



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

**THE HON MARK COULTON MP**  
Minister for Regional Health, Regional Communications  
and Local Government

## **JOINT MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Consultation on Alternative Voice Services Trials guidelines**

The Morrison McCormack Government is calling for submissions on the draft guidelines for the Alternative Voice Services Trials program, which explores new ways to deliver voice telephone services to rural and remote Australians.

Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts, the Hon Paul Fletcher MP, said the Alternative Voice Services Trials program will assess the effectiveness of different technology options with the aim of providing greater consumer choice and better long-term connectivity outcomes for rural and remote Australia.

“The draft guidelines released today set out how the program will operate and build on the feedback received last year on the draft design of the program. An important part of the trials will be giving new providers the opportunity to demonstrate their capabilities in this area,” Minister Fletcher said.

Regional Communications Minister, the Hon Mark Coulton MP, said the trials are crucial in determining how voice services are delivered to remote areas of Australia, as current technology becomes obsolete. It is therefore critical that the trials reflect the needs of people living in these areas.

“I strongly encourage industry and community stakeholders to contribute their feedback on the guidelines to ensure we have a broad range of perspectives on the design of the trials,” Minister Coulton said.

The Alternative Voice Trials program was announced as part of the Government’s response to the 2018 Regional Telecommunications Review, which identified concerns about the performance and longevity of the current high capacity radio concentrator networks.

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.

Interested parties are encouraged to have their say on the draft guidelines by Tuesday 2 June 2020, 5pm (AEST). To have your say on the draft guidelines visit: [www.communications.gov.au/AVST](http://www.communications.gov.au/AVST)

**ENDS**

**Media contact:**

**Minister Fletcher:**

Brad Hatch | 0448 162 679 | [Brad.Hatch@communications.gov.au](mailto:Brad.Hatch@communications.gov.au)

Rebecca Papillo | 0439 892 771 | [Rebecca.Papillo@communications.gov.au](mailto:Rebecca.Papillo@communications.gov.au)

**Minister Coulton:**

Steph Nicholls | 0417 314 920 | [Steph.Nicholls@regional.gov.au](mailto:Steph.Nicholls@regional.gov.au)