

Submission to the Regional Telecommunications Review

Dear Panel,

I wish to provide a formal submission to the 2021 Regional Telecommunications Review On behalf of the Slade Point Community in Mackay

We thank you for the opportunity to outline the connectivity issues our communities face and to suggest solutions for the Review's consideration.

Thank you for allowing me to teams in for the session recently and for allowing Dan Passfield to join me from Crediton. I appreciate the opportunity to put in a second submission as a councillor of Mackay Regional Council representing my constituents. I am sure that the Council as a whole will submit a submission.

The Slade Point community is 10 minutes from the CBD of Mackay; I have lived in this community for close to 40 years.

We have 3 telecommunication towers and a Telstra exchange building in our suburb, the three towers are situated David Muir Street, at the Telstra exchange and now one in the vicinity of the Slade Point Community Hall on Wren street all this in a community of approx. 2,000 households. In this submission I am speaking about both internet and mobile coverage.

I have lived in two houses over the years firstly at 2 Blacksmith Street where the service has always been poor and not working on many occasions to the extent that I had to pay a large amount of money to get a booster aerial just so I could apparently have a signal similar to town but it really didn't help that much compared to other residents in areas of Mackay with good service. The lady that bought my house 7 years ago is still complaining about the service for her internet and her mobile phone. I now live in 6 Swallow Street in Slade Point and rarely have issues and we are not that far apart.

I don't think in this day and age in Australia a person that lives rurally should be penalised by higher costs to get additional infrastructure to assist telco services with coverage that others in the cities don't have to pay for and also to get at a much cheaper rate on their plans. Yet here I am explaining we have infrastructure and are 10 minutes from town, not in a hilly area and we too suffer from the lack of or poor service and having to buy aerial that cost \$1000 to boost signal when others 10 minutes away do not have the same cost constraints.

I would like to give you an example of a local gentleman who called me recently Mr [REDACTED], asking me as a councillor to get the council to put a repeater on the water tower that council owns, he believes it is needed to bounce the signal back into the Lamberts Beach area, he has confirmed with me that signal strength at his house 17 Lindeman Ave and is happy to provide the info, a friend of his at Crane Street and Keswick Ave say the service is poor or sometime there is no signal for their internet especially and they experience poor mobile reception.

Obviously a piece of work would need to be completed before council would consider or not putting infrastructure on the water tower and that a telco would need to ascertain the need compare to the dollars to see if it's worthwhile which is unfortunately a big problem that monetary gain always comes before servicing the minority.

On another note I would like to also mention as I forgot at the session yesterday that when I am out travelling the region I note the following areas as places of no mobile phone reception

Mt Ossa/ north of The leap, Finch Hatton Gorge, Eungella, Peak downs highway at a number of locations, Mt Flora Dingo Beef Road, and there is a spot between Mackay and Rockhampton I'm just unsure of where I'll try to take more notice when I travel that road next weekend when I go to see family.

Queensland councils have also passed a range of resolutions for the Local Government Association of Queensland to action on our behalf to improve connectivity. These include calling for mobile roaming to be legislated to allow consumers access to available networks throughout regional remote areas, and ensuring the blackspot program prioritises improving coverage of non-commercially viable mobile blackspots. We would also like to reiterate our support for those resolutions.

It is important the local government is given the opportunity to provide the Review with a local understanding of how better digital connectivity would provide greater opportunity and overcome barriers for those living, working and raising a family in regional, rural and remote Queensland, and we thank you again for providing us with the opportunity to do this via our submission.

I thank you again for the opportunity to teams in to the review session

Sincerely



Cr Alison Jones
On behalf of the Slade Point community
Contact details:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Slade Point

I give permission for this submission to be made public.