

We live in a semi remote area of the Barrington Tops in N.S.W. Our home is a 1.15 hour drive from our nearest town (Gloucester) and mobile phone reception area. There is only the one road in and out of our Valley (Moppy Valley) Our only available phone service is our landline which is an extremely old copper wire/land line exchange and could be one of the last still operating.

The land line is frequently out of order, affecting 7 farming businesses in our area. Most recently it was out of order for 5 days, up until yesterday afternoon. This lack of a reliable service is extremely worrying and dangerous as we cannot even get txt alerts of fires and/or other emergencies. When we are flooded in and if the power goes off, we have no way of contacting anyone, either locally or anywhere in Australia, if our phone is also out. Although everyone is very careful when working in our environment, accidents do happen and we need to be able to contact medical help immediately.

For years now we have all struggled with this inadequate phone service and any attempts to get some positive response from either Telstra or our local member (David Gillespie) has been totally unproductive.

The other big problem is, when we finally get to speak to someone about a current outage, the "Service difficulties and Faults" person is rarely in Australia... they are usually in Asia and just totally do not get it that we have no alternative phone. We always feel that the person thinks we are being difficult or lying. Plus, it is usually very hard to understand them. Yesterday, my partner had to drive 54kms into town to use his mobile to phone Telstra to report our outage of several days. He waited 20 minutes until his call was answered (in the Phillipines) and then it took quite some time for the Telstra person to understand the problem and to agree to have the outage checked by a linesman.

We appreciate this opportunity to explain our position and the position of hundreds of other Australians living in more remote areas of this country. Surely it is not too much to ask, to have a reliable telephone service. I wonder if this submission will fall on deaf ears or just be deleted without any change to Telstra's modus operandi? After all, it is the 21st century and the man landed on the moon in 1969!!

Karen Miles and John Gillies