

Wednesday July 31, 2024

Submission

2024 Regional Telecommunications Review

### Introduction

The Tasmanian Hospitality Association (THA) welcomes the opportunity to lodge this submission to the 2024 Regional Telecommunication Review.

The THA is the peak body representing over 2500 hospitality businesses across Tasmania and 25,000 hospitality staff and employees – the Tasmanian hospitality industry being the third largest employing industry in the state. The hospitality industry also makes an enormous contribution to the state’s economy and plays a vital role in supporting Tasmania’s tourism industry, and the lifestyle and enjoyment of our communities.

For these reasons it is essential that Tasmania’s hospitality industry has in place the infrastructure needed to continue to provide and maintain a quality hospitality experience across the state.

### Impacts on Tasmania’s Regional Hospitality Businesses

Modern telecommunications are now essential in managing, operating and promoting a profitable business. This is particularly the case for hospitality venues in promoting and operating their businesses in what is a very competitive industry.

For Tasmania’s regional hospitality venues, having access to quality, reliable telecommunications technology is even more critical, not only in being able to promote their businesses nationally and internationally, but also in meeting the needs and expectations of their customers.

Unfortunately, some of Tasmania’s regional, rural, remote areas and island communities still do not have access to a reliable mobile phone and internet service.

Not only does this lead to the loss of bookings when their internet services are down, but also, at times, poor-quality customer service, such as when customers are checking in or out.

Further, modern travellers expect to have reliable internet and mobile phone access at all times. However, there are still areas in Tasmania where these services frequently drop out or are simply not available. This not only affects the business in question, but also reflects on Tasmania’s tourism and hospitality industry more generally.

While some venues have overcome these issues by subscribing to Starlink or other wireless network services, there are still areas where the internet services continue to be unreliable or intermittent at best. This includes some of Tasmania’s iconic tourism destinations such as Cradle Mountain and

*“Dedicated to Maintaining and Improving the Professionalism and Prosperity of the Tasmanian Hospitality Industry”*

Freycinet national park.

Even in some of the more populated holiday destinations such as Bicheno on Tasmania's east coast, internet services can still "drop out", giving rise to difficulties and frustrations for hospitality venues and their customers alike.

While there have been recent improvements and expansion of the networks, with investment by the carriers in locations such as Orford in recent times, and investment through the Australian government's Mobile Black Spot Program, more work is needed to ensure that Tasmania's hospitality businesses across the state have access to an efficient and reliable internet and mobile phone service.

The THA is keen to work with the Australian and Tasmanian governments, and the network providers, to identify priority areas where further investment in internet and mobile phone services is needed, to ensure the hospitality businesses across the state have access to quality, reliable telecommunications infrastructure to be able to continue to provide a first class hospitality experience.

### **Safety**

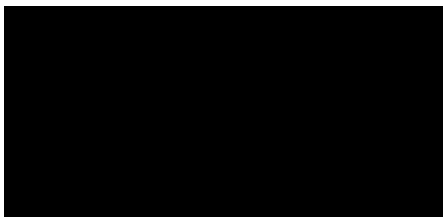
Having access to reliable mobile phone and internet services is also an important safety issue in Tasmania.

Visitors to our island state look to maximise their experience when travelling around the state and this often means travelling late in the day or the evening, as they travel from one location to another.

There are sections of Tasmania's road network in our regional, rural and remote areas where there is no service or a poor-quality mobile phone service. In the event that visitors experience difficulties while travelling, this can give rise to unsafe circumstances, especially in the event that they are unable to call for assistance.

For this reason, it is important that every effort is made to ensure that Tasmania's regional, rural and remote road networks are serviced with quality mobile phone services.

I hope this submission has been of value.



CEO