

BETTER INTERNET FOR RURAL REGIONAL & REMOTE AUSTRALIA

MEDIA RELEASE February 19, 2018

HAVE YOUR SAY on PHONE SERVICE GUARANTEE for #BETTERBUSHCOMMS

Rural Australians have the chance to influence the future of telecommunications in the bush, through a new survey being hosted by BIRRR (Better Internet for Rural, Regional and Remote Australia).

“We urge everyone in the bush to get online and fill out this questionnaire – help us build a clear profile of which tools are most important to keep us safe and connected,” said BIRRR spokesperson Kristy Sparrow.

The [survey](#) takes just ten minutes, and explores the telephone/voice service and internet options in homes.

The Australian Government is currently developing options for a new Universal Service Guarantee (USG) which seeks to ensure all Australians can access voice and broadband services.

“This USG is so vital for rural, regional and remote Australia – if they get this wrong, we have grave concerns that some could well be left in very tough and isolated situations, with potentially disastrous consequences.

“Data we collect will be provided directly to the USG taskforce committee, government departments and ministers and will be used in BIRRR work towards better bush communication.

“Every Australian, irrespective of where they live or work, should be confident they can access quality, reliable, accessible & affordable voice and broadband services with customer support guarantees,” Ms Sparrow noted.

“RRR Australia contribute a large proportion of Australia’s GDP and live across 80% of Australia's landmass. They do this in some of the most hostile and hazardous locations, making their need for reliable telecommunications paramount.

“The Government must not consider rural, regional and remote (RRR) mobile connectivity as a replacement for a Universal Service Guarantee (USG) voice service, until this connectivity at least meets the same service guarantees as existing landlines.”

A previous BIRRR survey (May 2016)* found that:

- many rural residents have a landline only, no internet connection.
- Many Sky Muster users (42%) have no mobile coverage.
- Boosting coverage into your home is costly.
- Illegal repeaters are causing huge issues with mobile coverage.
- VOiP (*considered a replacement for landline*) is not simple to use and is not reliable.
- If Sky Muster (satellite internet) goes down you cannot trouble shoot your connection without a landline

BIRRR has been involved in previous submissions to government (release [here](#) in their ongoing effort to save existing tools and to secure RRR telecommunication services into the future.

All rural, regional and remote Australians are urged to take part, and to share with their networks. It is open to all those in RRR locations (not simply BIRRR members). The survey will close on March 28.

Links:

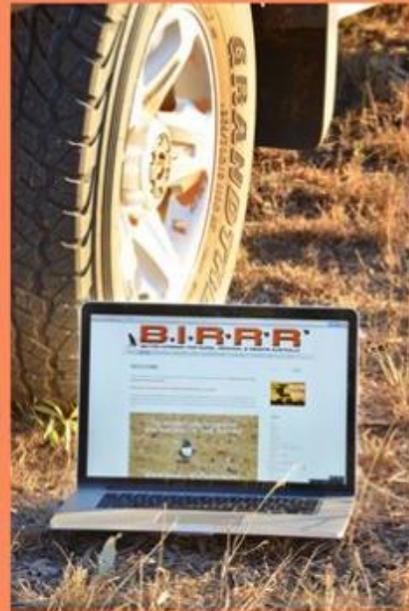
BIRRR LANDLINE & CONNECTIVITY SURVEY: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BIRRRlandlines>

BIRRR website: www.birrraus.com

*BIRRR Regional Internet Access Survey, 2016: <https://birrraus.com/2016/05/04/birrr-survey-results-released/>

BIRRR LANDLINE & CONNECTIVITY SURVEY

*Survey data is used in
advocacy &
lobbying for
#betterbushcomms*



www.surveymonkey.com/r/BIRRRlandlines

**SURVEY CLOSES
Wednesday 28th March 2018**