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NSW 2446

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### **Submission re communication in regional NSW**

First the recent census was a fantastic opportunity to gain an accurate assessment of telephone and internet coverage in Australia.

Secondly, the problem of poor or nil coverage is not confined to remote rural areas.

We live four klms from Beechwood and about 30 klms in a straight line from Port Macquarie yet are unable to make use of NBN and rely on ADSL via copper cable for internet. Mobile phone coverage is very poor. We have to wander around the house or yard to get a signal. The slightest movement can cause the signal to drop out. A text message can take up to four days to appear. The NBN tower is about three kms from us.

My work has taken me to areas of NSW where you would expect reasonable coverage such as Mudge, Ulan, Boggabri and Narrabri. The coverage is so poor that I had to purchase a satellite phone for the safety of my crew.

NBN is measuring success by the number of people connected to the system where they should be measuring what percentage of area has access to NBN.

I fear that our ADSL system works well for most of the time, but occasionally it is almost impossible to get repairs undertaken or to even find out what is happening. One or two days down is the norm, but the worst was June/July this year when it was down for 31 days with no explanation as to why. This fault not only affected us but approximately 80 other people.

During this period, I kept a log of our attempts to have something done. I feel that if a few of us had not contacted the telecommunications ombudsman we would be still waiting. Contacting our local Federal member of parliament was a total waste of time.

### **Telstra Bigpond Case No.**

- 1 June between 9 & 10 am no internet. After many calls to Telstra were told that it was their problem and our system was not at fault.
- 2 June Further calls to Telstra. Told that problem was at Beechwood Exchange & fault would not be repaired until 11 June. Called office of David Gillespie, local Federal member. Asked staff member to find out what was happening and lodge complaint with Federal minister who had communication portfolio. He stated he would report back to me.
- 9 June No communication from Gillespie's office. Went to office to find what was happening. Staff member that I spoke to on 2 June claimed he did not realise that I wanted him to do anything. Told me that Telstra was a private company and government had no influence over its operations. Discussion became a little heated on my side.
- 10 June Called Telstra, given number 1800 790 762 to call in future re our problems. Assured that fault would be repaired by 5.00pm 11 June
- 11 June Fault not repaired and no communication from Telstra.

- 12 June Rang Telstra and was informed that fault would not be corrected until 21 June. Were told that data available for mobile phone would be increased so we could use it as a mobile. That is of little help as we have poor connection on mobile phones at 68 West Frazer's Creek Road, Beechwood.
- 13 June Spent over one hour on phone. Telstra representative went through all the checks that have been done before. Operator in the end acknowledged that it was a local problem and that a technician would-be on-site Tuesday 15 June.
- Received text confirming that technician would be here Tuesday 15 June.
- 14 June another text confirming technician would-be on-site 15 June
- 14 June spoke to neighbours who use ADSL, same problem. A review of comments on the Beechwood Community Page indicates that anyone west of Beechwood on ADSL has no internet and are getting the same run around as us.
- 15 June. [REDACTED] Telstra technician called to say he would be checking the fault starting at the Beechwood Exchange end. I went for paper, two vans at the Exchange. Called in so I could speak to a person. Meet [REDACTED] told me fault was at the Exchange and affecting people on ADSL to the south, west and north of the exchange. He could not repair it as he was a linesman technician and the fault required an exchange technician. He would report fault. He also rang and told my wife same.
- 15 June [REDACTED] had call from Telstra wanting to know if we were happy with the outcome of [REDACTED] visit. Unbelievable. [REDACTED] was told someone would call her within 48 hrs. No one did.
- Beechwood Community Page indicates that some people have been told that fault would be rectified by 5.00pm 23 June
- 22 June, [REDACTED] spoke to person at Port Macquarie (Central) Telstra shop. Was told that someone would contact her within 48 hrs.
- 24 June, still not repaired and no communication from Telstra. Spoke to [REDACTED] at Telstra Shop, Port Macquarie Central. He checked their system, fault had been logged and would be repaired by 28/6/2021.
- 29/6/2021 Still no internet. From talking to neighbours and viewing the Beechwood Community Page it appears everyone on ADSL out of the Beechwood Exchange is affected. Contacted TIO, made complaint, Case No. [REDACTED]  
[www.tio.com.au/consumers/complaint\\_process](http://www.tio.com.au/consumers/complaint_process)
- 30/6/2021 Still no internet. Rang Telstra, would appear that people answering our calls have less of an idea of what is happening than us. Email from tio, our complain has been lodged and Telstra has two weeks to respond. Is this real?????
- 1/7/21 Noted that a Telstra vehicle seen outside Beechwood Exchange. Door shut, perhaps there for a quiet coffee. Still no internet.
- 2/7/21 Internet on, but very patchy – dropping out.
- 3/7/21 Internet working.