

# Judy Plant

Dear Sirs

I live approx. 86kms north of Chinchilla and 100kms south of Mundubbera, which is just off the north eastern edge of the Darling Downs in the Western Downs Regional Council area in southern Queensland.

Recently our power (provided by Ergon Energy) went out 4 times in two weeks because of burn off fires and strong winds. The power, most times, was off for 8 hours. While a nuisance, this was not a great problem but it exposed a greater problem.

Because our power was off for an extended length of time the back up 'power' at the local telephone exchange (Monogorilby) went out too! During these times fortunately no one in our households had emergency problems. I have not heard of anyone else in our rural district having problems either but you cannot depend on that to be the case! Reliability of service is important but most important in emergency situations

We are moving into the bushfire/ storm/ cyclone season. We are asked by government to prepare for it .....clean up, put away, collect water, food, batteries for our radios and torches, etc.

But what is Telstra doing for our need for communications in emergency situations? We must all plan for them

Here, when the power goes out, we loose Internet and landline phones. We have NO MOBILE coverage at any time either. The distance we are from our nearest town and help in emergency times is worrying and could all be overcome by better backup battery, generator power or even solar in our local exchange. Despite the technology revolution streaming ahead our basic needs are not being met when we need them the most. This surely is a basic need for many small local rural telephone exchanges around Australia??!

Mrs Judy Plant