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BIRRR WELCOMES SKY MUSTER DATA INCREASES

Better Internet for Rural, Regional and Remote (BIRRR) Australia today welcomed the announcement by nbn of a much-lobbied for data increase for nbn Sky Muster™ satellite internet customers.

The wholesale network provider has announced that from October 2017, nbn will double the maximum monthly wholesale data limits to 300GB (150GB Peak / 150GB Off Peak) on their Sky Muster™ satellite service. The increase is expected to be passed on to consumers and businesses via retail service providers (RSPs).

"This is a very positive step in the right direction to end the #datadrought that has restricted business, education and social development across regional Australia," said BIRRR founder Kristy Sparrow.

"We urge the RSPs to work with nbn and their customers to ensure that the new higher data plans are affordable and meet the individual needs of regional consumers."

"BIRRR has advocated for increased data limits ever since the launch of Sky Muster™, as we believe the current maximum of 75GB is inadequate for the multiple needs that rural customers often require.

Ms Sparrow said it was heartening to see a positive response from the major players in bush telecommunications.

"We appreciate that nbn and the Minister for Regional Communications have listened to us and understood that data allowances on Sky Muster™ have simply not been large enough," Ms Sparrow said.

"The doubling of wholesale data allowances will make a significant difference to communications in the bush. Rural businesses are not one size fits all, and if we are to encourage growth and innovation in regional areas, we need to ensure connectivity is on par with our urban counterparts."

"Two of the other improvements which BIRRR has been lobbying hard for - an nbn contact centre and outage information for Sky Muster™ users - have also been recently launched by nbn, and we look forward to continuing our collaborative work with nbn and the federal government to find solutions to regional Australia's telecommunications issues."

Ms Sparrow said the BIRRR group will continue lobbying for **improved reliability, changes to off peak hours, business grade services and an increased fixed wireless footprint** to help alleviate pressure on nbn's Sky Muster™ satellite network.

"It's no secret that Sky Muster™ has experienced issues since its launch 15 months ago but we are confident that nbn are listening and we will see a much improved service in the future.

"The BIRRR team also look forward to **regular ongoing reviews of Sky Muster™ data limits** by nbn, to keep pace with usage rates reflected in those recorded for urban and RRR Australians." ENDS

Media Contact: Kristy Sparrow

0429853482

BIRRR email: birrraus@gmail.com

BIRRR Website: www.birrraus.com

BIRRR Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/BIRRR/