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31 JUL 2024

2024 Regional Telecommunications Review Secretariat
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, and the Arts
Email: rtirc@infrastructure.gov.au

Dear Secretariat

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Committee for the 2024 Regional Telecommunications Review.

Tasmania is the only Australian jurisdiction that is wholly dependent on subsea cables for backhaul connectivity. The adequacy of telecommunication services in Tasmania, including but not limited to regional areas, is therefore dependent on subsea cable resilience.

Investment in backhaul connectivity is critical to improve the equity, accessibility and reliability of essential telecommunication services across Tasmania. Telecommunication providers are constrained in delivering these investments without government support.

The Tasmanian Government has engaged with the Australian Government on an opportunity for both levels of government to partner with a proponent to deliver a subsea cable solution to ensure the ongoing adequacy of telecommunication services in regional, rural and remote Tasmania. It is understood no appropriate national funding avenue currently exists to support this strategically significant investment.

The Tasmanian Government recognises the Australian Government as a valued partner in telecommunication investments and acknowledges the impact of Government's \$1.1 billion investment to improve telecommunications outcomes. It is critical this investment addresses identified needs associated with the delivery of essential telecommunication services in Tasmania.

I encourage the Committee to consider the need to review the Australian Government's regional telecommunications policy and investment framework to recognise the importance of resilient critical communications with respect to this matter, and address current funding gaps to improve telecommunications outcomes for all regional, rural and remote communities.

The Tasmanian Government shares the Australian Government's view that alignment and collaboration between all levels of government is critical to ensure our co-investments in telecommunication infrastructure are purposeful and effective in addressing the areas of greatest social and economic need and opportunity.

Yours sincerely

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of Eric Abetz MP.

Eric Abetz MP
Minister for Business, Industry and Resources