

To the Chair,  
Regional Telecommunications Review,  
2021.

Hi, Luke.

Thanks for the opportunity to make a verbal submission to the review this morning, and your invitation to make a written submission to the review.

The major issue for me is that I live at 2956 Riverina Highway, Bungowannah, NSW 2640, which is 11 Km's from the centre of a Regional City (Albury/Wodonga) with a population of 110,000, and a greater area population of 160,000 within a 50Km radius, and I have to use the NBN satellite service to get any internet access. Even then the speed is problematical, although I have yet to take up the suggestions made to me on that forum to change suppliers to get better speeds/data plans.

I have a farm business that I run with my wife Sue. I have had a business up until the 1<sup>st</sup> of July, with 12 employees, my wife is President of the Albury Harness Racing Club Inc, and a Director of the Howlong Golf Resort. I am a Councillor with AlburyCity, President of the Land Manager with the Albury Showground, Treasurer of the Albury Harness Racing Club, and Treasurer of the Murray District Golf Association. As you can see, with Covid, we have a lot of things to do and we need to stay connected to continue to do our paid and volunteer work properly.

The telephone service is also problematical, as inside we use wifi calls but because of the slow satellite we drop out. We have to go outside where the service is a little better. On the way home, when on a call, 50% of the time the call will drop out when we are going up or down Dights Hill, approximately 2 kms closer to Albury than my residence.

Since the seminar on Monday, I have been contacted by a few people, and have talked through my issues and have a couple of possible long term solutions, but they will be at a cost to me.

Whilst I have the financial capacity to fix my problem, the broader question is why can't the powers that be focus on providing a decent service to everyone? I know there will always be hard to service customers, but surely we should have an aspirational goal to provide everyone with access to a minimum standard of voice and internet capacity, regardless of whether they live in a major city, or 100kms from the nearest population centre. There are solutions out there, I am sure, but someone has to have the guts to implement, and maybe, just maybe use cross subsidisation to provide a reasonably priced service to those who find themselves through no fault of their own in a place that is hard to service from a voice or data perspective. Add \$2 per month to every city based mobile service and data plan, and you would have \$500m a year to invest in the infrastructure required to fix the issue.

The rural sector has been the backbone of the Australian economy for ever and a day, and I am speaking out because when the coal and iron ore exports stop, we still need to be fed, and the farmers of this generation need access to the technology now available to help grow the food needed for us and for export.

I would like to see the local issues fixed, but also the broader issue of equal access for all, regardless of location, start to be fixed.

Regards,

Henk van de Ven,

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