THE HON DAVID LITTLEPROUD MP

Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management

THE HON PAUL FLETCHER MP

Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

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Hundreds of satellite dishes to give better broadband connectivity during natural disasters

Under the $37.1 million Strengthening Telecommunications Against Natural Disaster (STAND) program, the Morrison Government is delivering hundreds of satellite dishes on emergency buildings such as Rural Fire Service depots around Australia; funding five new satellite dish-equipped Road Muster trucks; and funding twelve satellite dishes in travel kits.

Nearly one hundred satellite dishes will be installed, and all of the Road Muster trucks and satellite dish travel kits will be delivered, before the end of 2020.

Minister for Emergency Management, the Hon David Littleproud MP said, “The Government continues to support communities in fire-affected regions across Australia. This investment is part of the more than $2 billion in bushfire recovery assistance we are delivering to help communities build back better.”

Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts, the Hon Paul Fletcher MP, visited Namadgi National Park Visitors Centre today, where a satellite dish has been installed, and where NBN Co also demonstrated one of the new Road Muster trucks and one of the satellite dish travel kits.

The Road Muster trucks and satellite dish travel kits can be deployed anywhere in Australia to provide temporary broadband connectivity to communities that have been hit by a natural disaster.

The satellite trucks connect to the internet via the NBN Co satellites and provide internet connectivity within twenty metres of the vehicle via wi-fi. The satellite travel kits are essentially satellite dishes in large briefcases, which can be delivered to remote locations, to provide access to high speed broadband.

And in any emergency building where a satellite dish has been installed, connectivity can be enabled before, during or after a natural disaster.

“By offering broadband connectivity powered by the National Broadband Network’s Sky Muster satellites -- which have coverage of all 7.7 million square kilometres of Australia and operate even when terrestrial mobile or fixed line networks have ceased operating -- these dishes will help people in disaster affected locations stay in contact before, during and after a bushfire or other disaster,” Minister Fletcher said.

Authorised by the Hon Paul Fletcher MP, Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts, Sydney.

More information on what the Government is doing to strengthen telecommunications resilience is available on the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications' website.

Media contact:

Minister Fletcher:

Imre Salusinszky | 0432 535 737 | Imre.Salusinszky@communications.gov.au

Minister Littleproud:

Brett Chant | 0477 744 614 | brett.chant@awe.gov.au

Additional information

Strengthening Telecommunications Against Natural Disasters (STAND)

The Government announced its $37.1 million investment to telecommunications resilience in bushfire and disaster prone areas in May 2020.

On 12 May 2020, the Morrison Government announced the $37.1 million Strengthening Telecommunications Against Natural Disasters package to improve the resilience of communications networks. The STAND package is part of the Government's $650 million package for locally-led recovery.

There are four measures in the STAND package:

1. Strengthen the resilience of regional and remote telecommunications networks through mobile network hardening ($18 million).
2. More temporary telco infrastructure deployments, including NBN Road Muster Trucks and satellite fly-away kits ($10 million).
3. Better telecommunications for rural and country fire service depots and evacuation centres ($7 million).
4. Improved coordination and communication to communities about access to telecommunications in emergencies ($2.1 million).

NBN Road Muster Trucks

The capabilities of NBN Road Muster trucks include:

- the ability to simultaneously operate a secure wi-fi hotspot around the truck itself, whilst supporting public access wi-fi in a nearby building through a deployable wi-fi access point
- industrial grade computer gear designed to better withstand the effects of heat, dust and vibration
- mobile phone access via Voice over Interest Protocol (VoIP) apps where normal reception or infrastructure is not available
- a built-in mobile repeater designed to boost mobile phone signal strength for emergency workers in areas of poor reception
- an LCD screen and loud speakers to communicate crucial information
- the ability for up to 15 people to plug in and charge their mobile phones