



Incorporating the districts of Cunderdin and Meckering
ABN: 75 587 374 670
P.O. Box 100 Cunderdin Western Australia 6407
Tel: [REDACTED]
Email: admin@cunderdin.wa.gov.au

Our ref: [REDACTED]
Enquiries: [REDACTED]

Regional Telecommunications Independent Review Committee
Hon Alannah MacTiernan
<https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/have-your-say/2024-regional-telecommunications-review>

Dear Madam Chairperson,

Submission for Consideration in the Regional Telecommunications Review

The current state of telecommunications is a key issue for all communities in regional Western Australia particularly exacerbated during recent emergency situations and the community's heavy reliance on subpar telecommunications across the Shire.

The Shire of Cunderdin is located 158 kms east of Perth, and 58 kms east of the regional centre of Northam, covering an area of 1,872 kms² and consists of two localities being Cunderdin and Meckering. the Shire is responsible for a wide range of services and facilities including services to community property, hosting community events, adhering to Local Government regulatory processes and administration.

Telecommunications within our Shire is an essential service. The Cunderdin and Meckering communities often report that maintenance of physical communication infrastructure within our district has not been maintained.

Our Shire has numerous areas that experience extremely limited to no mobile network service with particular focus on the Meckering townsite, and the lack of service on the Cunderdin-Quairading Road. Both areas have recently been impacted by the absence of 3G and 4G service while attempting to access to Triple Zero emergency calls. This lack of mobile service coverage prevented the efficient use of the Shires disaster resilience, and emergency response practices.

We believe that minimum levels of service should be provided broadly within our local government area. In the past the very basic 3G network has been the only service many residents have had access to, and we have several concerns for when the 3G Network Closure occurs as this will leave many people experiencing an isolation from telecommunications services.

Not only does the lack of services impact on access to Triple Zero emergency calls, but also effects the economic, and social circumstances of our regional community members. Many factors are important to these residents including the reliability, affordability and latency of the Telecommunication services provided. Affordability of services is often a barrier for much of the community. Many people within our community receive government supplemented incomes and cannot afford to purchase external hardware devices to boost their households mobile and internet coverage.

While there is some evidence that the telecommunications industry is becoming more competitive and expanding, our rural and remote users are often overlooked in the upgrades to national telecommunication infrastructure showing a clear need for the industry to investigate how to provide equal access to telecommunications in our area. For this to be possible we would like to encourage providers to share infrastructure, bringing the community a diverse range of service providers and allowing the community an opportunity to experience the best possible service outcomes.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Regional Telecommunications Independent Review Committee for the work it does and the opportunity to provide input to the review.

If you require any further information or have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact our office on [REDACTED] or email admin@cunderdin.wa.gov.au

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

8th May 2024

