Good afternoon.
Please see below our responses to the questionnaire.

ACC is a privately owned family Company that operates in the Beef cattle industry.
We operate across 34 locations in Qld and remain heavily reliant on Telecommunications to conduct our everyday business. Connectivity across most of our business has improved significantly over the past 3-4 years, however this is mostly come at our own investment cost.
This cost and or lack of reliable and commercially accepted speeds is greatly limiting our ability to implement much needed innovation across our operations.

What telecommunications services are required in regional Australia to meet current and future needs?
While Australia's mobile footprint includes over 99% of the population, it covers only one-third of total landmass, meaning there is limited service in particular rural and remote areas, for example along transport corridors.

1. Are there any things regional communities and businesses need to do, but can't, on their existing services?
   Even prior to Covid19 regional communities were becoming isolated from historic service and retail agencies such as banks, post offices, department stores and health services as consolidation was being implemented and reliance on secure, reliable and speedy communications and data services became essential. It is highly unlikely this trend will be reversed- reinforcing the reliance on regional and remote connectivity to meet basic living needs.

2. What changes in demand, barriers or challenges need to be addressed when it comes to telecommunications services in regional, rural and remote Australia?
Despite the speed at which technological solutions on farm are being developed, it is clear that connectivity, complexity of the solution vs the operating environment and pricing aspects remain impediments to broader value realisation and adoption of IoT in the livestock industry.

3. How have the Government's policies and programs affected telecommunications service outcomes in regional, rural and remote Australia? How can these be improved?
The universal service obligation (USO) regime is set out in Part 2 of the Telecommunications (Consumer Protection and Service Standards) Act 1999. The USO mandates that Australians have reasonable and equitable access to standard telephone, payphone and prescribed carriage services. Access to these services must be provided by

the primary universal service provider and the current nominated provider is Telstra. The USO is co-funded by the Australian government and an industry levy that provides Telstra with A$290 million in funding per year to ensure that the USO is met. In 2017 The Australian Government response to the Productivity Commission of the day stated " *A Universal Service Guarantee will provide all Australian premises, regardless of their location, with access to both voice and broadband services delivered on a commercial basis by the market in the first instance, and where this cannot be achieved, options will be developed for targeted Government measures.*" and "*A future Universal Service Guarantee will need to meet the following requirements:*

- *broadband services are available to 100 per cent of Australian premises, on request, at the completion of the NBN rollout in 2020;*
- *voice services are available to 100 per cent of Australian premises on request;*
- *any proposed new service delivery arrangements are more cost effective than the existing USO contract (including any transitional costs); and*
- *a new consumer safeguards framework is in place following a review and associated public consultation process.*

No change will be made to the existing USO until these requirements are met."

Has the above first principles commitment been met?

4. How do service reliability issues impact on regional communities and businesses? How do outages, including in natural disasters, impact on communities and businesses?

As communities and remote operations become more reliant on telecommunications and data services, Personal safety and health and wellbeing became totally reliant on the telecommunications and reliability is paramount.

5. How might such impacts be addressed to ensure greater reliability? How can the network resilience be addressed in regional areas?

Have multiple platforms with multiple service providers

6. How did the use of digital services change for regional consumers and businesses during the response to the COVID-19 pandemic? What insights for future service delivery does this provide?

Access to reliable Voice and Internet became critical, particularly as remote operations and families were voluntarily or advised to Lock Down.

Personal safety and health and wellbeing became totally reliant on the telecommunications network in a scenario not experienced before.

7. What can be done to improve the access and affordability of telecommunications services in regional, rural and remote Indigenous communities?

Create a competitive and open platform for low orbit satellites (eg StarLink a growing system of Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellites launched by SpaceX to provide worldwide internet coverage. While Starlink is a very different type of satellite and internet connection to NBN's Sky Muster, the broad principle is generally the same. StarLink satellites in orbit communicate with transceivers on the ground and deliver a wireless signal to a terminal in your home (which plays the same role as a roof-mounted NBN dish. At the time of writing,

there were over 1,600 Starlink satellites in orbit. Starlink's offers unlimited data and has the potential for much faster speeds than Satellite NBN).

8. How can investment in telecommunications infrastructure work with other programs and policies to encourage economic development in regional Australia?

Create a competitive and open platform to provide a service with initial Government funding support where required to encourage establishment

9. What role could innovation, including new models, alternative investors or new ways of doing business, play to encourage investment in regional telecommunications infrastructure? What are the barriers?

Need to create an Create a competitive platform to welcome new service providers

10. To what extent will new technologies enable significant change to the delivery of telecommunications services in regional Australia over the next 5-10 years? Are there any barriers to accessing these technologies?

Need to create an open platform to new service providers. *" But SpaceX still may face a fight in Australia, as the country's telecommunications giant Foxtel wrote a letter of protest to the ACMA regarding Starlink. The TV conglomerate said that Starlink's services would interfere with Foxtel's current satellite service." This is a crucial link in our product delivery chain, and the consequences of interference, outages or degradations of margin are at the highest end of the spectrum of consequences for a business such as Foxtel," the company wrote. "We hold very high levels of concern regarding the interference potential."*

11. How can Government better support the rapid rollout of and investment in new telecommunications solutions in regional areas?

Need to create a seamless , forward looking regulatory platform to help create a competitive and open platform to new and existing service providers.

12. How can different levels of Government, the telecommunications industry and regional communities better co-ordinate their efforts to improve telecommunications in regional Australia?

Conduct post implementation reviews and continue to seek feedback

13. What changes to Government investment programs are required to ensure they continue to be effective in delivering improved telecommunications?

Offer incentives to invest including some protection if KPIs and timetables are achieved

14. How can regional consumers be better supported to identify, choose and use the best connectivity options for their circumstances, as well as to understand and use their consumer rights?

Utilise both traditional communication methods (mail service) , plus fund local groups of influencers or connectors (eg CWA / Farmer organisations / Industry Organisations / Sporting Organisations etc to host information seminars)

15. To what extent is public information on connectivity options, including predictive coverage data and speeds, sufficient to help regional customers make informed decisions? What other information is needed?

They are unlikely to know where to start looking and ironically will require quality IoT to access. Cannot be left to the service provider advertising or sales teams. (eg Pink Bats /Solar panels fiasco's)

16. What other matters should the Committee consider in its review and why are they important? Regional Telecommunications Review 2021 – Issues Paper 16

Lets at least get first world competitive in connectivity

Country
Singapore
Hong Kong
Thailand
United Sta
Canada
China
Chile
New Zeala
Taiwan
Japan
Russia
Brazil
Vietnam
62nd Slowest
Australia
Mongolia
South Afri
Philippine
Indonesia
Fiji

Regards

David Foote
Director
Australian Country Choice Group of Companies