



Department of **Commerce**  
Department of **Regional Development**



# Narrowing the digital divide in regional Western Australia



## Regional Mobile Communications Project



### Remote communities better connected to Western Australia and the rest of the world

Some of Australia's most remote communities are now better connected to the rest of the world, thanks to five new mobile communication towers installed by Telstra in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands.

The towers have provided unprecedented mobile voice and internet coverage to communities in areas such as Blackstone, Warakurna, Wanarn, Jameson and Wingellina in the Western Desert.

Commerce Minister Michael Mischin said the State Government's Royalties for Regions funded Regional Mobile

Communications Project (RMCP) had increased mobile network coverage in the area by more than 9000sqkm.

"This is an especially significant achievement for the RMCP in providing vital and reliable telecommunications coverage to remote communities that have previously had very little service," he said.

"The RMCP is about connecting Western Australia's regional and remote communities, providing equitable access to telecommunications and internet, as well as improving safety

throughout the State."

Stage 1 of the RMCP is now almost complete, with more than 100 of the 113 planned towers installed and operational and Highway 1 is now experiencing almost continuous mobile coverage.

Over the next four years, the State Government will commit another \$45million through the Royalties for Regions program to expand mobile coverage in small towns and communities in Western Australia via the new Regional Telecommunications Project (RTP). This project will commence in 2015.

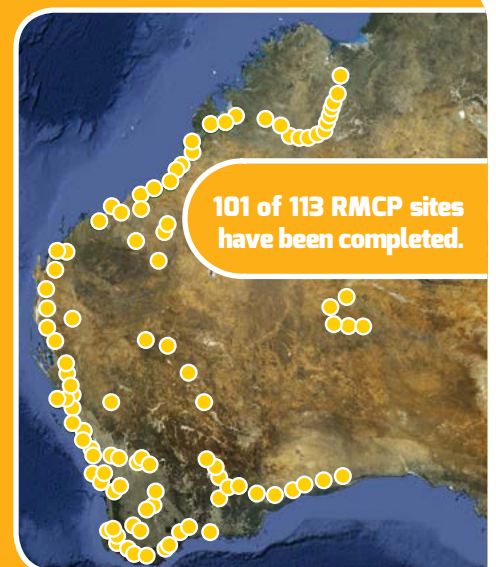
### New website

The Department of Commerce recently launched its new website. It outlines additional services and programs delivered by the Industry and Innovation, Worksafe, Consumer Protection, EnergySafety, Building Commission and Labour Relations divisions.



### State of build

101 RMCP towers are now complete, including all 21 sites allocated within the Goldfields-Esperance region. Eight of these mobile towers are now providing much needed road coverage along the major link (Ayre Hwy) from Norseman all the way to Eucla. The RMCP is expected to be completed by 30 September 2014.



# Amazing outcomes – positive improvements

## Yalgoo businesses get a boost

Yalgoo's new communications tower was installed and activated by Telstra in June this year and already local businesses are heralding the difference it is making.

Yalgoo Hotel owner Stan Willock said the new and improved coverage had made a huge difference to customers, staff and visitors. He said the tower had made the day-to-day operating of the hotel much easier and his business more connected with the local community. Recent visitors to the area had been impressed that they were now able

to easily make phone calls, send SMS and access the internet.

Commerce Minister Michael Mischin said towers like the one at Yalgoo not only ensured safer travel through improved mobile phone coverage, but also delivered "economic and social benefits to people living and operating businesses in regional communities".



**Telstra's Steve Thompson, Acting Sgt Revis Ryder, local member Vince Catania MLA, Inspector Scott Morrissey and Yalgoo Shire CEO Silvio Brenzi test the new Yalgoo mobile phone service.**

# Technical ideas and news – keeping you connected

## Cracking down on illegal devices

Communities all over Western Australia are now experiencing greater, more reliable mobile phone coverage and fast broadband, however, people using illegal mobile repeater devices are causing coverage dropouts in some regional areas.

The devices are designed to replicate and improve mobile signal but when used without appropriate licences and permissions, they can actually interfere with mobile coverage in surrounding areas.

Telstra is getting the message out that people using these devices are breaking the law and compromising the safety of others.

Telstra's Area General Manager, Boyd Brown says that the illegal use of

mobile repeaters had been known to knock out coverage to an entire area.

"People use these devices to improve their own mobile signal, however they often don't realise that they're interfering with the mobile coverage for the wider community," Mr Brown said. "A lot of the time, they're unaware what they're doing is illegal.

"While some people in an area might not notice a change, often those towards the edge of a coverage area will notice they don't have coverage where they once did, which may also impact on their ability to make emergency calls.

"Obviously there could be very serious consequences and anyone

illegally using mobile phone repeaters needs to be aware it is breaking the law with severe penalties."

Mr Brown said there had been numerous instances of illegal repeaters being found in Western Australia as a result of customer complaints, with more than 50 illegal repeaters located in the last 18 months.

If you would like to learn how to legally achieve maximum indoor mobile coverage that is safe and does not cause interference to other network users, click here



**Contact us** - If you would like more information on the RMCP and how it will benefit you, your community or business, visit: [www.commerce.wa.gov.au/digitaleconomyRMCP](http://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/digitaleconomyRMCP)

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