

15 June 2020

The Program Director
Mobile Black Spot Program
Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development and Communications
GPO Box 2154
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Program Director

Re: Input regarding Round 5A of the Mobile Blackspot Program

On behalf of Bundaberg Regional Council, I would like to thank the Australian Government for its proactive stance in helping to improve mobile broadband capacity throughout regional and remote areas of Australia. This program helps to deliver essential services to many Australians who would otherwise not have access to telecommunications services. Along with providing the following input, Bundaberg Regional Council is looking forward to collaborating with the many stakeholders involved to further improve mobile broadband accessibility across the Bundaberg Region and Australia.

Bundaberg Regional Council supports the Commonwealth's approach and methodology developed under Round 5A of the Mobile Blackspot Program. The proposed design principles provide the foundation to deliver critical infrastructure and services in areas where, in previous rounds, delivery was not as economically viable or technically practical. Furthermore, the continuation of the Mobile Blackspot Program is congruent with Bundaberg Regional Council's *100 Gig Bundaberg*, an initiative with the aim to provide gigabit broadband access across the region.

Importantly, Council sees significant opportunity for collaboration with the Queensland Government. In 2019, the Queensland Government established QCN Fibre to release thousands of kilometres of state-owned optic fibre for use by retail service providers. Trunk infrastructure (owned jointly by Powerlink and Energy Queensland) extends from the southern border of Queensland north to Cairns. Leveraging this fibre network may provide the required backhaul and foundation upon which a wide array of services may be delivered to regional and remote parts of the state under this program.

Live, work, play, invest



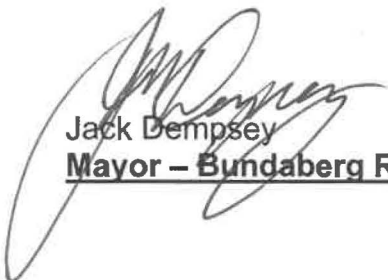
Utilising the QCN Fibre network supports a number of the proposed design principles, particularly encouraging competitive outcomes by leveraging existing carrier-agnostic wholesale backhaul. QCN's infrastructure would support multi MNO outcomes and encourage shared models to deliver the high bandwidth services to businesses and residents across the state.

Furthermore, the use of this backhaul may help to target priority non-commercial regional areas, particularly natural disaster-prone localities and help to deliver new technology solutions where low population densities have discouraged applications under earlier rounds. The Bundaberg Region experienced devastating floods in 2010 and 2013 due to significant rain events occurring over the Burnett River catchment. Along the Burnett River, there are a number of critical evacuation routes and emergency evacuation points that aid local residents in times of major flooding. Furthermore, the region has also been affected by bushfires, with severe fires having occurred just over the region's northern border in Deepwater National Park, burning for days in 2018.

Having reliable communications channels in remote parts of the region when natural disasters strike is critical for protecting vulnerable population areas. Moreover, employing new technologies in these areas where previous applications may not have been favourable due to low population densities is critical to delivering essential, and potentially lifesaving infrastructure.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide input into this important program. If you require further information or detail on the input provided above, please contact Ben Artup, Executive Director Strategic Projects and Economic Development on (07) 4130 4303 or via email at Ben.Artup@bundaberg.qld.gov.au.

Yours faithfully,



Jack Dempsey
Mayor – Bundaberg Regional Council