

WE HAD A SATISFACTORY SERVICE PRIOR TO NBN BUT IT IS NOW UNSATISFACTORY AFTER NBN

This submission is made on behalf of all the Telstra customers that are currently or have previously been receiving ADSL Internet/Landline service from the copper wire network in Remote/Bushfire effected areas that do not/will not ever have the NBN Cable option available to them and are having, or potentially may get, their copper wire disconnected without consultation.

Our family household experience at [REDACTED], despite being loyal Telstra customers for the past 36 years, in relation to the above matters and Telstra A/c [REDACTED] is as follows:-

DISCONNECTION 1

Without consultation from Telstra in January 2021 one of the occupants in our household was working from home as a computer operator for Ambulance Victoria for COVID reasons and was told by the Ambulance Victoria Computer technicians that "your internet has been cut off", days were spent to restore the ADSL internet connection for Telstra Account [REDACTED].

DISCONNECTION 2

Without consultation from Telstra early in February 2021 the ADSL internet was again found to be not working, after ringing Ph 132000 & 1800776273 Telstra allocated a reference Number of [REDACTED] and informed that the service had been suspended. Again days were spent to restore the ADSL internet connection for Telstra Account [REDACTED].

DISCONNECTION 3:-Without consultation from Telstra on 19.2.2021 the ADSL internet and Landline service for A/c No [REDACTED] was found to be again not working and after ringing Telstra representative [REDACTED] on Ph 132000 we were informed that the reason for this disconnection was because we were not connected to the NBN, we agreed to 2 Mobile Services, Landline and Internet using the old Copper Wire ADSL Network for \$195, we were informed that we would be charged a \$95 Connection Fee but would get this reversed if we rang the Accounts Department after receiving the first invoice if we quoted Reference Number [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] repeatedly informed "This whole conversation is being recorded", and informed "this will be recognised as an NBN service", and also informed "This is on NBN". [REDACTED] also informed that it may take 48 hours for some of the arrangements to become effective.

No Internet nor Landline became effective as a result of arrangements made in relation to Reference Number [REDACTED] so on 23.2.2021 I rang Telstra on 132000 and informed that there was still no Internet or Landline operating in relation to Account Number [REDACTED], after much conversation no solution for my connection problem was forthcoming, I informed I had to go to a funeral and would need to ring back tomorrow, whoever I spoke to informed me to ring the Sales Department on 1800177698 and to ask for an update on Order No [REDACTED].

BROADBAND INTERNET OFFER 1:-On 24.2.2021 I again rang 132000 and spoke to three (3) Telstra representatives and quoted Order Number [REDACTED], one of which [REDACTED] tried very hard to resolve my connection problem, eventually I was offered the following deal:- Two (2) Mobiles \$120 Landline \$55 and Mobile Broadband Service \$81 = \$256 per Month but would get a \$100 Credit on 1st Bill to help offset as an incentive.

Asking why my old ADSL option could not be re-continued I got the following reply:- "There is a network shortfall", "Cable to Copper not available from Exchange to House". My response to this offer was "This is a major change in service type and cost so I would need to have a family talk about what is being offered and I would ring back tomorrow". Salesperson said "when you ring back on 180177698 quote Case No [REDACTED] and Ask for Inbound Sales Team".

BROADBAND INTERNET OFFER 2:-On 25.2.2021 I rang 1800177698 and spoke to [REDACTED], after much communication he formulated another deal which eventually ended with the allocation of Case Number [REDACTED], I reluctantly accepted the deal after pleading my case that the Landline should be included at Nil cost to keep the connection at approximately what A/c No [REDACTED] had been paying each month, we needed the internet re-connected ASAP so I reluctantly agreed to the following:- Two (2) Mobile Phone Services \$120 (improved Data Usage), 4G Broadband (SIM included) Internet Hardware/Connection \$16 per month plus \$65 Internet Data Plan of 200GIG Data

= \$201 per Month (would get a \$100 Credit off this for the first month). I was informed that my copper wire Landline could be restored for Voice usage only at \$55 per month, I did not agree to this as it would mean my monthly charge would increase to \$256 per month. [REDACTED] unsuccessfully tried hard in consultation with his superiors to get this cost reduced as he acknowledged that Telstra had disconnected my internet and landline voice service without my knowledge. [REDACTED] informed that the landline voice only connection of \$55 per month was a separate sale so it could not be bundled in with the other services being offered. I explained that we are in a Bushfire prone area and we need the landline for safety reasons, after [REDACTED] indicated that my PC would be connected to the 4G device by existing Ethernet Cable and Household security system could be connected to the 4G Device by HDMI/USB adaptor I reluctantly accepted the deal proposed without the Landline included but said I would be following up my concerns on behalf of all Telstra customers in Bushfire prone areas for the safety reasons stated. We agreed that [REDACTED] would ring me on Wed 31st March to discuss the Landline issue further but this never happened.

All of the above has taken many dozens of hours of communication with Telstra (waiting on hold is horrendous) and many days of effort from both Leanne and Richard Etherton to attempt a fix, currently we no longer have a Landline, our internet does not connect on occasions and mostly it is impossible to watch our Smart TV's and it is impossible to effectively use an Ipad or laptop when internet is being used.

CONCLUSION:-Our experience at [REDACTED] Avoca (approximately 4 klms out of town in rural area) is that we originally operated 1. Landline, 2. Two (2) Mobile Phones, and 3. ADSL Internet Connection quite satisfactorily ie. Computers/Laptops/Ipads/Smart TV's all at the one time, utilising the Copper Wire Network and a ADSL modum. When the NBN systems were being distributed through the town we went along to the local community consultation process at the local Senior Citizens Centre and were told by the NBN reps that we would never get the new NBN Cables at our address but we did find some comfort from the representative saying that the existing Copper Cable service at [REDACTED] would never be cut off because none of the NBN options would be cost effective given our address. Despite being told this we were disconnected by Telstra without notice and our experience is described to the best of my ability in the heart of this document.

ISSUE 1. Our example before disconnection as a Telstra customer is that we held a bundle including two (2) mobile phones, ADSL Internet, and Landline for \$193 per month- As per our Telstra A/c No 2 [REDACTED]. After disconnection the alternative provided by the Testra Sales team incorporates a 4G Broadband option including new Router, two (2) mobile services and Landline using the existing copper wire for \$256 per month. Telstra Sales team say that the cost increase is caused by the Copper Wire Landline service not being able to be bundled in with the 4G Broadband option at Nil cost because there are two (2) separate Sales Packages that cannot be bundled together as an offer to customers and as a consequence there is a large cost increase.

ISSUE 2. A copper wire landline service functions even when household power drops out in times of Bushfire as the power comes from a central exchange thus enabling communications even in times of Bushfire or any emergency situation. To disconnect Copper Wire Landline services in Bushfire Affected or Remote areas is potentially or significantly life threatening.

ISSUE 3. Solution to Issue 1 and Issue 2 above is that in Remote/Bushfire effected areas Telstra are made offer a Mobile Phone/Internet/Landline package that can be bundled together at no extra cost to what Telstra Customers were being charged prior to disconnection and if the efficiency of the system offered is proven to be less than the efficiency of their previous ADSL Copper wire system then the option should be given for such customers to return to their previously provided copper wire services.

ISSUE 4. Satellite options do not solve problems 1 & 2 described above due to the extra costs and power required to run the options, however if this is the only option available for customers like us then a system needs to be set up early to avoid the days of wasted time as described in this document to get a satisfactory communication service up and running.

ISSUE 5:- Establishing a satisfactory communications service at [REDACTED] is an exhausting exercise.

RICHARD ETHERTON – Continuous TELSTRA CUSTOMER for approximately 36 Years – [REDACTED]