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Thursday 2nd September 2021.

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Submission – Regional Telecommunications Review.

I live at Beerwah in the Qld Sunshine Coast hinterland. The area is a mix of urban and semi-rural, and interspersed with small-holder agricultural industries. It is quite densely-populated, and is located within a half-hour drive of major Sunshine Coast metropolitan residential areas and an hour from metropolitan Brisbane.

I am advised that there are three Telstra mobile phone towers in or near our vicinity. Yet our mobile phone coverage at our home is so poor (1 bar) that it is virtually un-useable. I rely on *wifi* calling in my home to use my mobile phone, but when I step outside my home and away from *wifi* coverage my mobile phone invariably drops out. Even in our home *wifi* calling is far less reliable than a strong phone signal, and drop-outs are common.

Tradesmen we have had at our home find the lack of phone coverage very frustrating. Indeed, when our NBN service failed (which has occurred on two occasions), the NBN technician (when he finally arrived over a week later!) had to drive 4km into Beerwah township to get enough mobile phone signal to test the repaired service.

Such poor coverage is extremely inconvenient. Further, this situation poses a significant health risk on occasions when our NBN service fails because we then have no useable phone service – either landline or mobile.

I have enquired to a Telstra technician about remedying this situation. I am advised that it is not a lack of phone towers in our locality that leads to the poor coverage, but rather the undulating nature of the terrain in our neighbourhood. I was advised that there are two options to remedy the situation - either install another phone tower at an appropriate location in our neighbourhood, or install a local 'cell' booster/transmitter to improve service in our neighbourhood. I am further advised that the former option is unlikely to be feasible in view of the other towers in the vicinity.

I moved to this area from regional central Queensland a little over a year ago. Our mobile phone service here is significantly poorer – despite its much larger regional population. Indeed, on our recent travels through north-west Qld, it was interesting to note that most of the small towns in that region had strong (3G or 4G) phone coverage that I envied.

I am aware that there are remote and regional areas with poor mobile phone service. However, my own experience suggests that this is not limited to remote areas, and is an issue in many densely-populated regional areas. Many people also consider that overall mobile phone coverage has deteriorated in recent years. Is this due to the introduction of higher data-carrying services (ie 4G and eventually 5G), or to inferior signal reception of current modern handsets?

Telstra is the largest provider of regional mobile phone service, but it has not been possible to contact them about this matter.

Yours,

[REDACTED]