

I am the fifth generation of a family run sheep and cattle business. The property is less than 100km from the Melbourne CBD, so we would be termed as semi-rural. The internet is essential to the efficient running of our business. We use it for banking, paying bills, sourcing materials, selling and purchasing livestock as well as managing off farm business interests. During Covid lockdowns we have also needed to try and access Zoom meetings.

We have never had reliable internet. We have never had fast internet. We currently are struggling to get any signal and are constantly hot spotting from mobile phones. We have purchased a CEL-FI GO to legally boost the signal we receive and this has had very limited success.

We can't even reliably talk on our mobile phones inside the house. In all types of weather, we are forced outside and even then, there will be moments of distorted conversation.

The idea of streaming services is not even on our radar, as it would be impossible for us to achieve. Likely a concept difficult to comprehend for people in Melbourne.

We are in a small pocket that is incapable of receiving NBN coverage and we still haven't had an explanation as to why. Properties to the North and South of us can get NBN, but not us.

I recently tried a Zoom call with the local Shire Council and my connection dropped out over ten times during the course of a two hour meeting. It was embarrassing for me and confusing for meeting participants, as you get no warning you are about to disappear from the meeting.

We need our phones to work across our property to communicate urgent matters with co-workers. This is constantly a problem and we were reminded of the networks shortcomings only yesterday. We are Shearing at the moment, but our Shearing Shed is in a black spot. This is critically affecting our efficiency and effectiveness, particularly at high pressure times like shearing.

We also have regular problems with our landline. Crackling is constantly a problem. The last time Telstra came out to fix the problem they diverted landline calls to my Mother's mobile. Even though the landline is registered with the Do Not Call Register, we still get a barrage of unwanted calls. These unwanted calls have now become a problem not just for the landline, but for my Mother on her mobile. It is very unnerving for Mum and really unacceptable.

We have resorted to the Communications Ombudsman on two separate occasions. We are currently working through the second of these reports. We are just asking for a reliable internet service to be able to conduct our business. The amount of time we spend on hold to Telstra and particularly to people in foreign countries who are impossible to understand is not good enough.

We are not in the outback, we are less than 100km from a major city in Melbourne.