

- Contact name: [REDACTED]
- Organisation name, if applicable: business, Living Language (editing and proofreading, done from home via internet)
- Contact details, including telephone number, postal and email addresses:
 - [REDACTED], no mobile number because no mobile reception (even tradies can't get it here)
 - [REDACTED] NSW [REDACTED] (no Australia Post delivery to my street address)
 - [REDACTED]
- Confirmation whether or not your submission can be made public—published—or kept confidential:
 - can be made public.

1. What telecommunications services are required in regional Australia to meet current and future needs? Are there any things regional communities and businesses need to do, but can't, on their existing services?

- I would very much like to have mobile phone reception. I work from home and my house is at the bottom of a valley, so no line of sight to a mobile tower. This is despite being 30 minutes' drive from a major regional centre. Luckily, my business does not rely on mobile phones (mostly done by email, internet and postal services, although I have to travel 30 minutes to pick up and return post), but if my landline goes down (which has happened three times, and there has been substantial delay in reconnecting) and the satellite internet is not working (due to heavy cloud or storms or general outages), I have no way of connecting with friends, family or emergency services. Satellite internet is much slower than other services, too, and because of the 1-second delay, I sometimes cannot connect to some websites and have problems with downloads.

2. What changes in demand, barriers or challenges need to be addressed when it comes to telecommunications services in regional, rural and remote Australia?

- Geographical barriers and weather are problems for access.

3. How have the Government's policies and programs affected telecommunications service outcomes in regional, rural and remote Australia? How can these be improved?

- I have no idea what these policies are, so cannot comment.

4. How do service reliability issues impact on regional communities and businesses? How do outages, including in natural disasters, impact on communities and businesses?

- If my landline goes down (which has happened three times, and there has been substantial delay in Telstra reconnecting it) and the satellite internet is not working (due to heavy cloud or storms or general outages), I have no way of connecting with family or emergency services. I cannot get text messages if, say, there is a bushfire emergency in my area. No organisation phones on the landline to tell me, either.

5. How might such impacts be addressed to ensure greater reliability? How can the network resilience be addressed in regional areas?
6. How did the use of digital services change for regional consumers and businesses during the response to the COVID-19 pandemic? What insights for future service delivery does this provide?

- Because I do not have mobile reception, I have not bought a smart phone. This has caused problems with going into businesses and registering for contact tracing. Most seem to have got the idea of 'alternative means' by now although some regard it as a hassle. It also means I will only be able to have a paper 'vaccination certificate'.

7. What can be done to improve the access and affordability of telecommunications services in regional, rural and remote Indigenous communities?

- I'm not Indigenous, but see my comments regarding affordability at the last question.

8. How can investment in telecommunications infrastructure work with other programs and policies to encourage economic development in regional Australia?
9. What role could innovation, including new models, alternative investors or new ways of doing business, play to encourage investment in regional telecommunications infrastructure? What are the barriers?
10. To what extent will new technologies enable significant change to the delivery of telecommunications services in regional Australia over the next 5-10 years? Are there any barriers to accessing these technologies?

- I can only access internet via satellite (SkyMesh). Telstra says my area will never be connected any other way than by satellite.

11. How can Government better support the rapid rollout of and investment in new telecommunications solutions in regional areas?
12. How can different levels of Government, the telecommunications industry and regional communities better co-ordinate their efforts to improve telecommunications in regional Australia?
13. What changes to Government investment programs are required to ensure they continue to be effective in delivering improved telecommunications?
14. How can regional consumers be better supported to identify, choose and use the best connectivity options for their circumstances, as well as to understand and use their consumer rights?

- I found out by chance that I could get satellite internet. This was 20 years ago and communications were not great back then. But I still don't know what alternative service I could use if I become dissatisfied with my current provider, and how to swap over. Information on how to do this would be welcome.

15. To what extent is public information on connectivity options, including predictive coverage data and speeds, sufficient to help regional customers make informed decisions? What other information is needed?

16. What other matters should the Committee consider in its review and why are they important?

- Affordability, not just to Indigenous communities: Telstra has just upped its charges to \$50 per month for my landline. This is about \$10 a month more than I paid before their new charges came into effect. On top of this I pay \$55 a month for NBN-linked satellite internet, which is not 100% reliable. Where they have mobile phone access, friends pay much less than \$105 a month for their phone and internet service package.