

Our Ref: [REDACTED]
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22 April 2024

The Hon. Alannah MacTiernan
Ms Kristy Sparrow
The Hon. Fiona Nash
Dr Jessa Rogers
Mr Ian Kelly

RE: Commonwealth Government Telecommunications Review – closing 31/7/2024.

The Shire of Waroona in Western Australia wishes to make to following submission regarding the Inquiry into the Commonwealth Government Telecommunications Review, in alignment with the reviews terms of reference (1).

The lack of telecommunications resilience and capacity are significant issues for our regional Shire. The Shire of Waroona is predominately comprised of areas of natural vegetation, Forest, steep topography in the Darling Scarp area and agricultural environments. Although the district is located approximately 100kms from Perth's CBD. However, despite this proximity to a metropolitan area, the region's telecommunications resilience and capacity remain problematic. Due to the issues arising from the lack of coverage in many areas, such as Drakesbrook Weir, Nanaga Brook and Nanga roads district (in the Eastern Escarpment), as well as the localities of Lake Clifton and Preston Beach. In addition to the issues of very slow connectivity speeds, and the loss of coverage due to weather events and emergency related events, including bushfire events.

For example, during the large escarpment fire last month emergency vehicles were asking direction from residents due to loss of GPS signals were not available, endangering both the residents and emergency services personal. Similarity inadequate mobile phone coverage limited the ability of emergency services providers to warn resident in advance of the fire.

Hence the Shire of Waroona believes the district's telecommunications are not adequate. As the current telecommunication service levels and regions coverage significantly disadvantage residents. Such as people who are using the telecommunications network for commerce, education, and allied health services. In addition, the lack of telecommunications resilience and capacity, puts lone workers and residents in emergency situations, at heightened level of extreme risk in an emergency event.

This scenario has arisen because the telecommunications available in the Shire of Waroona's region, does not provide equitable access to telecommunications services significant to people in our region, when compared to the services and coverage currently available in the urban areas of Australia. In addition, there is very limited free or low-cost services and technology available in our region to meet the needs of socially and economically disadvantaged residents such as jobseekers, the elderly, and First Nations communities.

Consequently, the Shire of Waroona would like to ask the Commonwealth Government Telecommunications Review committee, to incorporate remedies to these issues, when formulating their findings and recommendations. Thank you for your consideration, please do not hesitate to contact the Shire of Waroona should you require any further information.

Yours Sincerely



Shire of Waroona Chief Executive Officer

(1) [Terms of Reference | Australian Government Regional Telecommunications Review \(rtirc.gov.au\)](#)