

To the Regional Telecommunications Review panel for 2021,

I live in the Edith area of the Northern Territory (north of Katherine). Despite the population in our area steadily increasing, our mobile signal is not. Many of the residents of this area live off-grid due to mains power coming to a halt only seven kilometres in to the area. We are all self-reliant on water. Those who have been able to afford to install signal boosters on their properties have done so at great personal expense. After we generate our own power, extract our own water and maintain our properties, it's no wonder so few can afford a signal booster. However, we have a phone tower not far from our area; the Fergusson Tower. It was struck by lightning a number of years ago. It took two years for Telstra to bother to fix it. Once fixed, they faced it another direction and we struggled on with a lack of signal. Phone calls can drop out multiple times before we give up. We often have sweet spots where we stand outside to make calls. These can change nightly. Want to do something that requires data? Stick your tongue out, twist your ear and pray to every god humankind has created over the millennia. You may get lucky. Currently, a second subdivision is being developed. More people to move to the area. More devices trying to connect to an already overloaded tower that's pointing in the wrong direction anyway.

I work in the Venn area of the Northern Territory (south of Katherine). This area is full of multiple agribusinesses. Melon growers, fruit tree growers, vegetable growers, hay growers, cattle producers. There are also the lifestyle block owners. Despite the businesses and homes in this area, again, signal is poor. Where I work there is a signal booster installed on the roof. Away from the range of the signal booster, finding the sweet spots are required. Out here there is also a rehabilitation facility. I imagine that they also rely on a booster that they have paid for themselves. During the busy season, it's not just the permanent residents and staff utilising what little signal there is, there are seasonal workers and backpackers trying to keep in touch with their family and friends back home. It'd be good for us to have peace of mind that if there is a workplace accident or an encounter with a deadly snake for example, that we can call emergency services and have that call get through. There's a tower not far from this area. It would be good if it was equipped with mobile signal.

Kind regards,

Teagan