



THE HON PAUL FLETCHER MP
Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts

THE HON MARK COULTON MP
Minister for Regional Services, Decentralisation and Local Government
Assistant Trade and Investment Minister

MEDIA RELEASE

20 December 2019

New ways of delivering voice telephone services for rural and remote Australians

The Morrison Government has today commenced consultation on the design of a program to trial alternative ways to deliver voice telephone services in rural and remote Australia.

Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts, the Hon Paul Fletcher MP, said he welcomes input on how the industry can best serve rural and regional Australia which will help inform the trial program.

“These trials will provide an opportunity to identify options for the long term delivery of voice services in rural and remote Australia and may lead to greater choice for consumers in the future,” Minister Fletcher said.

The 2018 Regional Telecommunications Review noted concerns about the ongoing operation of the high capacity radio concentrator (HCRC) network used to provide voice services in large parts of rural and remote Australia and recommended industry trial alternative voice solutions.

Minister for Regional Services, Decentralisation and Local Government, Mark Coulton, said: “The proposed year-long trials will involve up to 1000 participants and look at alternative voice solutions for HCRC areas and rural and remote locations more generally.”

The Government has allocated \$2 million in funding for the trials as part of the \$220 million Stronger Regional Digital Connectivity package announced in March 2019.

“As the Government indicated last December, it will not make changes to existing arrangements that affect regional Australians unless and until there are robust and proven alternatives,” Minister Fletcher said.

The consultation paper is available at: www.communications.gov.au/avstrials

END

Media contacts:

Minister Fletcher:

Brad Hatch | 0448 162 679 | Brad.Hatch@communications.gov.au

Rebecca Papillo | 0439 892 771 | Rebecca.Papillo@communications.gov.au

Minister Coulton:

Steph Nicholls | 0417 314 920 | Steph.Nicholls@dfat.gov.au