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I don't care if the submission is made public or published.

Customer Service guarantee

A big issue which the Federal government has allowed to happen is the loss to the public of the Customer Service Guarantee (known as the CSG)

The standard does not cover:

- mobile phone and internet services
- transfer to another phone company your equipment, such as the telephone handset.
- services if you have more than 5 landline phone lines
- fax lines

The CSG Standard does not apply if a network outage or disruption as the result of:

- a natural disaster or extreme weather
- planned maintenance or upgrade work that they told you about
- damage to their facility or network by a third party

In the case of a mass service disruption, the telco must follow the rules in the Standard. Within 10 days of the start of the disruption they must:

- write to everyone who is affected or publish a notice on their website and in the local newspaper. Local newspaper...they're a bit rare.???

The standard is only about telling Telco's how fast they must repair and fix your Landline, and this also has a caveat, that being it is on 'legacy telco equipment' and NOT connected via NBN. So if you have a 'desk' phone at home and it is connected via you modem, it will not be covered under the Customer Service Guarantee.

So, the Service Guarantee is what is inspiring Telcos to get rid of their legacy networks, NO service obligations to the customers means they can do whatever they want.

The real community requirement is for the 'Federal government' to reintroduce the Customer Service Guarantee, BUT make it applicable to the 2020's. This means make it applicable to mobile services as well as fixed.

Some history. Before NBN came into being, Telstra was the provider of most of the telecommunication's infrastructure. They accomplished this by using

various technologies and basically provided the copper to the residence. By providing this they rightfully had the largest part of the market.

Once NBN was born, Telstra saw it as a good way to get out of that high-cost ongoing maintenance, just become a mobile and special service provider.

The challenge is to put suitable controls in place for all telcos to provide a relevant service guarantee applicable to current technologies such as mobile phones. This is only an initial step until the next mobile technology comes along. Therefore, it would be good to make a half decent start on expectations of telcos at this stage.

Poor Maintenance of Telstra infrastructure

As a consequent, of the large amount of Telstra's visible and invisible infrastructure scattered around Australia are several buildings and grounds owned by Telstra (or building owner) that are an eye sore to many communities that have been neglected and possibly of very little technical use, let alone the company realizing any social awareness as to how it is presenting itself. There would be many regional telephone exchanges that could have the working components replaced into a cabinet.

I believe a 'Review' should persuade telcos of an obligation that they look after their house. That they need to be reminded that as a business in an Australian community it is a privilege not immunity. I also think that would be fair for reasonable financial deterrents be put in place to encourage a change in attitude within a reactive time frame.

Mobile phone coverage in an Natural Emergency situation

Australia has vast climatic variations bringing all sorts of challenges for the communities across the country. Mobile communications have become an international hit with people across the planet and with it came expectations... we want them to work everywhere and in all conditions. The sad reality is this will never be achieved because of the physical characteristics of a radio wave. They don't go for ever, they attenuate, they don't penetrate metal and they are affected by weather conditions, mainly rain and lightning and heat.

Mobile use has become a convenient tool for Emergency Rescue groups that they became reliant on.

Remote areas have little or poor mobile reception and people who live in these areas can feel left out of the conversation, not being able to have the same access as their city friends.

Successive Federal governments have done some work towards trying to help country people with mobile coverage but in my opinion, it has missed the spot. Because when there has been announced that the Federal government has announced 'X' dollars for 'black spot program', what is really meant is that there is money for Voda phone to establish themselves, where Telstra and Optus already exist. It doesn't mean that Voda phone will take up the opportunity, they may not

because of the way they configure their network, they may decide not to take up the option. It will then be offered to the other 2 who may choose to put a base station, in and affected area. It still may not happen that it will fix the 'black spot', because the other carriers will be wanting to get the transmission to the new base station as easy and cheap as possible.

So let's take an example of a mobile base station losing power during a disastrous situation, fire, flood. Mobiles don't have a service obligation, so it can be fixed whenever somebody decides that something could be done. That someone can be in Australia or overseas in a central alarm collection point.

Power alarms are usually dealt with by a company who only deal with that facet of the base station. Often power loss won't raise an 'urgent' alarm as it could be caused by lightening or normal power maintenance, so can go without attention for several days. Then maybe a contractor could be sent, but this can be cancelled if it is deemed too dangerous to send someone. So the base station stays 'down' in the emergency.

A quicker response may happen when a contractor who could be in a central point either in Australia or overseas, recognise a transmission alarm, they can't see the power alarms, so they think there is an equipment failure and arrange for a Maintenance person to attend. The Maintenance person may not attend, because it's not safe to go to site. If the Maintenance person does go to site and deducts that there is no 'mains' power and the batteries are flat, when they get back to town, they can report the no power to the people who sent them. It maybe up to the 'transmission' people to contact the 'power group and advise the situation. That's up to how the Telco has set up the group responsibilities it need not happen!

It must also be remembered that a COW may not/more than likely, not be able to be deployed because of the prevailing conditions.

The same sort of scenario is for the case of a telephone exchange.

What can be done to reduce the risk to people in remote communities being isolated in the times of a disastrous situation. Once again remembering that existing conditions may not allow the deployment of a MEOW. I don't believe that we can eliminate the risk, but certainly be able to improve the situation.

NBN offer a satellite service to telco providers. Please note I'm not recommending a satellite phone, as this service uses the marine radio satellite services and isn't particularly good. I refer to the NBN service only.

The NBN service would be set up at a permanent place as it requires a dish and ideally would have an UPS(uninterruptable power supply) and a small generator would be ideal. It would be the same as your NBN modem arrangement at home. That is, you can have a desk phone and number if you like, but maybe more importantly you can have an internet and wifi

connection. There is the possibility to extend the wifi signal using 'off the shelf' wifi extenders. With the wifi connection, people who have Samsung phones and people with Apple I phone 6 and up can do wifi calling. So, a fairly good service can be achieved, enough to allow people to feel safe and enough to be able to help coordinate essential services.

So, what affects and NBN satellite service. Basically, because it is a radio wave, heavy rain, maybe heavy cloud, but this is usually not for very long. The risk of power is being addressed by having an UPS and small generator. The risk of poor or no signal coverage is reduced by the satellite transmission path.

I would suggest that the NBN satellite services be kept at the RFS buildings. Many of them meet once a week and a service call test could easily be included in their meeting. The modem equipment need not be left turned on.

There will be no Service Obligation still, but this is something 'our legislators' would need to address if they were inclined.

But there is an opportunity to take advantage with what is available in the current technology sphere.

The final challenge would be in asking our legislators/Politian's to assist in finding the required funding for the satellite service and ancillary equipment before the next disaster happens. This is really something that remote communities can have in 2021!

Thanks Glenn