



## **THE HON PAUL FLETCHER MP**

Minister for Communications, Urban Infrastructure, Cities and the Arts

## **THE HON MARK COULTON MP**

Minister for Regional Health, Regional Communications and Local Government

### **MEDIA RELEASE**

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#### **Investing in rural and remote voice services**

The Morrison Government today announced NBN Co, Concerotel and Zetifi as the first three grant recipients under its competitive \$2 million Alternative Voice Services Trials (AVST) Program.

Minister for Communications, Urban Infrastructure, Cities and the Arts, the Hon Paul Fletcher MP, said that the trials aim to find better ways of delivering voice services for the future.

“The trials are a great opportunity for new players to demonstrate new ways to provide better voice services, more in line with changing consumer needs particularly for greater mobility,” Minister Fletcher said.

“I’m particularly pleased to see two small, innovative companies – Concerotel and Zetifi – in this first tranche of grants.”

NBN Co will deliver up to 260 trial voice services across Australia, including across its fixed wireless and satellite networks, as well as trialling a low band fixed wireless solution.

Concerotel will deliver up to 200 trial voice services in the Cocos (Keeling) Islands and Norfolk Island, providing better VOIP services to mobile phones reliant on satellite links.

Zetifi will deliver up to 50 trial voice services to provide improved Wi-Fi calling for farms in rural and remote areas of New South Wales and northern Victoria that currently experience poor mobile coverage.

Minister for Regional Health, Regional Communications and Local Government, the Hon Mark Coulton MP is encouraging rural and remote Australians to consider taking part in the trials.

“These trials are about identifying new options to deliver voice calls in remote areas, so it’s important that the new technology is tested across a range of localities,” Minister Coulton said.

“Ensuring that rural Australians have access to robust and resilient phone services is a priority for the Federal Government, which is why we are funding these trials to test what will and won’t work for remote communities.”

Some trials will include antennas or battery back up at homes, which is, intended to provide a more robust service with better in-home call quality.

Regional and remote consumers should be assured that their existing fixed voice services, such as a copper or high capacity radio concentrator service, will remain connected until there are robust and proven alternatives.

The grantees will ramp up recruitment of participants for the trials in the coming months so those consumers interested in participating in the trials should stay tuned for details.

The Government is also finalising grant agreements with other shortlisted applicants and expects to make further announcements about other successful projects shortly.

More information, including how consumers can register their interest to participate in the trials, is available on the [Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications website](#).

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