



MEDIA RELEASE

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Extension gives hundreds more access to free mobile phone boosters

Imagine the stress of not being sure you will have a mobile phone service in times of emergency or accidents or when you want to speak to loved ones.

That's the reality for many people in the Alpine, Indigo and Towong Shires whether they live in towns or more remotely.

Now a program that provides free mobile phone boosters has been extended until March next year, giving up to 800 households the opportunity to improve mobile phone reception at their home.

Roz Michelini who lives just 8km from Myrtleford said having mobile coverage has saved her a lot of concern.

"We didn't have any mobile coverage at our place. Since the booster was installed it's removed so much stress. Beforehand I was completely isolated if not in the house. It's also saved me time," Roz said.

Jack Holden, who lives in the Indigo Valley has also benefited from Community Business Connect's (CBC) Rural Connectivity for Recovery and Resilience Project (the Connectivity program), which received \$2.3 million funding from the Australian Government.

"Up to 2020 we had full mobile signal here at the house. In 2021 it dropped to nothing," Mr Holden said.

"We couldn't do online banking from home or consistently send emails.

"Getting this booster was a very easy process to be part of and it's made a huge change. My wife can contact her mother who is 90 and speaks to her everyday. She was always set up to go in case of emergency and the phone makes a difference. She can relax a bit knowing the service is reliable."

If you live in Indigo, Alpine or Towong Shires and are missing out on communication from family or friends or having difficulty with online services including banking, you can register to be included in this program at www.cbconnect.com.au/rcrr

Dan Fewster, Technology Manager with CBC said a pilot project in the Nariel Valley in 2021 had produced good results for many people who had been dealing with the daily frustration of not having mobile reception at home.



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“Community Business Connect, a social enterprise created by AgBiz Assist, based in north east Victoria was established with the express purpose of helping regional communities navigate technology challenges for social and business benefit. So, this project is a perfect fit and results from the pilot project showed us just how much good mobile phone reception can affect people’s lives,” Mr Fewster said.

Installations for the Connectivity program started in February 2023 with 200 boosters installed so far. A further 300 people have registered. The program can fund the installation of up to 800 boosters.

The program also includes an educational component, conducted over the phone which provides information about what the boosters can do and how to best maximise the benefit. It also guides users on their communications options in the event of an emergency.

Ends

For more information contact: Dan Fewster, Technology Manager on 1300 844 420 or view more details about the Connectivity project on our website: www.cbconnect.com.au/rcrr