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**MEDIA RELEASE EMBARGOED UNTIL October 4, 2017**

## **RISE IN DATA LIMITS WELCOMED BY BIRRR**

A rise in data limits for users of nbn satellite service, Sky Muster, was today welcomed by rural internet lobby group BIRRR.

The Better Internet for Rural, Regional and Remote Australia group (BIRRR), being founding members of the Rural, Regional and Remote Communications Coalition (RRRCC), has been lobbying extensively for better data limits since Sky Muster's launch in 2015.

nbn passed on new allowances recently - double the previous maximum monthly wholesale limits to 300GB (150GB Peak / 150GB Off Peak) on their Sky Muster satellite service - with new plans being launched on October 1 by the majority of providers.

"This is a much-needed improvement on existing limits," said BIRRR spokesperson, Kristy Sparrow.

Mrs Sparrow commended both Federal Communications Minister, Senator Fiona Nash, and nbn for listening to regional advocates, saying the increase was a positive step towards ending the 'data drought'.

While previous limits (which sat well below 'average Australian household usage') saw many rural, regional and remote Australians being 'shaped' for exceeding 'on peak' limits, the new plan offerings are so far being received well by members of the BIRRR group.

"The previous maximum (75GB peak) was inadequate for the multiple needs of rural customers."

Mrs Sparrow noted that some of the recommendations in the report put forward by the nbn Joint Standing Committee last week, included a regional and remote reference group, and for Sky Muster's data limits to be linked to average Australian fixed line use.

"This link is key to ensuring that RRR Australians are not further left behind when it comes to accessing reasonable and reliable internet to conduct their businesses, education, social and recreational activities."

Rural internet user Ali Briggs, from Condamine, also welcomed the new limits and described the changes she hoped it might mean for her family.

"The data increase is a game changer for us. I will be able to continue to work remotely from home, our children will be able to access online homework tasks, we can read cattle market reports & online news, do online banking, and even be able to online shop and video chat with our son at boarding school... all without the fear of using all of our data before the end of each month."

"We are thankful for the increase and understand the hard work that had gone into this from BIRRR and other lobby groups, without them we would still have small data allowances. We are very hopeful that this is just the beginning of increases in data for regional and rural users."

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