

# MEDIA RELEASE



The Hon **David Hawker** MP  
Federal Member for Wannon



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## WESTERN VICTORIANS CANNOT TRUST LABOR WITH TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Labor's appalling track record means it simply cannot be trusted to deliver better telecommunications outcomes for Western Victorians, Federal Member for Wannon David Hawker said today in response to Labor's plans to shut down Telstra's national fixed line copper network.

"Labor is planning to shut down Telstra's fixed line copper network, yet cannot explain how Western Victorians in rural and regional areas will continue to receive fixed line, including telephone, services in this event," Mr Hawker said.

"Stephen Conroy is guaranteeing that everyone who currently receives a fixed line service will continue to do so, but he cannot explain how."

Mr Hawker said Labor's NBN will provide fixed line fibre services to 90 per cent of the population, but unfortunately for Western Victorians many of our small towns and rural areas make up the 10 per cent who miss out.

"There is no evidence whatsoever that Labor's radical plans to force the structural separation of Telstra or ban it from acquiring additional spectrum to upgrade its mobile network will deliver better outcomes for rural and regional residents and businesses," he said.

"Telstra's scale and capacity as a national, vertically integrated incumbent enables it to support the provision of services in the many uneconomic areas of rural and regional Australia where other providers choose not to invest.

"The company's Next G mobile network provides by far the broadest geographical coverage of any network and starving Telstra of spectrum will mean many Western Victorians will be deprived of faster and higher capacity services."

Since coming to office the Rudd Government has already:

- Abolished the \$2.4 billion Communications Fund, established by the Coalition for telecommunications upgrades in rural and regional Australia.
- Cancelled the \$2 billion OPEL project which would have seen fast and affordable broadband services delivered throughout Western Victoria this year.
- And is winding back the Australian Broadband Guarantee program which provides subsidised services for Western Victorians living in under served areas.

"This Government already has a dreadful track record and should not be believed when it says it is acting in the best interests of rural and regional Australia," Mr Hawker said.

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