



Media Release

Embargoed until 8.00am (AEDT) Monday 12 November 2018

BIRRR CELEBRATES UNMETERED SKY MUSTER DATA PROPOSAL

After four years of lobbying for fairer data packages for rural, regional and remote Australians, the BIRRR team welcomes today's nbn announcement - offering unmetered data on the proposed Sky Muster Plus Services - with their own unmetered enthusiasm.

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

Following several submissions and regular discussions with nbn and the Federal Government, the Better Internet for Rural, Regional and Remote Australia (BIRRR) group, along with other regional stakeholders, suggested specific ways the nation's internet wholesaler could enhance the experience for nbn Sky Muster users and to cater for the growth in data needs.

A result of this advocacy and discussions is 'Sky Muster Plus'.

Ms Sparrow welcomed this news as a 'much-needed break in the #datadrought' that RRR Australia has been dealing with for many years.

She described Sky Muster Plus as an 'exciting' new nbn product development, designed for regional internet users. It will allow for improved Sky Muster plans that can deliver unmetered access across sites such as web browsing, email, smart phone and PC operating system updates - downloads which will not count toward monthly data allowances.

The proposed option will also help deliver faster download speeds, by providing 'bursts' up to 50Mbps (wholesale speed), when applications and network support allows.

"We are looking forward to the outcomes of the consultation process (between nbn co and providers), with new plans expected to become available to customers in 2019."



Based on the average user, it is estimated that approximately 30-40% of nbn Sky Muster usage will be unmetered with the new product. When users have exhausted their metered allowance data, they will not be shaped for essential email and web browsing activities.

“We appreciate that nbn and the Minister for Regional Services have listened to us and understood that data allowances on Sky Muster have restricted essential services for regional users and we thank them for listening to our concerns. “

“Sky Muster Plus will make a significant difference to those who have been battling limited data allowances, especially for the 42% of Sky Muster users who have no other internet option,” Ms Sparrow said.

The BIRRR team is grateful to the support of their 11,000 strong membership base, and in particular for donations received during their crowdfunding which has enabled the BIRRR admin to travel and discuss ideas with telecommunications stakeholders. It was during one of these advocacy trips to nbn headquarters in 2017 that BIRRR admin, along with the Federal ICPA & AgForce representatives, suggested ways of enhancing the Sky Muster service.

The unmetering of essential applications on Sky Muster was just one of the ideas thrown on the table during the trip.

The volunteer group also welcomed news of further enhancements to the Sky Muster service, such as business plans and health and education services and improvements to the nbn Fixed Wireless product.

Ms Sparrow said the BIRRR team will continue to assist regional Australians with their issues, however they would like to see telecommunication providers improve their customer service and communication, so the volunteer group can concentrate more on being advocates and not troubleshooters.

"The BIRRR team looks forward to continuing their collaborative work and partnerships with telecommunication stakeholders and the federal Government to ensure they are closing the gap on the digital divide."

END

<http://birrraus.com/2018/11/12/skymusterplusfaq/>