



ALPHA RCP CASE STUDY EXAMPLES

Case Study: Health: Jenny

Living with a chronic medical condition in a rural area can be challenging. This is increased when the medical condition is considered rare or unique. As a chronic disease individual, with a degenerative neurological condition, I am faced with additional challenges when accessing care and management plans than those in metropolitan based locations. I have a team of medical specialists located across Queensland (Townsville, Rockhampton and Brisbane), and a neurologist and neurosurgeon based in Sydney. Accessing Telehealth appointments for these specialists has been difficult, due to the internet speed and quality. At times it has been easier to complete Telehealth appointments at home through Skype or facetime with specialists through mobile phone coverage, then to rely on ADSL2+ internet speeds at our local hospital (telehealth facility) or home. Unfortunately, due to the current internet speeds and limitations placed upon telehealth services, many appointments need to be face-to-face. I currently travel to Brisbane at least once per month, more often than not once per fortnight. It is not just doctor specialist appointments that struggle to be accommodated with current internet requirements. I undergo fortnightly speech pathology for severe dysphagia and physiotherapy (which is supposed to occur weekly). Unfortunately, due to Covid-19, borders to NSW have remained closed, meaning we have been relying on Telehealth appointments with the NSW specialists. Due to technology malfunctions and limitations these appointments have not been very successful, resulting in finding other options (another specialist to complete a face to face appointment and refer the information back to the NSW based specialist) during this time. Being located rurally should not impact access to services or impact health outcomes. Rural and remote communities are at increased morbidity for chronic medical conditions, and this is primarily due to the access to care. In today's society, basic internet connection should not hinder specialist choice, specialist care, or allied health services.

Case Study: Work + University: Danielle

Living and working in a rural community does not and should not limit educational and employment opportunities. I am currently engaged in the injury prevention field with Queensland Health, James Cook University and a non-for-profit injury prevention organisation. During the Covid-19 closure period remote access to the workplace was essential for many workplaces. My situation was no different. While working from home it was essential to be able to have access to zoom, and remote access to the workplace servers. The internet reliability and speed generally allowed for access to zoom meetings, however it was the remote access to workplace servers and systems that provided difficult. Within the research sector, ethics application generally prohibit data to leave a secured network or system, meaning we can not simply download data sets to home computers or individual work computers. The reliability of the ADSL connection in Alpha made it impossible to run analytical data analysis through the remote access connection. Connection errors frequently occurred. As a result, I find myself travelling to and from Alpha and Brisbane to complete my employment tasks.

A reliable internet connection is also essential for networking and professional development within the research sector. I have been afforded the opportunity to speak at numerous international conferences. Due to Covid-19, a number of these conferences have now become virtual offerings. Partaking in a virtual conference to its full capacity requires a reliable internet connection, both for the delivering of one's own presentation, and for engaging in question time during the conference. Current internet capacity, speed and quality in our local township does hinder my ability to fully engage with my team in Brisbane.

We are currently on an unlimited ADSL2+ internet connection. We have considered converting to an NBN satellite plan, however the data allowance (when using a VPN) and latency limitations is what has prevented us making the conversion. To have equitable access to internet services (high speeds with unlimited data) as compared to major cities would be a great step forward. Equitable access will not only allow for a more educated workforce to stay employed locally within the township of Alpha, but also increase the access to services that can be provided locally in the township.

The reliability of the internet access and internet speed has played an important decision on whether I undertake my PhD from an external rural and remote location (Alpha) or relocate to Townsville, traveling back and forth to the rural location (Alpha) for data collection. The current internet reliability and speed unfortunately will not allow me to fulfill my requirements.

Currently undertaking a Graduate Law (Hons) Degree externally through Queensland University of Technology, technology and internet capacity at times impacts study opportunities. Depending on the time of day, online tutorial participation can be limited when integrating video, voice and whiteboard activities. While download speeds do not seem to be impacted, difficulties have been faced with upload speeds when uploading video presentation orals to the university blackboard suite. The mobile coverage data is often faster than the ADSL currently provided to the town, although often this network (particularly during tourist season and when community events are held) becomes congested. Frequently, when uploading materials for university we find ourselves connecting to our mobile phone via a hotspot rather than utilising the ADSL cable connection due to the upload speed.

ALPHA RCP SUPPORT LETTER EXAMPLES



To Whom It May Concern,

Our club is writing this letter in support of the application to the Regional Connectivity Program, by nbn co and Barcaldine Regional Council for a technology flip for the town of Alpha in Central Queensland.

Alpha Jockey Club is an active and engaged community organisation with over 100 members. Each year we hold an annual race meet along with several other community events such as Australia Day celebrations and community meetings. We are also used as a venue for birthday parties, events and weddings. We are supportive of our local community and have previously donated to mental health support, education and health services in our district.

Our annual race day attracts a crowd of over 3000 people, which places considerable strain and limitations on our current connectivity. In order to grow our event, we need access to affordable, fast and business grade connectivity; this is currently unavailable to us at our location. Improved connectivity would mean that we could enhance the marketing of our event, live stream races and Fashion on the Field competitions, post to social media with race results and create engagement with our community and racegoers. We would be able to increase our engagement with sponsors and attract more sponsors to our event. Better connectivity would increase our sales and the sales revenue of sub-contractors such as food vendors, allowing them and our club to use credit card facilities and EFTPOS. It would also reduce volunteer fatigue by allowing ticket sales online and the scanning of tickets upon entry, as well as the use of an online sign up register that manages volunteers more effectively and efficiently.

In the event of emergency, Alpha Jockey Club is well placed to be an evacuation centre for the town (being placed outside of the flood zone), with various facilities such as kitchen, toilets and showers being a focus of major recent upgrades. However, our current connectivity options would be restrictive for emergency service personnel and locals. During our race day (and at other events held at our venue) it is currently very difficult to make a voice call if we needed to access 000 or emergency services, this is a large safety concern to our committee.

To enable us to compete in the digital marketplace we need improved connectivity. Currently with the large numbers attending our event, mobile towers cannot cope with the demand and using innovative platforms and marketing tools, such as online ticket scanning, EFTPOS facilities or live streaming are not achievable for us. We wholeheartedly support this application. It will enable our community to grow, our event to become more successful, reduce volunteer fatigue and support more events to be held at our venue.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact either Kevin Wiltshire or myself.

Kind regards,

Anna Appleton

To Whom It May Concern,

Alpha Show Society would like to enthusiastically support nbn co and the Barcaldine Regional Council application for the Regional Connectivity Program.

Alpha Show Society is a small but dedicated committee who are strong advocates for regional communities, agriculture and our local produce and skills. Each year we hold our annual agricultural show at the Alpha Showgrounds, showcasing a variety of sections from beef cattle to working dogs, the amazing pavilion full of flowers, cooking and arts and crafts, woodchopping and a carcass competition, just to name a few. We are passionate about our district being sustainable and progressive and believe that improving the connectivity that is available in our community will help our region grow and prosper. Alpha has been negatively affected by drought and people leaving our community, additionally current connectivity options are old and degraded or congested. This is hampering our local committees and businesses from embracing digital innovation.

Our society is currently limited to how we can use connectivity. At show time and during our annual Beef Dinner / Carcass Competition we connect via 'hot-spotting' our phones, using a tower that becomes slow and congested as soon as a large number of competitors, guests or visitors arrive. We would benefit from improved connectivity by being able to accept nomination fees on our website, engaging with sponsors, use of social media and live streaming to promote our show, offering EFTPOS facilities to increase our revenue and improved ability to react / get help in times of emergency. Better connectivity would allow us to encourage more vendors to attend with trade stalls and food sites and encourage more community engagement, as well as reduce costs for volunteers.

There is no existing voice service or internet connection at the Alpha Showgrounds. In 2019 we hosted our beef dinner, with a celebrity chef, Matt Golinski. If we had been able to access better connectivity we could have live streamed our event and auction, conducted online voting for our Carcass Competition taste testing component and promoted our sponsors on social media.

At times we have also held workshops for our local community, covering items such as use of social media, nutrition of cattle during drought, digital literacy and mental health. These sessions could have been delivered more effectively and efficiently with better connectivity. Alpha Show Society would be willing to facilitate digital literacy workshops to ensure that our community could make the most of any improvements in connectivity.

We need to equip our town and district for the future and to do this we must address the digital divide and ensure our schools, health centre, volunteer groups and business can keep up with digital innovation. We applaud the Barcaldine Regional Council for taking the steps necessary to ensure our region is not left behind and can be digitally ready for the future.

Kind Regards
William Bowyer (President)

Handwritten signature of William Bowyer in blue ink.