**Submission to the Inquiry on Regulated Mobile Roaming**

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Inquiry.

The Northern Territory Opposition would like to make it known that we are concerned about the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) inquiry into regulated mobile roaming.

We believe that a decision to regulate mobile roaming would effectively remove the incentive for telecommunication companies to invest in rural and regional Australia.

Mobile phone coverage, as well as access to a secure telecommunications connection, is a major issue across the Northern Territory.

The concern of the Opposition is that our constituents living in rural, regional and remote areas would be negatively impacted in future years due to lack of investment arising from any move to regulate mobile roaming charges.

It is the view of the Opposition that if the ACCC were to regulate mobile roaming these investments would become uneconomic, undermining any ability to continue to invest in the regional network.

We (the Opposition) do not want Territorians to miss out from the opportunities that mobile technologies provide and we do not believe Territorians do either.

Our approach is one of sceptical apprehension.

The high additional costs and low additional revenue that flow from extending networks into rural, regional and remote areas where there is low demand, is likely to impact incentives for Mobile Network Operators to extend their mobile networks in these areas.

If Australia ends up with regulated mobile roaming the real loss will be felt across rural, regional and remote communities, where more coverage is paramount.

The overall and unfortunate consequence would be a transfer of value from regional Australia to the cities.

This is not in the best interest of Territorians.

Mobile services are particularly important to regional and remote consumers who have a greater dependency on mobiles than consumers in urban areas.

In our vast Northern Australia, it is incumbent on politicians of all political persuasions to stand up for the good of Territorians.

In the same vein, Territorians living in regional and remote communities deserve some level of service.

Territorians living in rural, regional and remote communities also deserve to have mobile telephony services available to them should they wish to avail of them.

I trust that the concerns of the Opposition in the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly will be given some weight and credence.

If there is any further way in which we may be able to assist with the inquiry, please do not hesitate to contact the Office of the Leader of the Opposition.

Yours sincerely

Gary Higgins

Leader of the Opposition