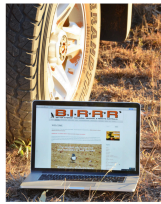




*Support, advisory & lobby group
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BIRRR MEDIA RELEASE

22nd September 2025

BIRRR: Government Response to RTIRC Review Falls Short

"Nine months for a response, but still no action."

Better Internet for Rural, Regional and Remote Australia (BIRRR) has welcomed aspects of the Government's response to the 2024 RTIRC Report, but says the lack of funding and concrete commitments leaves rural and remote Australians frustrated and disappointed.

BIRRR spokesperson Sharon Single said while the proposal for a Universal Outdoor Mobile Obligation was important, there was no clear commitment or funding for the fourteen recommendations handed down by the Committee.

"RTIRC is critical in ensuring regional voices are heard by the government when it comes to telecommunications," Mrs Single said.

"While the response contains some good news for the bush, there's been a lot left on the table. We need the government to get more ambitious when it comes to future-proofing telecommunications for regional Australia."

Mrs Single also pointed to the absence of action on emergency mobile roaming, connectivity literacy training, universal services reform and ongoing support for the Regional Tech Hub.

"Emergency roaming has now been recommended in two RTIRC reviews, has gone through a public consultation process and even an ACCC investigation. Regional Australia has endured multiple natural disasters, cyclones, floods, bushfires, yet there has been no meaningful action," she said.

Regional, rural and remote communities continue to face serious connectivity challenges every day. From ongoing issues since the 3G shutdown, to poorly managed migration processes, regular outages, and navigating confusing sales practices and provider biases.

BIRRR administrator Alana Moller said regional communities had invested significant time and effort into the RTIRC consultation process, and after nine months waiting for the Government's response, many had hoped for stronger outcomes.

"We welcome the Government's move to review the RTIRC process, but after the extensive time and effort put into submissions, and nine months since the report was handed down, the response is light on

substance. Regional communities deserve more than broad statements; they need clear commitments and practical measures to deliver real improvements,” Mrs Moller said.

She added that the RTIRC’s final recommendation for a permanent Commissioner or Advisory Panel was now more important than ever.

“A permanent regional telecommunications advisory body is long overdue, but unless it is properly resourced and empowered, regional telecommunications will remain a three-year afterthought, dependent on stop-start reviews rather than continuous accountability and transparency.” Mrs Moller said.

BIRRR said whilst the Government’s response acknowledges the issues and recommendations in principle, many of the recommendations remain under “consideration”, rather than a commitment. The response offers no dedicated funding, vague timelines, and little detail on how the recommendations will actually be delivered.

END

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