

Hello,

I am writing in regards to the Telstra Mobile reception(or rather lack of) in the Dundee Beach/Dundee Downs/Dundee Forest area (NT Post Code 0840).

There is a Blackspot tower in Hardcastle Road ,Bynoe NT -which only serves approx.5km radius(despite during their testing phase was able to reach approximately 20km, and people in my area had quite good reception for over 24hrs while they were testing)There is also a Telstra Tower in Mermaid Circuit Dundee Beach, which serves part of the Dundee Beach area.

I actually live in Dundee Forest which is half way, approx 17.-18km between both towers and have zero reception.The local Volunteer Fire Brigade is based in the Dundee Downs area, and they also have absolutely no reception there either.On several occasions even a Sat. Phone would not work.During some emergencies people have been known to drive for several kilometres to locate a resident who actually still has a landline in working order-which are very few as landlines are also very unreliable- just to get help .This wastes much valuable time, and can basically be the difference between life and death.There are no medical facilities in the Dundee/Bynoe area, so time is of the essence when trying to contact Darwin when help is required.

There are many people in the same situation as myself, and some people who are trying to run a home business, have even installed a Cell-fi system , but have only managed to obtain limited and very unreliable reception.It is quite common for them to have to leave their home/office, and drive between 5-15km to get reception in order to continue their call.

In regards to Dundee Beach itself, people have reported that on most occasions they are lucky to get 2 bars and during the peak times such as weekends(Fridays to Mondays)and holidays, tourist seasons etc) their reception is a real case of "hit and miss"-depending on which part of the area you are in, and again for many is non-existent. The tower that is there is in serious need of upgrading, as it simply does not cope with the large amounts of people who come to the area for holidays etc.

We have an extremely high number of tourists who are not considered part of the official records, but often live here for 3 to 6 months of the year...sometimes even longer-especially since the Covid 19 situation has developed in recent times.Many of those who have traveled here now reside here on a semi-permanent or even a permanent basis,as they see it as the safest place in the country.This is putting great strain on existing infrastructure and to escalate matters more, the vast majority of these travelers are quite elderly and as previously mentioned, this places more urgency on being able to contact Darwin(over 100km away) for Medical/Emergency services.

Census numbers do not reflect the true population of the area nor how the existing towers are inadequate for the volume of people who live and travel in the area.In fact a large proportion of the residents did not even complete their Census forms this year as they did not receive hard copies, and they could not get enough reception to complete an online version. Many people are questioning if Telstra is in fact living up to its Consumer responsibilities, as they are paying for a service(often on a monthly basis) but are not in fact receiving the service.Most residents when asked, have reported they are usually only able to use approximately 10% of their monthly allowances in their plans, simply because they cannot get reception.

We have tried to go through what we believe to be the appropriate channels over the years to try and have our concerns heard, but it is like getting on a treadmill...always moving but getting nowhere! We have in previous times been directed to our Local member ....who said we had to go to the Federal member.... who then directed us to a person in communications in Canberra...who then sent us to the Minister for Infrastructure ...and still no real progress. We just seem to be continually fobbed off, without any real answers ! The lack of response is as silent as our mobile reception. I know Senator McMahon did mention this situation in Parliament earlier this year, but we have had no updates since.

Several of us have recently contacted Basestation Enquiries, and have received a reply saying that IF things go according to plan, we can expect upgrades to the Dundee tower later this year, or in early 2022.However, when we asked if these upgrades would be large enough to help us here in the Dundee Forest and Dundee Downs area- Again..nothing but silence.

I am really hoping this issue may be resolved soon, as many people are very frustrated with the whole situation, and tensions within the community are getting quite high.

Any updates you can supply would be greatly appreciated.