



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**Federation Chamber**

**CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS**

**Telecommunications**

**SPEECH**

**Wednesday, 14 September 2016**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

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<b>Speaker</b>	Littleproud, David, MP	<b>Question No.</b>	

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**Mr LITTLEPROUD** (Maranoa) (10:34): Last night I was fortunate enough to present my maiden speech to parliament. During that speech, I talked about the importance of connectivity to an electorate of my size and the regional nature of it—a lot like yours, Deputy Speaker. I want to congratulate the ACCC on their recent announcement of an inquiry into national roaming for our mobile phones. I am calling now on our telcos to show some leadership and to actually come to the party and come to the table and negotiate a commercially viable option rather than being forced by the ACCC. Telcos can now offer their customers the opportunity to go overseas and provide international roaming for only a few dollars a month, so they can surely come to the table and negotiate amongst themselves a commercial option to be able to provide national roaming for people in regional Australia.

I am not asking them to actually sell the family jewels. I appreciate that they have made significant investments in infrastructure. So too has this government. We have made a \$220 million commitment to the mobile phone Black Spot Program—something that would not have happened unless this coalition government put it in place. We take telecommunications in regional Australia very seriously. It will be the key infrastructure of the 21st century that will deliver the infrastructure to allow people in regional Australia to become part of a global economy.

I am asking these telcos to come to the party and negotiate a number that will give them a return. I am not asking them to do it for nothing; I am asking them to do it on a commercially viable option. I understand Telstra's reluctance to do this. I understand there is a competitive disadvantage for them, but the competitive advantage to each and every customer across regional Australia far outweighs that. Couple that with the opportunity that could also exist with the introduction of the NBN in fixed wireless services. This could actually increase competition for the NBN, in the rollout of regional Australia, where we have fixed wireless services that are providing the NBN. This is a huge competitive advantage that we could give to the people of regional and rural Australia at a relatively small cost to the telcos. I ask them to show their social licence in a public way. Come together and actually put on the table a viable option for each and every person in regional Australia.