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I live at Holgate on the Central Coast of NSW. The surrounding Matcham / Holgate area, is a heavily forested area containing approximately 700 residences, most of which are off 3 main roads, each of which are one way in one way out. Wattle Tree Road, Oak Road, and Matcham Road. These roads follow along the bottom of 3 parallel valleys. These are small acreage residences many with bush on their land, and surrounded by forested reserves.

This area is close to the large business, retail district and urban areas at Erina.

The area is notorious for poor mobile coverage. Coverage from the Optus and Vodafone networks is either non-existent or very poor over the most of the area. Telstra network provides the best coverage, but this is also very poor, with very weak signal or no signal in some localities. On top of that there have been several instances over the past year, with experiences shared on the local community facebook page, of complete outages of the Telstra mobile network, for weeks and days at a time, where many local residents had no mobile coverage at all. The response from Telstra was very poor, they didn't even acknowledge that there was an outage or problem. It necessitated many residents to lodge complaints with the Telecommunications ombudsman, write to their Local Member of Parliament etc. before the service was restored. No explanation has been provided for these outages.

Mobile coverage is important in our area, as our NBN service is provided by overhead copper cables strung between poles, which are easily taken out by falling trees, particularly during periods of storm or very high winds. Mobile coverage provides an additional method of communication, should NBN service be interrupted. Many trades and visitors coming in to our areas to perform work get caught out not being able to call out or take calls because they are with the Optus or Vodafone networks, that have little or no service coverage across our area.

Many residents in our area are professional people, business owners, some run businesses from home, there are 3 Doctors that I know of in close proximity to where I live, being easily / readily contactable is very important to them at any time.

In the event of bushfires, for our safety we need a reliable and strong mobile network coverage to receive any warning messages.

Our area has been neglected for adequate mobile coverage for too long.

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Richard Aichinger

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