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- **What are the main barriers for people in regional communities to increase their use of digital technologies**

Mobile coverage is extremely patchy. For those travelling through regional areas, they regularly pass through black spots so are disconnected from calls or data sessions.

For some properties, mobile reception is unreliable or non-existent, limiting the use of digital technology which can be used in the business and the opportunities which come with it.

Basically, the telecommunications infrastructure in the rural areas is so inadequate, resulting in reduced use and research of digital technology.

- **How are people in rural areas currently using their broadband services**

For many in rural and regional areas, they rely upon Satellite Broadband or Wireless Broadband. Unlimited plans are very expensive, especially compared to those in urban areas. This results in the monitoring of data used for business, educational use and pleasure. The speeds of this technology is also far less than broadband available in urban areas, resulting in reduced productivity.

Over recent months, this service has not been 100% reliable.

Satellite Broadband is not compatible with Voice over IP (VOIP) due to the latency in the service.

This service therefore limits the types of technology which can be used.

- **What data intensive activities are occurring in regional and rural Australia? What digital technologies are needed?**

Auctions Plus is an online platform used to buy/sell cattle.

Many businesses are moving away from office based servers to cloud technology.

Every business application we use now involves communication over the internet.

Like any business, many businesses in regional and rural Australia operate with websites as a marketing tool and selling platform.

Transport companies have tracking tools.

Any business operating system is data intensive and there are so many out there. I have only named a small percentage.

I would like to see better mobile infrastructure in rural areas, for a safety perspective and a communications tool to effectively operate a business.

- **How can regional businesses better utilise digital technologies to maximise economic benefits**

I do believe that the engagement and uptake of technology is limited due to limitations in the infrastructure available required to operate this technology.

I am sure so much more could be achieved to help improve productivity, processes and safety if we had better infrastructure available.

We all hear about the importance of collecting data. If we had better data to analyse, so much more could be done. We need to have data technology in place to collect this data easily.

- **What skills do people need to get the most from their digital technologies and where can they learn these skills**

Knowledge on the availability of boosters and repeaters is minimal. You need to be in close contact with your communications outlet to learn about these. Some have a huge call-out fee, which reduces access to the information.

In my opinion, digital technology skills are best learnt when you are using the products. This is how you gain a true understanding of the use and potential.

Rural businesses tend to share a lot of knowledge with other businesses and news and opportunities travel fast.

People will only research technology when they have the infrastructure in place which will support its usage.

- **Have you had ongoing issues with satellite or fixed wireless broadband services, and how have you overcome them.**

My greatest issue with NBN Satellite is not being able to use a VOIP phone and connect to my office telephone system which is based in Sydney, due to the latency of satellite internet. I haven't found a solution as our Wireless Broadband does not receive very good signal. We are located in a black spot.

Recently we have been faced with issues of the satellite technology being unavailable for periods. This makes it very difficult to operate a business.

Cloudy days (not that we seem to have had many of them lately) seem to slow down the data speeds.

- **Impact on Education**

Limited data plans due to the extraordinary costs vs plans in metropolitan areas means we have to watch our data usage.

Websites for school research projects is limited in our household, particularly You Tube Will our children's education and development be affected by the lack of telecommunications? Au pairs are not interested in working for our family due to limitations in the access to telecommunications.

Training within businesses is also reduced as we can't take part in online training.

Businesses can't progress and innovate without solid telecommunications infrastructure in regional areas.

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