Regional Internet Access Survey, 2016

Better Internet for Rural, Regional and Remote Australia
About BIRRR

• Created 22/10/14 by Kylie & Kristy
• Result of personal frustration with own bush internet services.
• Volunteer group grown to almost 7000
• Use social media and hashtags #fixbushinternet & #datadrought
• Website resource created 22/10/15
• Helped troubleshoot over 1000 cases
• Guided many more through the bush telecommunications ‘jungle’
• Try to work with all interested parties - nbn co, providers, users, industry groups and government.

The BIRRR FB Group now has 7000 members & the website has had 19,000 visits.

BIRRR has 4 admin – Kylie, Kristy, Amanda & Kristen & a team of support volunteers.
The Regional Internet Access Survey

• ABOUT THE SURVEY:
  - Illustrate the real-world state of internet in RRR areas
  - Seeks to provide data to lobby for better bush connectivity

• WHY INTERNET ACCESS IS IMPORTANT:
  - It's an essential part of everyday life – business, health, education, social connectivity
  - Equitable access to the internet is needed for regional Australia to grow and prosper

• WHAT DID YOU EXPECT COME OUT OF THE SURVEY:
  - Real world statistics, illustrating the #datadrought and a range of other issues impacting bush telecommunications
The Responses

• Asked specifically about data use, cost, speed and reliability of broadband and satellite

• Distributed to nearly 6000 members of BIRRR

• 1832 people attempted to respond to the survey

• The survey found that rural and remote Australians:

  Are severely disadvantaged in terms of access, speeds, cost and reliability of their internet connections, whether they be via mobile broadband or via satellite
Technology

**Rural and remote** Australians typically have access to only **mobile broadband** or **satellite** for their internet services.

![Figure 2: Primary Source of Internet Connection (N=917)](image)

![Figure 1: Map of participant supplied addressees for Mobile Broadband and Satellite internet connection from BIRRR, Regional Access Survey](image)
How its used

How RRR People Use the Internet
Regional Internet Access Survey Results, 2016

- Personal/Social: 24%
- Education: 23%
- Health: 14%
- Streaming: 8%
- Gaming: 3%
- Business: 28%
Speed

- 74% of mobile broadband users (Fig 11, p21)
- 89% of satellite users (Fig 18, p 30) have download speeds under 5Mbps
Usage

- 63% of respondents are shaped more than 6 times per year
- Over 40% being shaped every single month.

(Table 11 p 19 for mobile, Table 23, p 29 for satellite)

“Unable to check internet speed as currently shaped due to having used our data limit in first 2 weeks of monthly cycle.”

(Eganu, WA)

My internet has been shaped for the past 5 months as we have apparently gone over our 20GB allocation …data is always gone within 3-7 days of the start of the month…”

(Kellerberrin, WA)
Satellite broadband costs an average of $15.96 per GB, with some consumers paying up to $70 per GB

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Telstra Broadband Satellite</th>
<th>1GB</th>
<th>2GB</th>
<th>5GB</th>
<th>10GB</th>
<th>20GB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monthly fee (24 month plan)</td>
<td>$69</td>
<td>$119</td>
<td>$249</td>
<td>$399</td>
<td>$599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly data allowance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1GB (5.9c/MB)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2GB (5.95c/MB)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5GB (4.98c/MB)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10GB (3.99c/MB)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20GB (2.99c/MB)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed* (Download / upload)</td>
<td>Up to 512/256kbps</td>
<td>Up to 1Mbps/256kbps</td>
<td>Up to 3Mbps/512kbps</td>
<td>Up to 6Mbps/1Mbps</td>
<td>Up to 6Mbps/1Mbps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum cost over 24 months (based on the monthly fee of your broadband plan and includes $2,490 for hardware and urban standard installation)</td>
<td>$4,146</td>
<td>$5,346</td>
<td>$8,466</td>
<td>$12,066</td>
<td>$16,666</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Additional Costs

- 72% of mobile broadband users had to purchase extra equipment at their own cost (Fig 10, p19) usually between $1000 - $2000 (Fig 20, p33)
88% of RRR respondents stated current data limits did not meet their needs.

A recent Facebook poll shows ongoing concerns about data limits, even after Sky Muster launch.
Mobile

- 73% of respondents did not get reliable mobile phone coverage at their home/business
Access

- 41% said their address would not register on the NBN database (Fig 21, p 35)
Options

- 65% of people not confident that they are aware of their NBN option (Fig 23, page 40)
Support

BIRRR page inundated each week with #DataDrought stories

- **EDUCATION**: Children doing school work in cars, tertiary students unable to study externally, families being geographically split so children can continue school, children being sent to boarding school very young

- **BUSINESS**: Setting up remote office in town, businesses failing due to #DataDrought, missing out on innovation opportunities

- **HEALTH**: Travelling 8 hours to attend 10 minute appointment, inability to access support networks and therapy opportunities, emergency situations (accident, fire, flood etc)

- **SOCIAL**: Inability to reach out to support networks, sense of heightened isolation from community.

- Some families unable to get connected at all

X FAMILIES BEING FORCED TO LEAVE THE BUSH
Solutions

- INDEPENDENT TELECOMMUNICATIONS ADVISORY BODY
  (we’d like BIRRR to become redundant!)

- BETTER CUSTOMER SERVICE: through specialist RRR call centres (including nbn and Telstra) to DIRECTLY handle internet-related activities in Australia (especially for connections).

- An ESTABLISHED UNIVERSAL SERVICE GUARANTEE for regional Australians

- HIGHER PEAK DATA limits: significantly better than the 75GB (nbn Sky Muster satellite) are needed to cater for the fact that most rural and regional customers have ONE connection that must service BUSINESS, EDUCATION, HEALTH, SOCIAL and RECREATION needs.

- EQUITABLE DATA COSTS

- Urgent increase in MOBILE BLACK SPOT funding
Questions