



## MEDIA RELEASE

# Three new mobile base stations to be switched on in the New England Electorate

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FEDERAL Member for New England, Barnaby Joyce said new mobile base stations in the New England Electorate will be switched on by the end of June at Drake, Woolomin and Hillgrove as part of the Commonwealth Government's \$385 million Mobile Black Spot Programme.

"These new mobile base stations at Drake, Hillgrove and Woolomin will bring a much-needed boost to mobile coverage, providing benefits to emergency service operators, businesses, and residents," Mr Joyce said.

"The Coalition Government understands the importance of mobile coverage in regional and remote areas of Australia, which is why we allocated \$100 million for Round 1 of the programme and a further \$60 million for Round 2.

"Despite being in Government for six years, Labor did not spend one dollar on fixing mobile black spots in regional Australia."

He said Round 1 of the Mobile Black Spot Programme will deliver almost 500 new mobile base stations in regional and remote areas, including 28 new and upgraded base stations in the New England Electorate.

"This represents the largest one-time increase in mobile network coverage delivered by a single public funding programme in the history of mobile communications in Australia."

He said the locations of the new or upgraded base stations were selected following an extensive public consultation process which allowed residents in the New England Electorate to nominate mobile black spot locations.

Following the nominations, a competitive selection process was undertaken where mobile network operators were asked to nominate sites where they would build new or upgraded base stations to serve the black spot locations nominated by the public.

Mr Joyce said successful locations were selected in accordance with the ranking process in the Programme guidelines which were issued publicly in December 2014.

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Hon **Barnaby Joyce** MP

FEDERAL MEMBER FOR NEW ENGLAND

He said more than 6,000 locations were nominated under Round 1 of the programme, and nominations for Round 2 of the programme closed earlier this month. Round 2 will see the Commonwealth Government invest an additional \$60 million in improving mobile coverage, on top of the Commonwealth Government's \$100 million investment in Round 1.

The Commonwealth Government announced the successful locations of the 499 new base stations funded under Round 1 in June 2015, and met its commitment to have the first base stations funded under the programme switched-on by the end of 2015. The full rollout will be completed over the next three years.

The Commonwealth funding commitment of \$100 million under Round 1 (ex GST) was supplemented by funding commitments from the governments of NSW (\$24 million), Victoria (\$21 million), Queensland (\$10 million), Western Australia (\$32 million) and Tasmania (\$0.35 million), as well as around \$1.7 million from local governments, businesses and community organisations.

The new and upgraded base stations to be built under Round 1 of the Programme will provide new handheld coverage to 68,600 square kilometres and new external antenna coverage to over 150,000 square kilometres, and over 5,700 kilometres of major transport routes will receive new handheld or external antenna coverage.

A map of mobile black spot locations and the locations which will receive new or upgraded coverage under the Programme is available from <http://nationalmap.gov.au/>

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