

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY**

**WRITTEN QUESTION**

Mr Guyula to the Minister for Digital Development:

**Telstra connectivity**

- 1. There have been significant Telstra outages in remote areas over many years. The islands of Galiwin'ku and Milingimbi in my electorate suffer from particularly poor connection, as well as elsewhere. In the 23/24 financial year, what collaborative work is this Government doing to address these issues? Will we see more infrastructure to improve connectivity and reliability across all of our communities?**

I acknowledge the frustration and disruption that comes from outages in your region. I continue to work with the Federal Government, who retain primary responsibility for telecommunications, to improve the connectivity of all Territorians, regardless of where they live.

The 2023/24 financial year will see a number of telecommunication upgrade projects come online in the Arnhem Land region, including in the Mulka electorate.

The Arnhem Fibre Upgrade Project, a partnership between the NT Government, the Federal Government and Telstra, will increase the bandwidth across Arnhem Land from 5 gigabits per second (Gbps) to 100Gbps. It will run from Darwin to Nhulunbuy and is anticipated to be completed in the coming months.

The completion of this upgrade will allow for the future upgrade of telecommunications to Galiwin'ku and Milingimbi, as well as Wurrui and Minjilang.

The NT Government and Telstra are also co-investing in the Remote Small Cells program, which will see 4G mobile phone connectivity delivered in small remote communities and homelands using satellite small cells. In the Arnhem Land region, this will include Mapuru, Garrtbalala, Gawa, Biranybirany, Rorruwuy, Banthula, Langarra, Manmoyi, Ji-Marda, Mamadawerre, Gamardi, and Donydji. Discussions with local communities regarding land tenure and access are ongoing.

Budget 2023 saw \$4 million ongoing allocated to funding to uplift digital connectivity to our Territory Schools, particularly for those schools in remote and very remote parts of the Territory. This investment will see a mixture of fibre, wireless and satellite technologies utilised, along with new low earth orbital satellites, to achieve high speed connectivity in the most remote locations without the significant costs of trenching traditional fibre optic cables.

I continue to participate on the Federal Digital and Data Ministers' Meeting (DDMM), which is comprised of the relevant digital and communications Ministers from Federal and Jurisdictional governments. Digital inclusion for First Nations people continues to be a priority for the DDMM and I continue to advocate for the specific needs to Territorians, particularly those living in remote communities.