

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this submission in response to the Universal Service Obligation Inquiry Draft Report. Burke Shire Council acknowledges access to telecommunications infrastructure and services as a universal right as well as a critical enabler to economic and community development to ensure sustainable communities, particularly in regional and remote areas of Australia. Our recommendations are outlined below, with further detail contained in the attached submission.

1. That quality communication services in regional, rural and remote areas must be comparable to those available in urban areas – similar reliability, economy, features, voice quality and data rates.
2. That fast, reliable and affordable two-way voice and data communication are available to all communities and households for health and education service delivery.
3. That mobile phone service coverage increases throughout rural and remote Australia.
4. For those who have no mobile coverage, a mandated right to a fixed telephone service and a reliability guarantee is essential.
5. Assurance that there is continued investment in the NBN Fixed Wireless network, to ensure that the capacity of the NBN's Satellites are managed.

In conclusion, the primary objective of the USO should remain the protection of the most vulnerable, including Australians struggling with inadequate telecommunications in regional and remote areas.