



Greg Aplin MP
Member for Albury

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REGIONAL DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY PROGRAM OPENS

Member for Albury, Greg Aplin today announced the NSW Government is seeking Expressions of Interest from companies or internet service providers that have the potential to deliver better connectivity solutions for local businesses and households in regional NSW.

Mr Aplin said the NSW Government's new Regional Digital Connectivity Program is designed to provide tailored solutions to local connectivity issues being experienced by people living in rural and remote parts of the state.

"The program will be open to businesses and internet service providers to submit proposals that will improve connectivity and deliver faster and more reliable digital services for regional households and businesses," Mr Aplin said.

"This is all about giving smaller organisations the chance to submit great ideas that have the capacity to connect areas that would not otherwise have internet or phone coverage.

"From providing improved online learning for school kids, to platforms for regional exporters to manage global orders, we recognise there are opportunities to use existing government assets and install new infrastructure to deliver more consistent, local high-speed internet services.

"It's a fantastic chance to ensure businesses, community groups and locals get the digital connectivity services they need and they deserve," Mr Aplin said.

Community members will also be invited to submit ideas and report challenges with mobile coverage or internet connectivity in their area by phoning 1300 679 673 or visiting the [Connecting Country Communities web page](#) by 15 August 2018.

The government is seeking EOIs that address issues for both voice or data connectivity.

The funding for the Regional Digital Connectivity Program will come from the \$50 million Connecting Country Communities Fund, which is part of the broader \$1.3 billion Regional Growth Fund. The \$500 million Growing Local Economies Fund also provides funding for connectivity projects that deliver economic growth and benefits for businesses and residents of regional NSW.

Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional NSW John Barilaro said the Regional Digital Connectivity Program complements the NSW Government's \$39 million investment in the highly successful Mobile Black Spots Program, which has delivered more than 100 new or upgraded mobile towers or base stations across regional NSW, with more to be delivered before the end of this year.

"The NSW Government knows the value and importance of connectivity in regional areas," Mr Barilaro said.

"As someone who spends a lot of time travelling this vast state, I know how frustrating poor connectivity and mobile coverage can be, not only for residents, but the businesses who rely heavily on it.

"We are already rolling out the first layer of connectivity infrastructure with a huge number of tower upgrades in priority regional locations, but we know there is a lot more we can do – and the big telcos aren't necessarily always the ones who have the solutions.

“This is the next phase in the \$50 million Connecting Country Communities Fund and we want to ensure we do this properly, getting money to the right projects as a priority.”

For more information about the Expressions of Interest process or to submit details of connectivity challenges, visit the [website](#).

The Connecting Country Communities Fund was launched in 2017 as part of the \$1.3 billion Regional Growth Fund.

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