



Gavin Pearce MP
Federal Member for Braddon

Media Release

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Communications investment a gamechanger for King Island

The completion of the \$9.8 million investment into the King Island mobile network is being officially celebrated today. The globally recognised communication project established a new standard for telecommunications infrastructure, with the delivery of the world’s longest high-capacity microwave feed from Cape Wickham to Victoria.

Federal Member for Braddon, Gavin Pearce MP, said this was a project he had fought long and hard for.

“It was a long hard road to secure this investment, but it was a challenge I was up for,” Mr Pearce said.

“For decades, politicians from all sides have been visiting King Island, promising the community that improving communications was their priority. For decades that promise was never fulfilled. When I was elected in 2019, I too made that promise.”

“The issue of comms on King Island has been a ‘self-licking ice-cream’. It’s a little island in the middle of the Bass Strait - a population of around 1600 – so the level of investment needed was difficult to sell at any level of government. That left the island trapped between not having the population to justify the multi-million-dollar overhaul necessary to fix the problem, but their lack of reliable communications was limiting their enormous potential for growth.”

“I know King Island well. It’s always punched above its weight and the island’s contribution to our state’s economy is significant – cattle, seafood, tourism, the list goes on and on. But it was being held back by lack of infrastructure. We needed to break down the barriers to that growth potential, and it was my job to convince Canberra the investment was value-for-money.”

“When the Liberal/National government launched the Regional Connectivity Program in July 2020, the brief was to identify projects that would provide the most profound benefit to local communities. I knew this was King Island’s window of opportunity. I immediately pitched the idea to the Minister for Communications at the time, Paul Fletcher MP. He listened but had to be convinced it was value-for-money, so we jumped on a plane and I showed him the potential first-hand. Once on the island, it was a pretty easy sell.”

“In 2021, Paul Fletcher and I returned to the island to announce the \$9.3 million investment in the King Island Mobile Network Project.”

“High-speed, reliable broadband and mobile services will be a game changer. Connectivity equals opportunities: opportunities for students to reach their full potential; better opportunities for businesses to flourish; opportunities for families to stay connected to loved ones; opportunities for tourism and industry to develop, not to mention the provision of lifesaving medical and emergency services.”

“To have fought for the funding in 2020, secured the funding in 2021 and today join with King Islanders to celebrate the completion of this globally recognised project, well, it’s a great day.”

The completion of the King Island Mobile Network Project will be officially celebrated on King Island today at 1:30pm at the King Island Bowls and Golf Club.

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