

Telecommunications Enquiry Submission

I have lived 35kms from Rockhampton, a major regional city in Central Queensland, for 23 years. In that time, as the rest of the world progresses technologically, we have not only remained static but our telecommunications services have deteriorated. The only internet I can now receive is mobile via a single Telstra tower (my prior poor experience with satellite internet when it rains or even showers means I am not reconsidering that option).

That lone Telstra tower I can access has been damaged quite a few times, not just in the big weather events like Cyclone Marcia, but “normal” modern weather conditions; however trying to get a technician out to fix or even check it out has become nearly impossible. Instead I spend hours on the phone in a queue waiting to speak to an overseas Telstra “support” person who repeatedly tells me such useful tips as to turn my phone off and on. They obviously assume I must be a technopeasant because I’m old and/or rural, when I’ve been using computers since they were as big as filing cabinets and I have always kept myself fully across Windows, iOS and Android operating systems. Then, without having helped me at all, they try to sell me more data when I have trouble connecting to use the data I already pay for.

I live very close to the east coast and major towns, yet I may as well live in the Sahara; indeed I’ve seen documentaries with turbaned Tuaregs apparently using smartphones with greater ease than I can.

Telstra is more about profit now, not providing a vital service; even more vital now in these difficult COVID times when shopping and keeping in contact with family and friends is often done online.

Television coverage is the same. I do get free-to-air TV via the VAST satellite network, but again weather is a problem with pixilation and dropouts a daily, even hourly occurrence. This really isn’t good enough for a relatively-wealthy first world country. People should be above profits, or has that gone the way of other Australian values, off into the mists of sentimental mythology.

I can only hope this enquiry leads to some actual improvement and not just rousing speeches in line with electoral cycles, as usual. Thank you for this opportunity and your time, anyway.

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29/09/21