

I would like to thank the organisers of the petition and those who have signed up to its contents for so clearly setting out their requests backed by a large number of our population for change in the current VSAT Licence fee and the granting of regulatory approval for Starlink to offer domestic tariffs.

It was decided in 2016 by the government of the day that despite representations made during a select committee process that people who self-provide are not contributing with the rest of the community to the joint cost of the exclusively licenced service which theoretically makes the cost of the service per customer higher than it would otherwise be. Self-provision was not outlawed completely but was made available to individual private users at a licence fee designed to discourage self provision.

The point was made by many people back in 2016 *“That the licence should be exclusive only to resale of telecoms services, thereby allowing businesses and individuals to self supply but not sell services. This would allow choice and testing of technology, and should impart an element of competition in that the licence holder should be able to install/provide the service cheaper than any business/individual. “*

It was also pointed out in 2016 by FIG officers that free market competition in a market is likely to be more effective in ensuring practical, consumer protection, and quality of service and price control than any Regulator.

Many factors have changed since that decision including, quality of service, availability, reliability and cost of alternative services and a high level of financial support from FIG to the exclusive provider for improved internet provision, that considerable financial support giving the provider a significant commercial advantage was not made back in 2016.

I shall be presenting the petition to the Legislative Assembly on 25th July where subject to support by MLAS it will be referred to a select committee currently scheduled for 1st August. In the select committee we will have the opportunity to hear the evidence ,establish the facts ,revisit the decision and the advice it was based upon taking into account the overwhelming support demonstrated today from our community for change.