

From: Emma White
To: secretariat@rtirc.gov.au
Cc: [David Stoate](#)
Subject: Feedback from the Kimberley Pilbara Cattlemen's Association WA re: the Regional Telecommunications Review
Date: Sunday, 5 August 2018 12:08:01 PM

Good morning,

Due to competing priorities, the Kimberley Pilbara Cattlemen's Association of WA (KPCA) has not been able to participate in the public consultations relating to the Regional Telecommunications Review nor give more fulsome consideration to the issues raised in the Discussion paper.

We would however like to provide the following, high level feedback for consideration by the Committee as part of the Review process:

- The KPCA was only made aware of the planned public consultation in Kununurra held on 8 June 2018 on 2 June 2018. We did circulate information to members and stakeholders regarding this session via social media however were limited in being able to communicate this more broadly (and effectively) due to the minimal notice. We were unable to partake in the consultation session in Kununurra due to having a prior, priority commitment. WA Agriculture and Food Minister the Hon Alannah MacTiernan MLC had invited the WA pastoral industry to a meeting in Carnarvon on 8 June 2018 to discuss pastoral land tenure reform which is a priority issue for KPCA. We also note that no further public consultation sessions were scheduled in the Pilbara or Kimberley regions of WA.
- Landlines still remain of fundamental importance to the pastoral industry in the north of WA for reliable and cost effective telecommunications. We do however note that in times of severe weather as was experienced by the West Kimberley in the wet season of 2017/18 – even landlines can become unreliable which can pose significant issues in terms of being able to communicate medical emergencies, amongst others. We are however aware of at least one West Kimberley pastoralist that was only able to phone out on their landline for an extended period of time due to wet season impacts with the repair timeframe prolonged due to issues between the local Shire and Main Roads repairing washouts to the unsealed road to allow access to the property to repair the landline service.
- Internet services are of fundamental importance in being able to run businesses from a management and administrative perspective however there are reliability and coverage issues.
- Blackspot program expenditure has resulted in some improvements to mobile/wireless coverage over the Pilbara and Kimberley regions however the improvements are typically along main highways and into tourist destinations (e.g. national parks) rather than improving coverage across pastoral properties more broadly.
- The uptake of new technology to improve the productivity and profitability of the pastoral industry is being fundamentally hampered by the lack of comprehensive, reliable and affordable mobile/wireless coverage across pastoral properties in the north of WA. At the moment, new technology reliant on connectivity can only be deployed across properties if the satellite network is utilised which presents a significant cost challenge/impediment.
- We hold significant concerns that with the announcement by Telstra mid July 2018 of its intention to cut 8,000 jobs that there is a significant risk that services in remote and regional areas will further deteriorate rather than improve.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback for consideration of the Committee.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any further information.

Kind regards,

Emma.

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