



An Australian Government Initiative



Yorke and Mid North

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[Submitted via online portal]

Dear ACCC Regional Mobile Infrastructure Inquiry Team

**RE: Submission to the ACCC Regional Mobile Infrastructure Inquiry - Consumer Survey**

We are pleased to provide a public submission to the ACCC's Regional Mobile Infrastructure Inquiry.

Regional Development Australia Yorke and Mid North (RDAYMN) is an incorporated organisation funded by Federal, State and local government. Our main goal is to promote and facilitate sustainable community and economic development within the regions of Yorke, Mid North and the Southern Flinders Ranges. During the past twelve years RDAYMN has worked alongside a number of Councils, businesses, community and not-for-profit groups to increase economic activity and competitiveness and to enhance social and environmental outcomes for our region.

Approximately 10 years ago RDAYMN undertook extensive regional consultation to identify the regions mobile blackspots. Just over 100 blackspots were identified and a further 153 to date. In 2018 we also undertook further consultation to understand the regions internet connectivity issues. Most recently (March 2023) we have revisited consultation on both mobile blackspots and internet connectivity issues. Changes in responses to our various consultations is minor to moderate. This is perhaps a reflection of the number of improvements that have occurred, for example approximately 12 mobile coverage improvement projects within region during the past ten years.

Key highlights from our most recent consultation include:

- That there are approximately 253 MOBILE BLACKSPOTS identified within the Yorke & Mid North Region, with 245 of these currently listed on the national database
- Anecdotal reports across the region of existing black spots locations 'expanding' during the past two years, particularly on agricultural properties
- Many respondents highlighting emergency related risks. Fire risks, particularly in agricultural areas and outer regional / remote locations whereby limited or no coverage areas severely impact people's safety as they cannot receive current information on fire activity
- Unreliable connection /connectivity in general disadvantages regional businesses



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**Local Government Partners**

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District Council of Mount Remarkable | Northern Areas Council  
District Council of Peterborough | Wakefield Regional Council  
Yorke Peninsula Council | Regional Council of Goyder  
Copper Coast Council | Port Pirie Regional Council  
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- Limited or no coverage limits potential use of new technology in development of new tourism product (eg location triggered interpretive technologies, use of QR codes, augmented reality apps, etc)
- Over 82% of respondents stated they were connected to the internet at home. Compared to the 2016 Census (data by region) cited at just over 75%
- Over 80% of respondents use their internet multiple times a day.

Please see attached our submission utilising data obtained particularly through our March 2023 consultation, in addition to references of other data sources. We would be happy to provide any raw data that may assist in collating submission data.

You can contact me via [ceo@yorkeandmidnorth.com.au](mailto:ceo@yorkeandmidnorth.com.au)

Yours Sincerely



Daniel Wilson  
Chief Executive Officer



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# ACCC - Regional Mobile Infrastructure Inquiry - Consumer Survey Regional Development Australia Yorke & Mid North SA Inquiry Submission



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# Regional Development *Australia*

YORKE AND MID NORTH

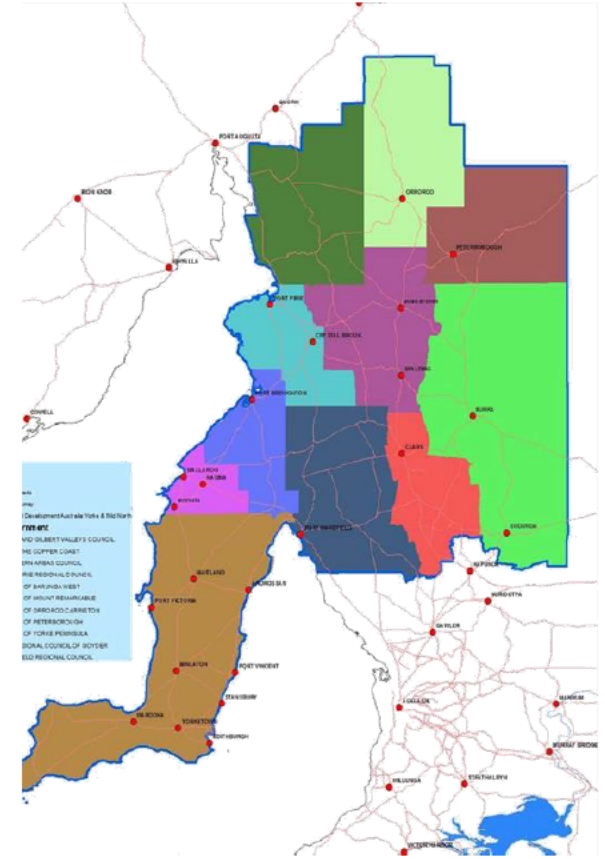
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# YORKE & MID NORTH REGION SOUTH AUSTRALIA

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- The Yorke & Mid North region is north of Adelaide with land coverage of 35,036 square km's
- 96% of the regions land is designated for agricultural and primary production purposes
- The population estimate for RDA Yorke and Mid North Region as of the 30th June 2021 is 78,164. Since the previous year, the population has grown by 0.50%. Population growth in Regional SA was 0.64%
- Health Care and Social Assistance is the largest employer, generating 5,187 local jobs in 2020/21
- However, based upon FTE jobs - Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing remains the largest employer, generating 5,167 FTE jobs in 2020/21.



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# INTRODUCTION

- 10 years ago RDAYMN undertook extensive regional consultation to identify the regions mobile blackspots. Just over 100 blackspots were identified and a further 145 identified to date
- In 2018 we also undertook further consultation to understand the regions internet connectivity issues
- More recently (March 2023) we have revisited consultation on both mobile blackspots and internet connectivity issues with just over 40 respondents



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# MOBILE BLACKSPOTS

- There are approximately 253 MOBILE BLACKSPOTS identified within the Yorke & Mid North Region, with 245 of these currently listed on the national database
- Anecdotal reports across the region of existing blackspots locations 'expanding' during the past two years, particularly on agricultural properties

# IMPACTS OF MOBILE COVERAGE ISSUES EMERGENCY RELATED

**Respondents to our 2023 consultation cited a number of impacts ranging from severe to moderate, including emergency related impacts:**

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Need to rely upon UHF radios

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Fire risks, particularly in agricultural areas and outer regional / remote locations - Limited or no coverage areas severely impact people's safety as they cannot receive information on fire activity

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Loss of power impacts some townships and their tourists as the telecommunications core related back-up requires power

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Access to assistance in limited / no coverage areas, following accidents, severely impacts response times

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Unable to access telehealth services

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# IMPACTS OF MOBILE COVERAGE ISSUES BUSINESS

- Inability to monitor livestock water through AGTECH
- Unable to contact colleagues who are travelling in a timely manner
- Inability to work from home
- Affects business competitiveness & productivity when unable to have 'real time' access
- Unreliable connection /connectivity in general disadvantages regional businesses



# IMPACTS OF MOBILE COVERAGE ISSUES BUSINESS

Respondents were asked to provide estimates on the number of businesses (and or households affected by limited / no coverage areas). Responses varied from small to relatively large areas:

Responses ranged from a 1km radius through to a 50km radius...



*“Even when within a few kilometres of a cell tower [there are] continual dropouts... The analogue system was far superior...” (March 2023 survey respondent)*

# IMPACTS OF MOBILE COVERAGE ISSUES TOURISM RELATED

Limited or no coverage limits potential use of new technology in development of new tourism product (eg location triggered interpretive technologies, use of QR codes, augmented reality apps, etc.)

Limited or no coverage is a travel deterrent for some of the regions tourists, particularly internationals



*“Significant safety risks particularly in emergency (for farm staff, guests and visitors, or for event attendees) when unable to get signal (WiFi or mobile)”  
(March 2023 survey respondent)*

# IMPACTS OF MOBILE COVERAGE ISSUES

## TOURISM RELATED



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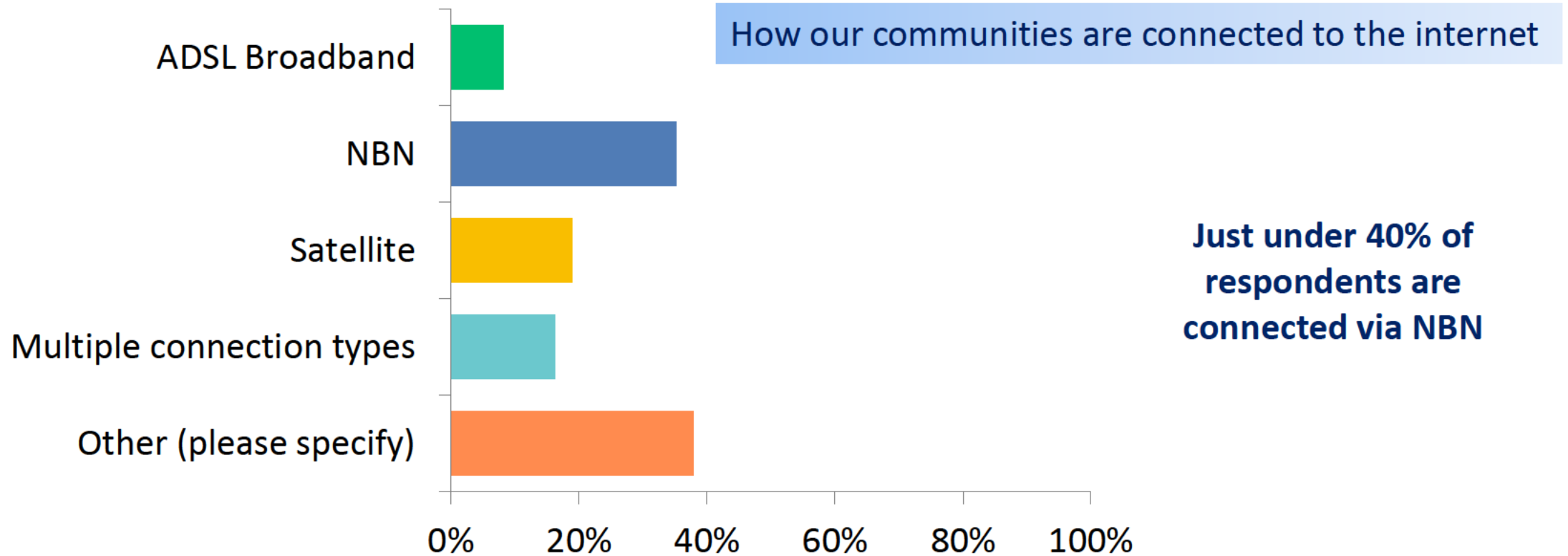
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**Guests and visitors (particularly returning international visitors) concern about the lack of mobile services in some key areas of the region (including Southern Flinders Ranges and Dhilba Guuranda – Innes National Park)**

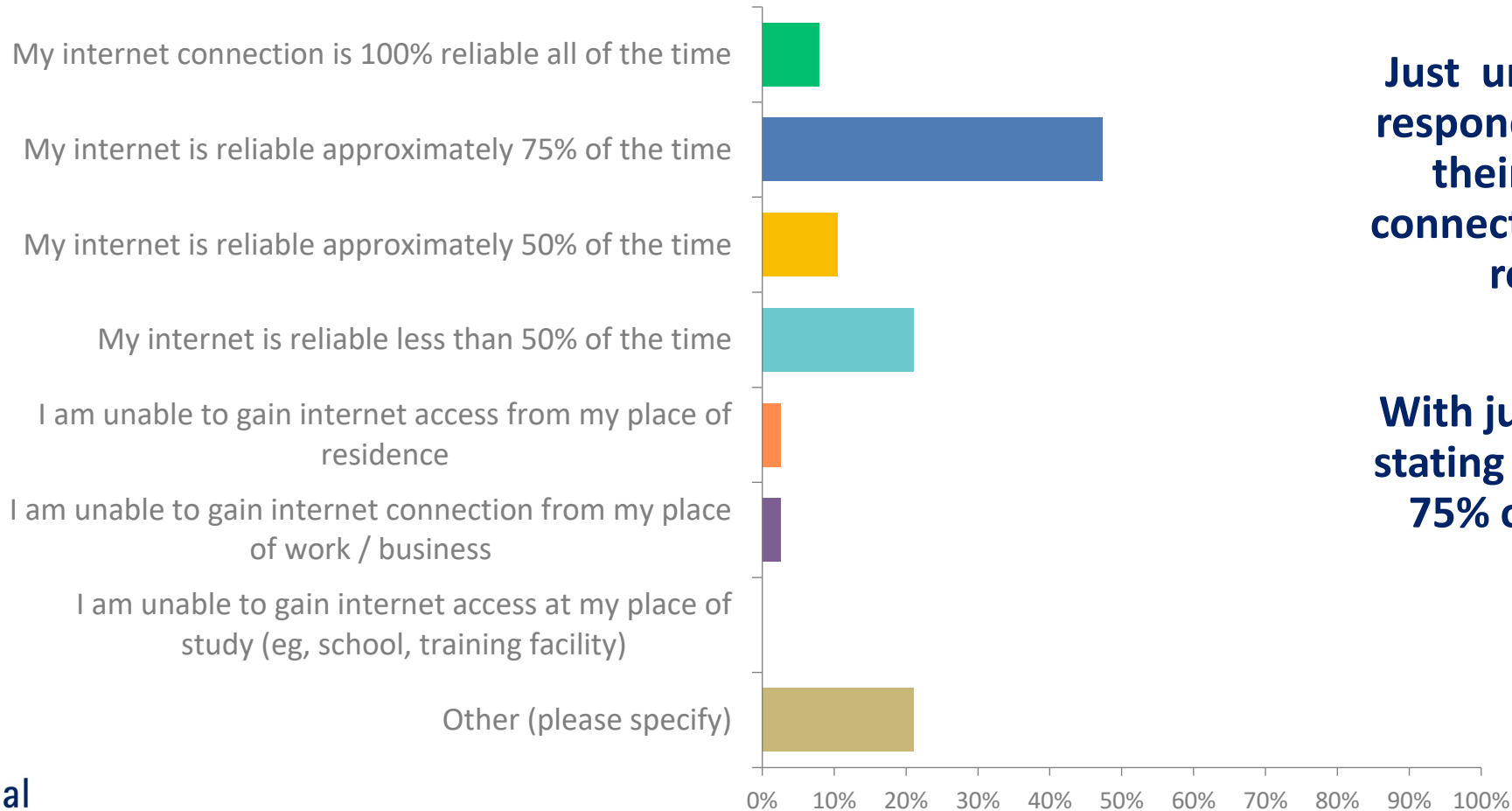
**Consumer expectations have a greater 'demand' for connectivity. Poor connectivity limits what some tourism businesses can offer (eg, on demand tv services)**



# INTERNET CONNECTIVITY



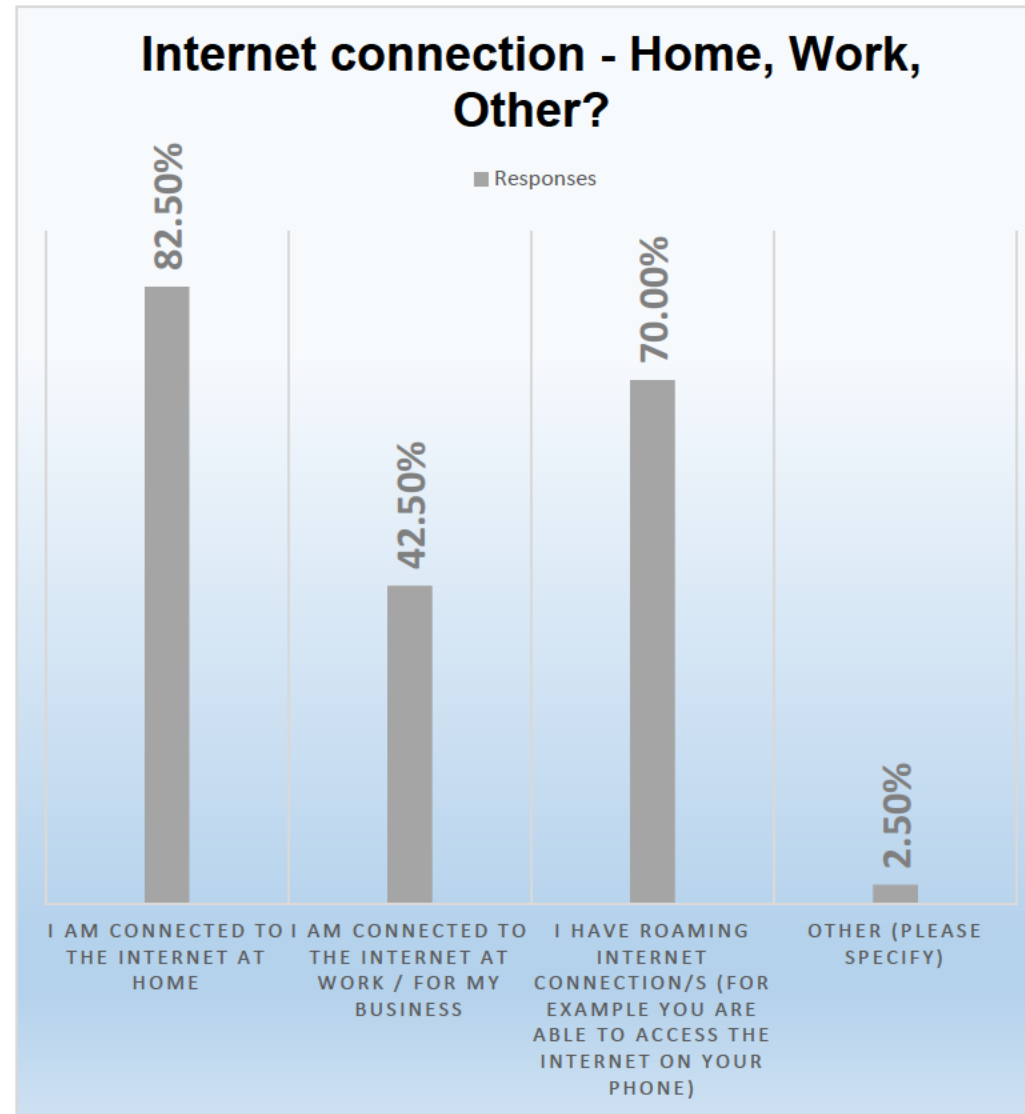
# INTERNET CONNECTIVITY - RELIABILITY



**Just under 10% of respondents stated their internet connection as 100% reliable**

**With just over 40% stating it as reliable 75% of the time**

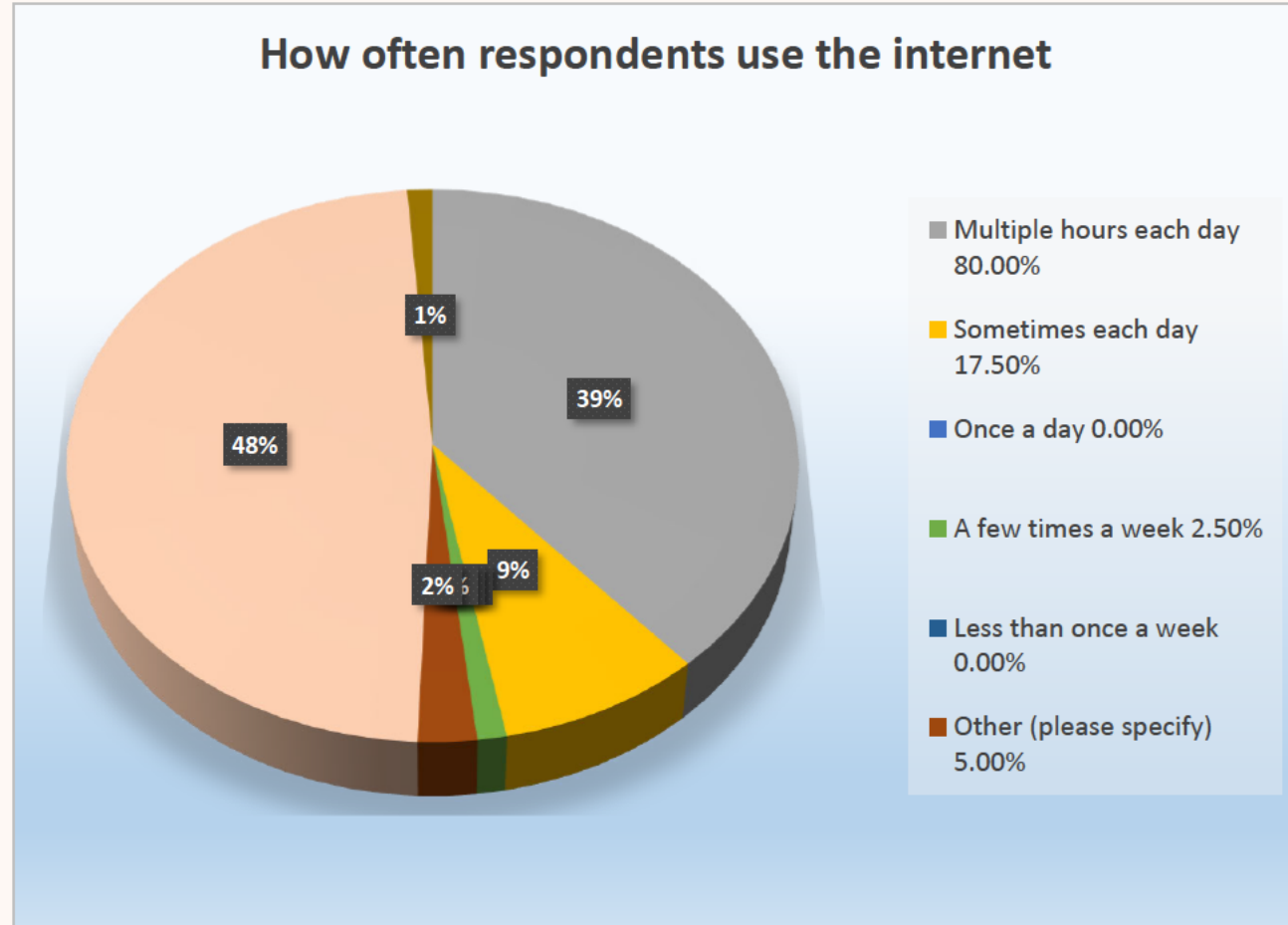
# INTERNET CONNECTION – At Home, Work, Other



Over 82% of respondents stated they were connected to the internet at home. Compared to the 2016 Census (data by region) cited at just over 75%

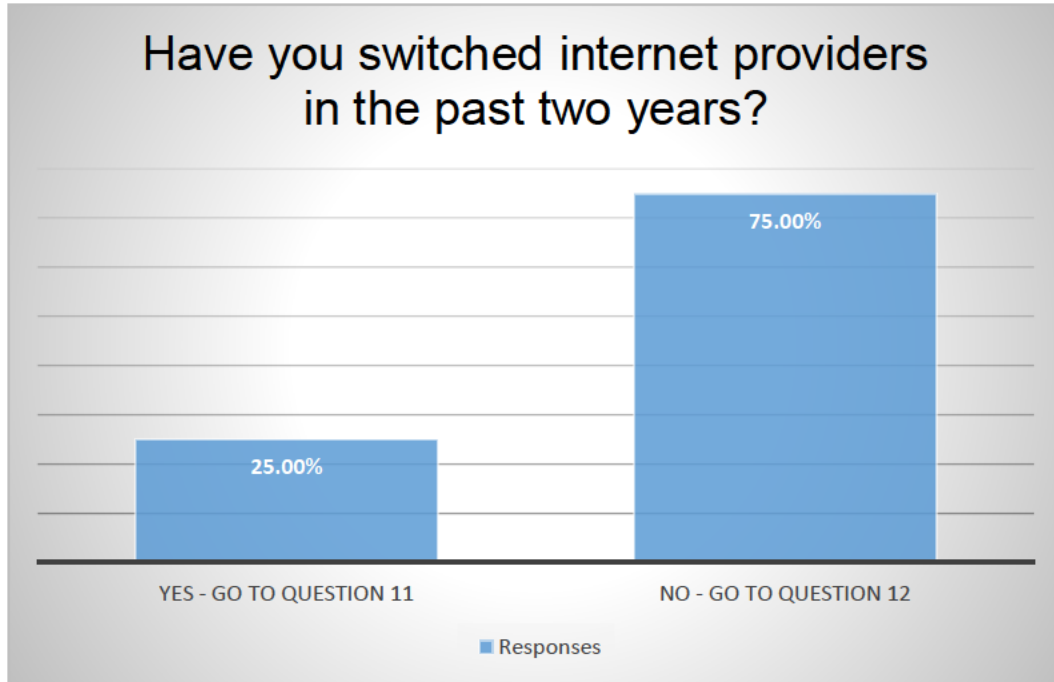
# INTERNET CONNECTIVITY - USAGE

Over 80% of respondents use their internet multiple times a day

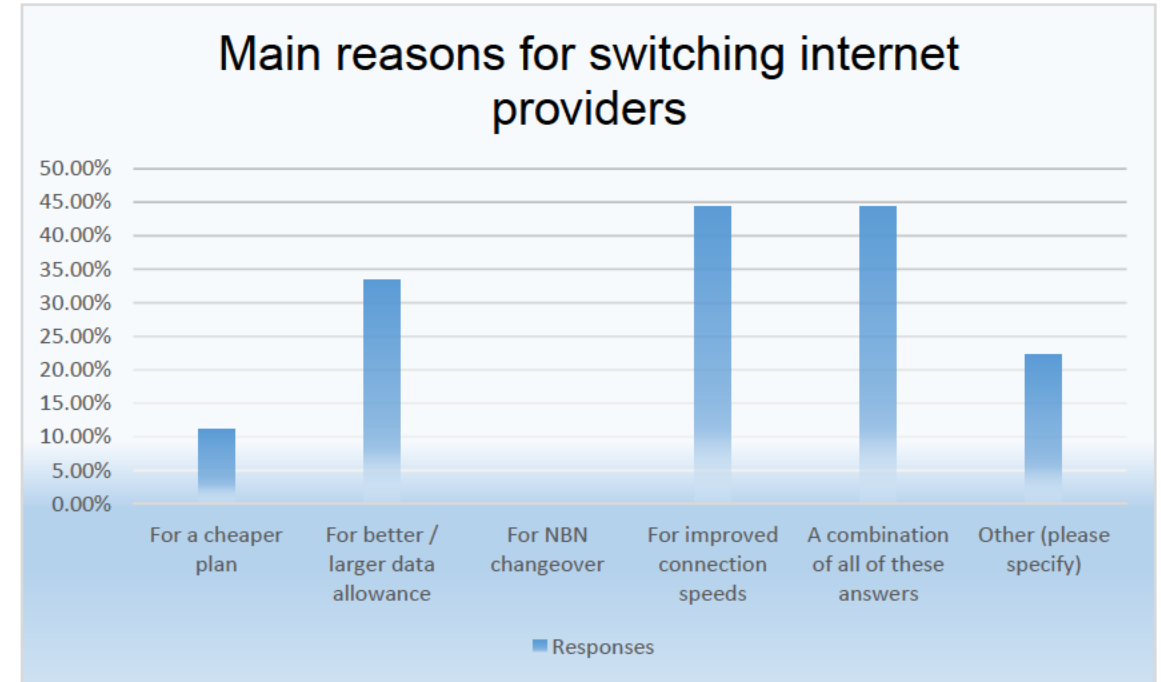




# Internet Provider related info



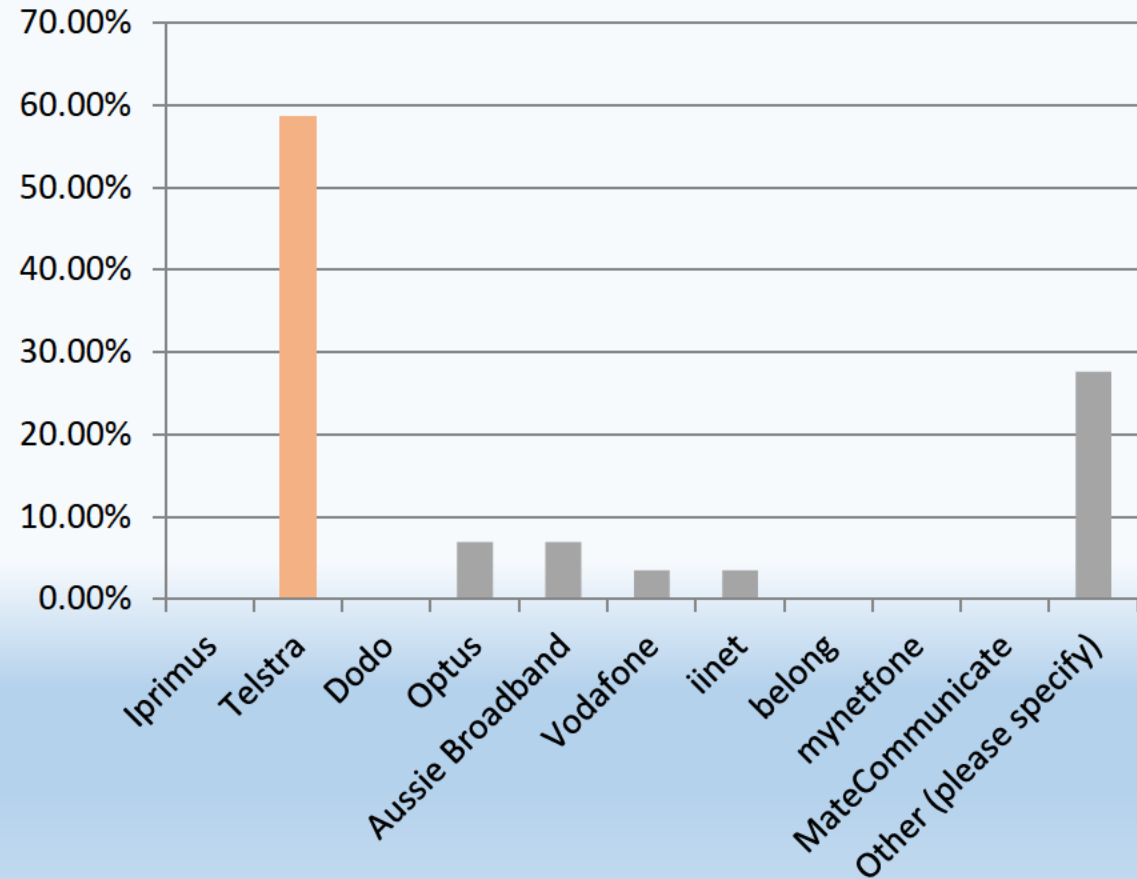
**25% of respondents changed providers in the past two years**



**Users switched providers for a variety of reasons including connection speed, seeking cheaper plans or a combination of factors**

# Internet Provider related info

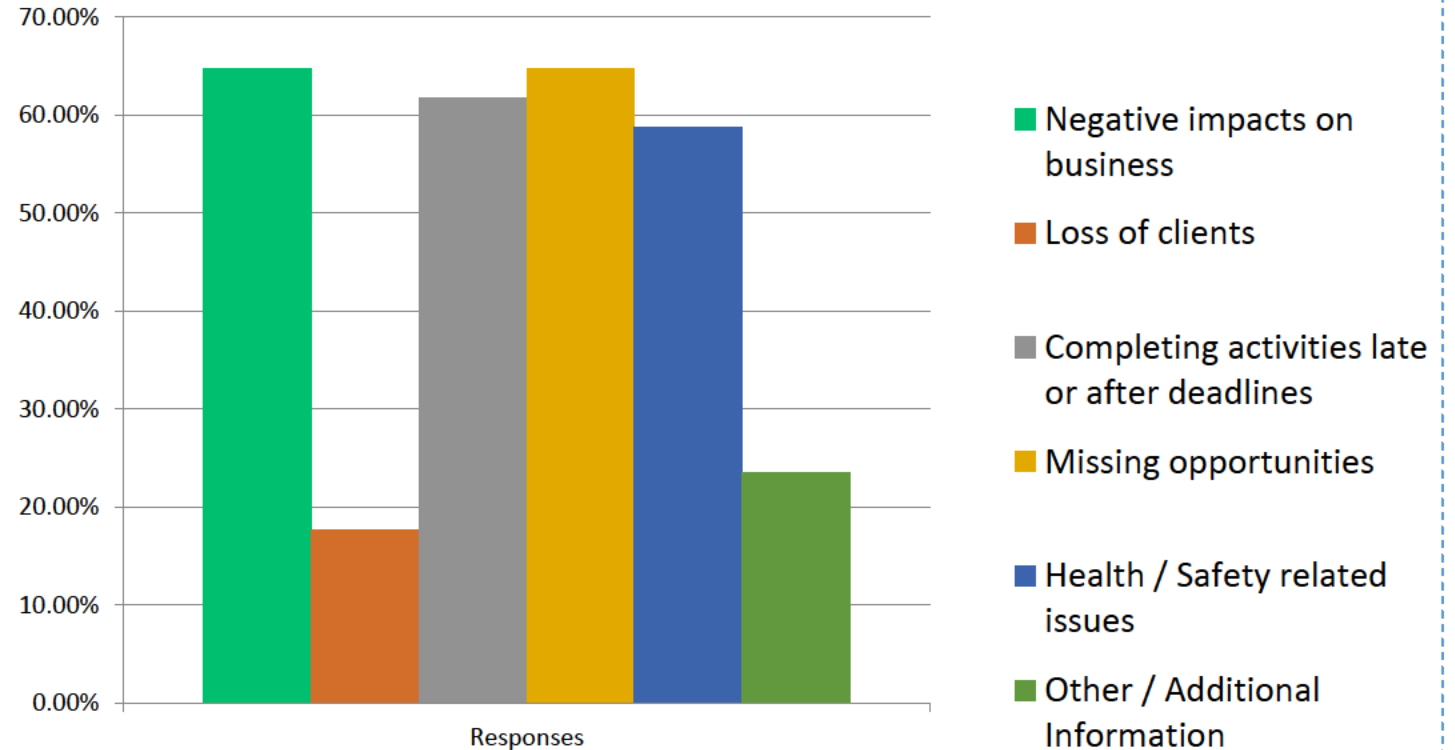
Who is your internet service provider? (you may select more than one if they are different for home / work / study / recreation)



**Telstra continues to be the provider that most of our regional users are subscribed too, at 60% in our March 2023 consultation, compared to 49% of respondents in our 2019 survey**

# Impacts & challenges of connectivity issues

What are the issues / challenges you have experienced due to internet connectivity issues?



**Impacts of internet connectivity issues range from health-related implications to loss of clients and related negative impacts upon businesses due to missing opportunities**

*Thankyou for your consideration*

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