

Andrew Cruickshank



19 September, 2021

The Hon Luke Hartsuyker
Chair,
Australian Government,
Regional Telecommunications Independent Review Committee.

Dear Sir,

I am a resident of East Gippsland.

I have been a voluntary member of the East Gippsland Shire's marketing board and the economic development board.

East Gippsland Shire covers an area of 20,931 sq km, of which 80% is public land, largely forest and wilderness.

The Shire has a population of 47,000 people, with the main town, Bairnsdale some 230km east of Melbourne. The NSW border is a further 280km east of Bairnsdale.

Tourism was the Shire's 4th biggest industry before Covid19, comprising 1500 employees or 9% of the Shires workforce.

The Regional Telecommunications Review seeks to identify methods for improving regional telecommunications connectivity, to encourage investment in regional telecommunications and to support broader regional development goals.

The 2019-2020 bushfires, which destroyed much of the region's forests, also demonstrated the vital public good nature of telecommunications.

Harrowing scenes of thousands of people sheltering on the beach at Mallacoota highlight the danger when natural disaster strikes.

Much of the regions telecommunication's infrastructure was destroyed by the fires, with residents, farmers and tourists were unable to communicate.

I propose that the existing Telstra payphone network be extended and also that Telstra Air locations increase their footprint and capacity.

There are approximately 15,000 Telstra payphones nationally and approximately 33 in East Gippsland (See attached spreadsheet)

There appears to be only 8 Telstra Air locations in the Shire.

I suggest that a further 10 Telstra payphones be installed as per the attached spreadsheet, in locations along the main tourist routes.

I also suggest that an additional 13 Telstra Air locations be provided, to accommodate the needs of locals and tourists alike.

The locations suggested are all located in key settlements and at places where people can rest or shelter from danger.

Tourists use internet for directions, to book accommodation etc., while local residents and businesses will use higher internet speed for work and education.

I am aware that improved satellite communications may be available in the future, but an immediate and low-cost fix would see the expansion and improvement of the Telstra payphone/Air network in the Shire.

Yours sincerely,



Andrew Cruickshank

FAPI, RPIA, CPA, MRICS, ACEcD

Economics, Planning, Property.

Encl.

CC The Mayor, East Gippsland Shire Council
The Hon Tim Bull MP, Member for East Gippsland
The Hon Darren Chester MP, Member for Gippsland
The Editor, East Gippsland News.

Prepared by

Andrew Cruickshank

Telstra Public Phone locations- East Gippsland

Existing Telstra Payphones

Bairnsdale
Bemm River
Benambra
Bendoc
Bonang
Bruthen
Buchan
Cabbage Tree Creek
Combienbar
Eagle Point
Ensay
Genoa
Goongerah
Johnsonville
Lake Tyers
Lakes Entrance
Lindenow
Lucknow
Mallacoota
Marlo
Metung
Newlands Arm
Newmerella
Nicholson
Nowa Nowa
Omeo
Orbost
Raymond Island
Swan Reach
Swifts Creek
Toorloo Arm
Tubbut
Wy Yung

Required Telstra Payphone locations

Cape Conran
Club Terrace
Gelantipy
Glenaladale
Meerlieu
Point Hicks
Tambo Crossing
Thurra River
Willis Camp Ground
Wulgulmerang

Telstra Air wifi locations- Existing

Bairnsdale
Bruthen
Cann River
Dargo
Lakes Entrance
Mallacoota
Orbost
Paynesville

Required Telstra Air wifi locations

Bemm River
Bonang
Buchan
Club Terrace
Combienbar
Gelantipy
Genoa
Lake Tyers
Marlo
Metung
Nowa Nowa
Omeo
Swifts Creek