



30 July 2018

2018 Regional Telecommunications Review Secretariat
 Department of Communications and the Arts
 GPO Box 2154
 CANBERRA ACT 2601

Via email: secretariat@rtirc.gov.au

Dear Secretariat

The Central Highlands Councils Victoria (CHCV) is a strategic and cooperative alliance between 8 municipal Councils in the Central Highlands area of Western Victoria. Our membership comprises of Ararat Rural City Council, Central Goldfields Shire Council, City of Ballarat, Golden Plains Shire Councils, Hepburn Shire Council, Moorabool Shire Council, Northern Grampians Shire Council, and Pyrenees Shire Council.

On behalf of the CHCV Chair Mayor Cr Samantha McIntosh, City of Ballarat, and our member Councils, please accept this letter as our joint submission to the 2018 Regional Telecommunications Review.

CHCV has identified 24 priority locations for new mobile towers across our region, as highlighted in below. This critical infrastructure is needed to support our growing population, improve emergency response capacity in fire and flood prone areas, provide much needed digital connectivity for industry (notably the agricultural sector), significantly improve productivity, and improve coverage for industry, tourism (events), home and business use. One member Council has over 600km of roads with blackspots, caused by lack of infrastructure investment and a hilly topography.

Council	Number of Towers	Location of Tower
Ararat Rural City Council	3	Ararat East Armstrong Denicull Creek
Central Goldfields Shire Council		Amherst Daisy Hill
Golden Plains Shire Council		Cape Clear Gheringhap/Batesford Woodbourne/Meredith
Hepburn Shire Council	8	Blampied Campbelltown

		Kooroocheang Lyonville South Mount Franklin area Musk Porcupine Ridge Trentham North/Newbury
Moorabool Shire Council	3	Dales Creek Greendale Morrison's
Northern Grampians Shire Council	2	Borough Huts Swanwater
Pyrenees Shire Council	3	Mena Park Natte Yallock Yalla-Y-Poora

Digital connectivity is fundamental to the lives of those living in regional Australia, however many regional communities are disadvantaged when it comes to accessing quality digital infrastructure and services. Across many parts of the Central Highlands region it can be challenging to do business, access health services, make mobile phone calls, or use tools for education and lifestyle such as social media or video calls. Investment in regional digital infrastructure to create access and opportunities will reduce the digital divide, drive innovation, increase the competitiveness of regional industries, and enhance economic and social outcomes in regional and rural communities.

Communities across the Central Highlands region are also currently contributing to the development of localised digital plans that will define digital success and provide a road map for realising the social and economic potential of regional communities. The plans will address local priorities and needs in terms of telecommunications and broadband infrastructure, recognising that each area is unique in its key industries, population, geography and existing digital infrastructure. The approach includes investigative fieldwork and mapping of current infrastructure and services including mobile coverage, improved fixed broadband for businesses, and establishing local digital hubs and co-working spaces that allows regional users to experience what high quality broadband connectivity and digital functions can deliver. This will be overlaid with data collected in regular surveys.

The Central Highlands region is leading the way in this work, and their experience will be able to be replicated in all other regions across the state.

Yours sincerely



Justine Linley
CEO
City of Ballarat