

Regional Telecommunication Review submission

Paynes Bridge Road, which felt the full brunt of the Dereel bushfire on March 27th 2013, has little or no **mobile phone coverage** and this was a major problem on the day of the bushfire. None of the three emergency mobile phone messages were received by my husband who was home on the day of the fire.

Having no **mobile access** has become a problem for people living in our rural community. Even though our little community finally got a Telstra mobile phone tower, after the Dereel bushfires destroyed ours and other people's homes, it still is a problem to some, who still cannot access mobile phone coverage from their properties. Most of the area that was highly impacted due to bushfires, still are unable to have mobile coverage. Incoming calls to mobiles will just go straight to a missed call. Most times we are unable to know who rang, so miss some important calls.

The **landline phone** is not an option in the event of evacuation from the premise and the mobile phone is vital to touch base with loved ones that have fled, keeping their spirits up, reminding them they have support and assistance along the way, and being able to locate their whereabouts.

The other reason that **landline phones** are not an option, is due to the fact that if the power is cut, then most people who have cordless phones, are unable to access them.

In Dereel, the normal **landline phones** often are unavailable also, due to archaic line systems. When it rains, it becomes another problem, due to the ground being moist and small rodents eating the telephone wires in the exchange.

In some areas of Dereel, **radio** reception is poor, and essential radio stations such as ABC Ballarat are not able to be accessed.

Digital **television** reception is also a problem in Dereel and often pixilation occurs, or complete shutdown due to "No signal".

Not all residents have a **computer** in Dereel, and for the ones that do, Internet coverage can also be a problem in Dereel, even though the NBN tower has been installed, some people are still unable to receive relevant coverage