

**41ST PARLIAMENT**



## **Report 44**

# **STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

*Inquiry into regional telecommunications in Western Australia*

---

Presented by  
Hon Pierre Yang MLC (Chair)  
October 2024

## **Standing Committee on Public Administration**

### **Members as at the time of this inquiry:**

Hon Pierre Yang MLC (Chair)

Hon Darren West MLC

Hon Wilson Tucker MLC

Hon Colin de Grussa MLC (Deputy Chair)

Hon Sandra Carr MLC

### **Staff as at the time of this inquiry:**

Stephen Brockway (Advisory Officer)

Emily Briggs (Committee Clerk)

### **Address:**

Parliament House

4 Harvest Terrace, West Perth WA 6005

Telephone: 08 9222 7300

Email: [lcco@parliament.wa.gov.au](mailto:lcco@parliament.wa.gov.au)

Website: [www.parliament.wa.gov.au](http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au)

**ISBN 978-1-923220-06-5**



# CONTENTS

---

- 1 Conduct of the inquiry** ..... 1
- 2 Cessation of the inquiry** ..... 1
  - Extent of inquiry..... 1
  - Commonwealth inquiry ..... 2
- Appendix 1 Submissions received** ..... 4
- Appendix 2 Public hearings** ..... 7

# 1 Conduct of the inquiry

- 1.1 On 20 March 2024, the Standing Committee on Public Administration (Committee) resolved to establish an inquiry (the inquiry) into regional telecommunications in Western Australia.
- 1.2 The terms of reference for the inquiry were set out in the Committee Report 42, *Terms of Reference: Inquiry into regional telecommunications in Western Australia*. They are:

to inquire into and report on issues impacting regional telecommunications in Western Australia<sup>1</sup>
- 1.3 The Committee resolved on 20 March 2024 that, given the shortened timeframe for the inquiry, it would not seek public submissions, and would not advertise the inquiry via newspapers or social media. Instead, the Committee wrote to selected stakeholders on 4 April 2024, inviting them to make a written submission.
- 1.4 47 submissions were received. A list of them may be found at Appendix 1 to this report. The submissions that were made public by the Committee may be found on the Committee's webpage.<sup>2</sup>
- 1.5 Due to time constraints, the Committee resolved to hold hearings with telecommunication companies, agencies and power providers only. The Committee relied on written submissions for evidence from individuals and local governments about on-the-ground user issues. Fifteen hearings were held (see Appendix 2), and the transcripts of those hearings, together with broadcast video footage of them, are on the Committee's webpage.
- 1.6 Over the same period, the Committee was conducting its inquiry into innovation in Western Australia, which commenced on 29 November 2023. That inquiry was completed with the tabling of its report, *Breaking new ground: innovation in Western Australia* on 10 September 2024.<sup>3</sup>
- 1.7 On 25 September 2024, the Committee resolved that progress of the inquiry be ceased at that stage, with the intention of recommending that the members of the Standing Committee on Public Administration of the 42nd Parliament consider continuing the inquiry.

# 2 Cessation of the inquiry

- 2.1 The decision to cease the inquiry was made by the Committee on 2 grounds:
  - more time was needed than is available to complete a comprehensive inquiry
  - a Commonwealth Review of regional telecommunications is underway which will not be completed until after the Western Australian Parliament is scheduled to prorogue.

## Extent of inquiry

- 2.2 Consideration of all the evidence received up to this point made it clear to the Committee that, to complete a comprehensive inquiry into regional telecommunications in Western Australia, the views and experiences of a greater number of individuals and small businesses needs to be considered. Local governments provided important evidence to the Committee,

---

<sup>1</sup> Standing Committee on Public Administration, report 42, *Terms of Reference: Inquiry into regional telecommunications in Western Australia*, Western Australia, Legislative Council, March 2024.

<sup>2</sup> Standing Committee on Public Administration, *Inquiry into regional telecommunications in Western Australia*, accessed 17 October 2024.

<sup>3</sup> Standing Committee on Public Administration, report 43, *Breaking new ground: innovation in Western Australia*, Western Australia, Legislative Council, September 2024.

which showed that the Committee needs to hear from more witnesses. More people need to be given an opportunity to be heard.

- 2.3 Further, the Committee received some limited examples of problems created by telecommunications shortfalls from different representatives of the emergency services — the WA Police and WA Police Union, the WA Country Health Service, St John WA and the Department of Fire and Emergency Services. Given some of the concerning issues revealed in the submissions and hearings, the Committee believes that the taking of more detailed evidence from the individuals involved in those organisations is warranted.

## Commonwealth inquiry

- 2.4 Every three years, the Regional Telecommunications Independent Review Committee (RTIRC) examines the adequacy of regional telecommunications, consulting publicly, including with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The Committee is established by section 158R of the *Telecommunications (Consumer Protection and Service Standards) Act 1999* (Cth). The Review is ‘an opportunity for Australians living and working in rural, regional and remote communities to share their views and experiences using telecommunications services.’<sup>4</sup>

- 2.5 RTIRC has begun its 2024 Review. It is chaired by the former Western Australia Minister for Regional Development, Agriculture and Food, Hon Alannah MacTiernan. Its terms of reference can be found on its website.<sup>5</sup> It is looking into the ‘barriers that may mean people in regional, rural and remote parts of Australia do not have equitable access to telecommunications services as compared to services available within urban areas.’ Moreover:

The Committee will also consider the unique needs of First Nations’ communities, the effectiveness of existing Government investment programs, the potential of emerging technologies, the Universal Services Obligations, and the suitability of telecommunications during emergency situations.<sup>6</sup>

- 2.6 Public consultation began in April this year, and visits to Broome and Kununurra took place in August 2024. Its final report is due to be presented to Government by December 2024. It is therefore anticipated that the final report will be published after the 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament of Western Australia has concluded, pending the election in March 2025.
- 2.7 The Committee believes that the findings and recommendations of that Review, in the Western Australian context, will be of high value to this inquiry.
- 2.8 Given that the 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament will shortly be coming to an end, there is insufficient time for the further taking of evidence and the drafting of a report to the House. It is also not possible for the Committee to consider the findings and recommendations of the RTRIC Review.
- 2.9 The Committee recommends that the Standing Committee on Public Administration of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament consider continuing this inquiry. In doing so, it may wish to consider:
- advertising the inquiry more widely, seeking submissions from individuals, small businesses and emergency service personnel in particular

---

<sup>4</sup> Regional Telecommunications Review Committee, [2024 Regional Telecommunications Review kicks off](#), Regional Telecommunications Review, accessed 17 October 2024.

<sup>5</sup> Regional Telecommunications Review Committee, <https://www.rtrc.gov.au/terms-reference>, accessed 17 October 2024.

<sup>6</sup> Regional Telecommunications Review Committee, [2024 Regional Telecommunications Review kicks off](#), Regional Telecommunications Review, accessed 17 October 2024.

- holding some regional community forums across the State, to hear from local people as to how they are affected
- the contents of the RTRIC Review as it applies to Western Australia.

## RECOMMENDATION 1

The Standing Committee on Public Administration of the 42nd Parliament of Western Australia consider continuing the inquiry into regional telecommunications.

2.10 Telecommunications is a Federal matter. Therefore, in the meantime, and in order to ensure that full use of the evidence acquired thus far may be of maximum benefit, the Committee will write to Hon Alannah MacTiernan drawing her attention to the inquiry and inviting her to consider that evidence for the purposes of her Committee's Review.



Hon Pierre Yang MLC  
**Chair**

## APPENDIX 1

---

### SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED

Number	From
1	Nannup Music Club
2	Private Citizen
3	Shire of Broome
4	Private Citizen
5	Shire of Ashburton
6	City of Greater Geraldton
7	Shire of West Arthur
8	Private Citizen
9	CRISP Wireless
10	Shire of Boddington
11	City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder
12	Shire of Murray
13	Shire of Waroona
14	Shire of Manjimup Bush Fire Advisory Committee
15	WA Police Union
16	NBN Co
17	Shire of Kent
18	Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes
19	Shire of Derby/West Kimberley
20	North Eastern Wheatbelt Regional Organisation of Councils (NEWROC)
21	Shire of Esperance

Number	From
22	Isolated Children's Parents' Association of WA Inc.
23	Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN)
24	Shire of Mundaring
25	TPG Telecom
26	OneWiFi and Infrastructure
27	Shire of Victoria Plains
28	Optus
29	Shire of Pingelly
30	Amplitel
31	Private
32	Horizon Power
33	Private Citizen
34	Shire of Narembeen
35	RRR Network
36	AMTA Ltd
37	Small Business Development Corporation (SBDC)
38	WA Country Health Service (WACHS)
39	Western Power
40	Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA)
41	Hon Stephen Dawson MLC, Minister for Emergency Services; Innovation and the Digital Economy; Science; Medical Research
42	Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD)
43	Telstra
44	Field Solutions
45	AEMO



Number	From
46	WA Police Force
47	St John WA

## APPENDIX 2

### PUBLIC HEARINGS

Date	Participants
10 June 2024	Horizon Power <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cameron Parrotte, Executive General manager, Engineering and Project Delivery</li></ul>
12 June 2024	OneWiFi and Infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mevan Jayatilleke, Director</li></ul> Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Louise Hyland, Chief Executive Officer</li><li>• Matt Evans, Consultant, Mobile Carriers Forum</li></ul> CRISP Wireless <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Leigh Ballard, Chief Executive Officer</li></ul>
17 June 2024	Western Power <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sam Barbaro, Chief Executive Officer</li><li>• Gair Landsborough, Executive Manager, Asset Management</li></ul> NBN Co <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rachael McIntyre, Executive General Manager, Stakeholder Relations</li><li>• Naomi Evans, Head of NBN Local WA</li></ul> TPG Telecom <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Trent Czinner, Group Executive, Legal and External Affairs, Company Secretary</li><li>• Ross Mitchell, Head of Government Relations</li><li>• Louie Liu, Head of Industry Strategy</li><li>• Alexander Osborne, Head of Regulatory</li></ul>

Date	Participants
19 June 2024	<p>Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eamonn McCabe, Executive Director, Regional Business Development</li> <li>• Penny Griffin, Regional Telecommunications</li> <li>• Paul Tzaikos, Manager, Regional Business Solutions</li> </ul> <p>Western Australian Police Union</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paul Gale, President</li> <li>• Kevin McDonald, Field Officer</li> <li>• Matthew Payne, Research Officer</li> </ul> <p>Amplitel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mat Jones, Chief Operations Officer</li> <li>• Amanda Morrison, Stakeholder Engagement Manager</li> <li>• Jane Pollard, General Manager Property</li> </ul>
28 June 2024	<p>WA Country Health Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• James Thomas, Executive Director, Business Services</li> <li>• Melanie Goode, Director, Command Centre</li> <li>• Amy Collins, Acting Director, Digital and Data Innovation</li> </ul> <p>Telstra</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boyd Brown, Regional General Manager</li> <li>• Bronwyn Clere, Executive, InfraCo Operations and Asset Management</li> <li>• Channa Seneviratne, Executive, Technology Development and Innovation</li> <li>• Gerard Tracey, Principal Engineer, E2E Service Performance and Resilience</li> <li>• Lisa McTiernan, Government Relations Manager</li> </ul> <p>Department of Fire and Emergency Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patrick Leach, Corporate Services Command</li> <li>• Paul Carr, Chief Superintendent, Country Operations</li> </ul> <p>Field Solutions Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stephen Mason, Manager, Government and Business Relations</li> <li>• Vin Mullins, Group Executive Government, Partner, Engineering and Infrastructure</li> </ul>

Date	Participants
4 July 2024	Western Australia Police Force <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="571 309 948 338">• Jodie Pearson, Commander</li><li data-bbox="571 360 1098 389">• Stephen Thompson, Acting Commander</li><li data-bbox="571 412 1267 441">• Phillip Manna, Assistant Director, Technology Portfolio</li></ul>

## Standing Committee on Public Administration

### Date first appointed:

17 August 2005

### Terms of Reference:

The following is an extract from Schedule 1 of the Legislative Council Standing Orders:

#### '5. Public Administration Committee

5.1 A *Public Administration Committee* is established.

5.2 The Committee consists of 5 Members.

5.3 The functions of the Committee are to —

- (a) inquire into and report on —
  - (i) the structure, efficiency and effectiveness of the system of public administration;
  - (ii) the extent to which the principles of procedural fairness are embodied in any practice or procedure applied in decision making;
  - (iii) the existence, adequacy, or availability, of merit and judicial review of administrative acts or decisions; and
  - (iv) any Bill or other matter relating to the foregoing functions referred by the Council;

and

- (b) consult regularly with the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations, the Public Sector Commissioner, the Information Commissioner, the Inspector of Custodial Services, and any similar officer.

5.4 The Committee is not to make inquiry with respect to —

- (a) the constitution, function or operations of the Executive Council;
- (b) the Governor's Establishment;
- (c) the constitution and administration of Parliament;
- (d) the judiciary;
- (e) a decision made by a person acting judicially;
- (f) a decision made by a person to exercise, or not exercise, a power of arrest or detention; or
- (g) the merits of a particular case or grievance that is not received as a petition.'



---

Parliament House,  
4 Harvest Terrace, West Perth WA 6005  
Telephone: +61 8 9222 7300  
Email: [lcco@parliament.wa.gov.au](mailto:lcco@parliament.wa.gov.au)  
Website: <http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au>