

2021 Regional Telecommunications Review Secretariat

Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications

GPO Box 594

CANBERRA ACT 2601

10th September 2021

Dear Review Committee,

I have been invited to participate in your current 2021 Review on Telecommunications. Prior to this review being opened, I had, along with Di Feltdtmann from Dookie done some research on just how serious the black spot problem was for our area. When the research was completed, we then took a petition to our local Member of Parliament asking for help. So, our complaints are not new.

I don't know the technicalities of how our service is provided, I only know that users are angry at the poor service we have to put up with.

Our North East Art Trail have gone to a lot of expense to create a Trail of Silo Art, Wall Art, Sculptured Art, in an attempt to support our isolated small towns that are struggling to remain relevant. Our Pubs, Shops, Restaurants and cafes had been struggling to stay in business until this art encouraged tourism.

We have thousands of tourists travelling to our towns, but the lack of reception is an ongoing problem. We have put up notices of our website with all of the relevant information such as maps to all the sites, historical information about each town,

- but tourists complain that we lack reception, so they can't access our website.
- They can't Google Maps as we have no reception.
- They can't send photos because we have no reception
- The Pub complains that he misses out on Bookings because of lack of reception
- The Fire Brigade Captain says they can't get reception when fighting fires
- Farmers complain because they can't do business on their phones, lack of reception
- Building Contractors...same thing
- Our Local Halls, no reception
- No Zoom calls for us...no reception

We've had accidents on the Tocumwal Road, can't get reception so have to drive a distance to make OOO call.

If we have a patient, who has had a heart attack in our Halls, we can't make a call for OOO without having to run out to the road, wait till a bar comes up, stand on one leg with your head tilted to the side and hope like hell you can get the message out. NOT GOOD ENOUGH.

Don't tell us that if we can get one bar up, that's sufficient, because it isn't. It's demoralising that we aren't treat as equal value as the major towns. We live in a country where these services are our right.

We are concerned about our lack of internet being ADSL 2 as it's a lot slower than the NBN and running businesses and home schooling leaves a lot to be desired. Students find that the service is intermittent and have had to request hard copies of the work they have been set to do.

Satellite service, does not seem to be an option either as cloudy days etc. interrupt the signal.

We have an aged community so we are vulnerable to emergencies. Accidents, Fire, Health issues.

QR Codes don't always work at our Hall or our Pub.

The above problems occur in

- St James
- Devenish,
- Goorambat
- Boxwood,
- Broken Creek
- Waggarandall
- Parts of Dookie
- Yundool
- Lake Rowan
- Boweya
- Bungeet
- Major Plains
- Stewarton
- Yabba South

COVID did not cause this problem, it only exacerbated the situation. Mobile phones were used for connectivity between families in lockdown and for remote learning. Many problems arose, especially for students.

3G, 4G,5G. will it make a difference? Even with the Zoom meeting on Tuesday night it was apparent that people who registered for the meeting and had a turn at voicing their problems were cutting in and out.

In closing, we appreciated the opportunity to vent about our reception problems, but unless something is done it may well have been for nothing.

I remain Your sincerely,

Kathy Beattie

St James Hall Committee

St James Fire Brigade

St James Silo Art Committee

Treasurer North East Art Trail

Community Coordinator for St James