproud said.

National roaming would mean that Telstra, Optus and Vodafone customers would be provided better coverage through access to other networks for a fee.

Coverage maps of the three telcos show there's a number of regional areas solely covered by Telstra, so the competitive disadvantage to Telstra in dollar terms is low – particularly given some of that infrastructure would have been aided by the Federal Government.

"The reality is that if the telcos aren't able to find a reasonable commercial solution to national roaming for regional Australia then the Government will need to legislate. The telcos need to show they're good corporate citizens and come to the table to find a solution immediately," Mr Littleproud said.

The Maranoa MP – whose vast electorate spans more than 40% of Queensland – said poor mobile phone coverage was a major let down for those living in rural towns.

"If my feet are behind a desk, I'm not doing my job so I am out in my electorate and the most common issue I hear is the lack of reliable mobile phone coverage," he said.

"Mobile coverage is more than communication; out here it's about safety and can have a negative impact on local tourism business because travellers feel unsafe exploring some areas of the Maranoa without adequate phone coverage.

"Australians can go overseas now and pay a few extra dollars per month to access other networks – it doesn't make sense that international roaming can't be adjusted to suit a domestic market and local infrastructure that taxpayer dollars have contributed to."

–ENDS–