



MEDIA RELEASE

Increased mobile coverage for Spring Ridge, Blackville, Gilgai

09 May 2019

Member for New England, Barnaby Joyce, has welcomed new small cell base stations at three locations - Spring Ridge, Blackville and Gilgai - that will improve mobile phone coverage across the electorate.

The new Telstra Small Cells in the Liverpool Plains and Inverell shires are part of the Federal Coalition Government's Round 3 Mobile Black Spot Program that has seen more than 696 active mobile stations established to improve mobile phone coverage to people living, working, and travelling in regional and remote parts of the country.

"After a community meeting at Spring Ridge in February, one of the main issues raised with me was for more mobile services and now we've got funding for new mobile infrastructure there," Mr Joyce said.

"Blackville and Gilgai will also receive a boost to their mobile services, which is part of my program of pushing for increased coverage at places like Moonan Flat, Legume, Torrington, Wellingrove Creek and Weabonga, which also received funding recently.

"I know small towns need delivery of services just like Armidale and Tamworth, and I will continue fighting for communities big and small across our electorate."

There are now 45 new and upgraded mobile base stations in the New England being delivered under the Mobile Black Spot Program.

Minister for Regional Services, Local Government and Decentralisation Bridget McKenzie said that reliable and effective mobile communications are a key driver of the enormous contribution that our regions make to Australia's economic growth.

"Greater access to mobile services in regional Australia improve the ability to keep in contact with family and friends; allows better access by farmers to online services and help local businesses grow by making these areas more attractive to tourists," Minister McKenzie said.

"Investing in mobile technology needs to be seen as just as critical as investing in traditional

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Hon **Barnaby Joyce** MP

FEDERAL MEMBER FOR NEW ENGLAND

infrastructure like roads, rail and bridges.”

The Liberal and Nationals have invested \$220 million in Rounds 1 to 4 of the program that has delivered a total of 1,047 new base stations across Australia, leveraging a total investment of more than \$760 million.

The Government has also announced the \$220 million Stronger Regional Digital Connectivity Package that includes \$160 million for two new rounds of the Mobile Black Spot Program and \$60 million for a new Regional Connectivity Program.

(ENDS)

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