

Regional Telecommunications

Proper telecommunication in regional WA is essential for community, business and emergency services. The Nationals want regional people to have faster, more reliable and more affordable access to telecommunications.



Our Commitments

Rollout broadband solutions in regional WA	\$42 million
Continue the Regional Telecommunications Project	\$20 million
Local Government Wi-Fi Fund	\$5 million
Combat the rise of illegal repeaters by offering a subsidy for legal equipment	\$1.5 million
'State Fibre Taskforce', to advise on new and existing fibre opportunities	\$500,000

Background

Access to reliable telecommunications is a vital issue for regional areas. Quality, affordable and reliable mobile reception and internet access is vital for business, emergency services, tourism and education.

In recognition of the need for reliable telecommunications, Royalties for Regions has invested \$105 million into funding mobile phone base stations through the successful Regional Mobile Communications Project (RMCP) and Regional Telecommunications Project (RTP). Combined, these two projects will see 344 phone towers built or upgraded across the State, with the RMCP alone increasing coverage by more than 30 per cent.

Whilst responsibility for telecommunications largely rests with the Federal Government, The Nationals WA's proactive investment lead these developments because our Party understands the importance of adequate service and will continue to build on this significant Royalties for Regions investment.

Our Commitment

Regional Broadband Strategy

Providing broadband to regional WA is a significant task. Due to the size of Western Australia and the costs associated with service provision in remote and regional areas, the NBN and other providers won't provide adequate broadband coverage to many in regional WA.

The Nationals WA are not satisfied with this situation and don't believe regional people should be disadvantaged because of where they live. WA's businesses and communities require access to fast, reliable internet to remain competitive in a modern economy.

Through the Royalties for Regions-funded Seizing the Opportunity in Agriculture, The Nationals have funded the State Agricultural Telecommunications Infrastructure Improvement Fund. This \$22 million fund will create the opportunity for high-priority innovative agricultural telecommunications infrastructure and technology to be constructed in regional areas of Western Australia.

The Nationals believe the NBN should provide at least fixed wireless technology to all towns in regional WA, with greater than 100 potential connections. Recently a decision was taken to move a number of WA towns from fixed wireless technology to satellite. The Nationals WA are not satisfied at the choice of technology being rolled out across these areas in Western Australia, and as such if elected The Nationals will invest \$20 million to ensure these communities are no longer disadvantaged by the growing digital divide between urban and rural areas.

The deployment of technology could be undertaken through the NBN's technology choice program or through alternative service providers with expertise in this field.

The Nationals WA commit to \$42 million to develop broadband technologies in regional WA.

Regional Telecommunications

Regional Telecommunications Project

The Regional Telecommunications Project and Regional Mobile Communications Project have delivered and are delivering 344 new phone towers across regional WA.

The Nationals understand how important mobile phone coverage is in regional WA. This is why we intend to continue our support for projects that deliver increased coverage.

To continue the good work of the RCMP and RTP, The Nationals WA commit an additional \$20 million to this program.

Local Government Wi-Fi Fund

Accessing the internet on the go is important and in some cases vital to business and individuals alike. A number of Local Governments have deployed or are considering local wireless networks in their CBD's or perhaps at a local tourist attraction or related infrastructure.

These networks support tourism, education and help grow and sustain the patronage of local businesses. A number of innovative e-tourism products are being developed across the State which rely on connectivity and present significant opportunities to deliver tourism information differently.

The Nationals WA commit \$5 million to a contestable fund to allow Local Governments to deploy local wireless networks in our regions.

Mobile Repeater Rebate

Mobile repeaters can play an important role in securing or improving mobile coverage in fringe reception areas.

Currently these devices are expensive, and as a result a prevalence of illegal imported versions are common. These illegal devices have significant network impacts and results in the loss of coverage to other users.

In keeping with our current investment to expand the mobile phone networks outside of Perth, we will provide a \$500 rebate to those living in our regions when a legal repeater is purchased.

The Nationals commit \$1.5 million to fund a rebate for legal mobile phone repeaters to combat the rise of illegal repeaters.

State Fibre Taskforce

The Nationals WA will also investigate options to use existing fibre optic networks to deliver high quality connectivity to regional and remote areas of our State.

At present the State has a significantly underutilised network of fibre optic cables. The first step to delivering broadband through fibre optics in WA is understanding current availability and potential use for internet service providers.

The Nationals WA will establish a 'State Fibre Taskforce' to determine which fibre optic cables exist in the current network and their capacity. This logistical exercise will provide a clear picture for internet service providers as well as governments as they consider the deployment of future technology and bandwidth.

The Nationals WA will invest \$500,000 to report on the State's existing fibre network to ensure WA is efficiently using its present fibre optic capacity.

The Nationals will invest \$69 million over five years to improve regional mobile telecommunications.



The Nationals WA welcome your feedback on this policy:

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