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For immediate release

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Approved by: Cr Bill West, Chair of Centroc and Mayor of Cowra Shire Council

Centroc welcomes State mobile black spot funding

Central NSW Councils have welcomed the announcement by newly appointed Regional Development Minister John Barilaro this week that \$25 million will be allocated over four years to eliminate some of the state's worst mobile phone black spots in regional NSW.

Centroc have strongly advocated for NSW to leverage the Federal Mobile Blackspot Program.

"This is great news. Central NSW has many blackspots due to the hilly terrain long distances" said Cr Bill West, Mayor of Centroc.

"The Mayors of this region were concerned that other states such as Victoria were leveraging the program and would therefore get more activity," said Cr West. "Centroc welcomes the State Government's commitment and will seek assurances that a reasonable proportion of the funding will be allocated to Central Western NSW mobile blackspots."

The Centroc Board will meet with the Minister in Sydney this month to discuss how the region might assist the State Government ensure mobile network infrastructure providers and operators address priority mobile black spot zones.

"Reliable mobile coverage is an issue of critical importance to the economic development, sustainability and safety of all regional communities," said Cr West. "The State Government's commitment of \$25 million dollars in mobile blackspot investment across regional NSW is strongly supported and welcomed by Central NSW Council members."

Mr Barilaro said the program, a partnership between the NSW Government, the Commonwealth and multiple telecommunication carriers, will improve coverage along major transport routes, in small communities and in locations prone to experiencing natural disasters, as well as addressing unique mobile coverage problems.

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“In the election we promised regional NSW would not have to worry about the stress and hassle associated with mobile black spots, which are costly and inefficient,” said Mr Barilaro. “Under the agreement the NSW Government will work closely with the Commonwealth Government and the carriers to ensure more of our regional communities enjoy better mobile phone access.”

The Commonwealth has also committed \$100 million (GST exclusive) over four years to the delivery of the Mobile Black Spot Programme and is expected to announce the successful funding recipients and locations in June 2015.

Ends.

For media enquiry: For comment please contact Bill West 0429 990 085