



Alpine Shire

File Number: 402.00 / 401.06

Our Ref: LH: DB

17 November 2016

Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
Level 35, The Tower
GPO Box 520
Melbourne Vic 3001

To whom it may concern,

**SUBMISSION TO AUSTRALIAN COMPETITION AND CONSUMER COMMISSION
(ACCC)
MOBILE ROAMING INQUIRY**

Alpine Shire Council welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the ACCC with respect to mobile roaming.

By way of background, the Alpine Shire is situated in north-east Victoria approximately 300km from the Victorian state capital, Melbourne and 70km south of Albury-Wodonga. The area of the Alpine Shire is 4,790 square kilometres (this excludes Hotham Heights and Falls Creek Ski Fields). 92% of the Alpine Shire is on public land and covers large tracts of the Alpine National Park. The remaining 8% of land consists of towns, villages and farming land in the major river valleys, Ovens, Buffalo, Buckland and Kiewa Valleys.

The townships and villages of the Alpine Shire are well-known and visited tourist destinations. The estimated resident population (according to the latest Australian Bureau of Statistics released in March 2016) is 11,858. This number increases significantly with the seasonal influx of tourists to the region.

Residents within the Alpine Shire boundary have faced many challenges in recent years with significant bushfires in 2003, 2006/07, 2009 and 2013. The shire has recorded major flooding events during namely 1993, 1998 2010, 2013 and 2016.

Council has actively lobbied its Federal Member for Indi, Cathy McGowan AO MP, for improved telecommunications and in particular the rollout of the mobile blackspot program and progress on the NBN within our region. Council is concerned that by regulating the roaming, more mobile network operators would appear but that the issues would still remain and that the extension of coverage would still be an issue.

During challenging times mobile services are very important to regional consumers who have a much greater dependency on mobiles than their counterparts in urban areas especially during these times.

Council would welcome improved competition which may produce benefits to regional consumers but is concerned that the short term benefit to regional consumers could impact the investment incentives of the mobile network operators at the cost of maintaining and or upgrading infrastructure if investment incentives are reduced by regulating mobile roaming therefore disadvantaging its residents over the long term.

In summing up, Alpine Shire Council does not support based on our understanding that the pace and scale of network extension to provide much needed coverage in our municipality would be reduced as a result.

Please feel free to contact me on my mobile number [REDACTED] should you require further information.

Yours sincerely,



Dave Barry
Chief Executive Officer