
Quandialla Progress Association

President: Mr Robert Reeves
Treasurer: Mrs Sue Priestley
Secretary: Mrs Marlene Taylor
"Quambatook"
QUANDIALLA. 2721.NSW
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07/03/2021

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing on behalf of the Quandialla Progress Association in my role as secretary to ask that you act on our behalf regarding the poor Telstra service we receive within the village of Quandialla and surrounding areas.

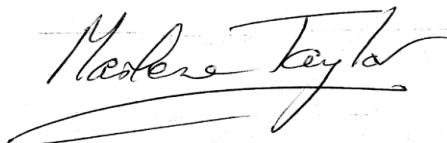
At our February meeting members spoke about the poor phone, internet, Wifi and ATM service experienced by business and individuals. Business owners spoke of the intermittent ATM service which has resulted in significant financial losses by the Bland Hotel, Quandialla Bowling Club and Temora Fuel. EFTPOS is another issue where local business must connect via personal Wifi. Another serious downside of poor service is the difficulty experienced when trying to fulfill covid regulations and sign in at local businesses.

It seems yet again that those that live and run businesses in regional areas have been forgotten. With the push for all invoices and business activity to be completed online especially all things government related, we deserve to have the quality of service we are paying for. WE pay the same fees as those who benefit from excellent service. We receive no discounts from Telstra in acknowledgment of the poor service we receive.

After a supposed upgrade to the Berendebba tower more than 12 months ago many in the Quandialla and Caragabal areas commented about reduced service quality, both around the district and within individual residences. We personally had to spend an additional \$1400 for a booster just so our phones would operate within the house on our farm. Many have installed boosters on their homes and antennas in vehicles to try and improve service.

Our community members deserve a reliable service which allows them to optimize business outcomes. It is a challenge to encourage tourists to leave the highway and travel through our village, especially when we are unable to confidently provide services so many take for granted. I ask that you give this matter your strongest consideration and pressure Telstra to finally, deal with all the black spots within our area and provide the service we pay for.

Yours Sincerely,



Marlene Taylor: Secretary, Quandialla Soldiers Memorial Hall Association.

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22/09/2021

Attention: Senator Bridget McKenzie: Minister for Regional Communications.

Thank you for your letter which we received via Michael McCormack's office.

Your response to what is a real issue for those that live in regional areas was an incredible disappointment. You commented that your department "sought an update from Telstra" who "acknowledge that some customers in the area may experience less than ideal mobile coverage". You mentioned "the predictive coverage maps published by the Mobile Network Operators". The definition of predictive is "relating to or having the effect of predicting an event or result" which suggests there is a likely hood or possibility of service existing. Not very reassuring. Had your department bothered to speak to residents in the area you would have discovered that the actual situation is very different.

Your solutions required customers to spend thousands of extra dollars, not to obtain the level of service our town or city counterparts get, but rather something that only bears a weak similarity.

Quandialla is a thriving farming community, located between Grenfell, Young West Wyalong and Forbes. We are not remote however, our mobile service has been problematic for years, even with our close proximity to the Berendebba Tower. Businesses in our village work hard to survive in very difficult times, firstly through drought and now with Covid. Unreliable access to EFTPOS, ATM and mobile service is inexcusable.

We recognise that many farms, due to their distance from towers in our area will not receive excellent service. All we ask for is reasonable and consistent service. Many

have already invested in boosters and antennas in their homes and vehicles yet our service still isn't reliable or consistent. The inconvenience and frustration this causes in a time when the level of technology demanded in agriculture increases continually.

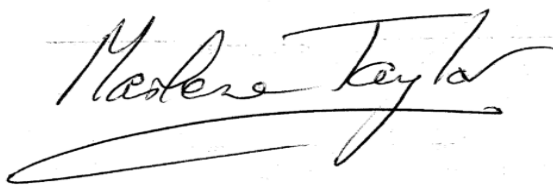
Our ability to run effective and efficient businesses or conduct our personal lives in a manner comparable to our town and city counterparts is greatly hindered by our Government's inaction.

Communities such as ours and Caragabal, who also rely on the Berendebba Tower, have complaint fatigue. The hours wasted, waiting for someone to actually answer when we wish to make a complaint. When each call related to that complaint comes from a different person, so we start at the beginning again. When your complaint, which you submitted online whilst in town if you don't have satellite internet, is not even acknowledged. The weeks, last time nearly 4 weeks, of no service at all because they are repairing the Towers have lead to increased anger. Feeling like we have simply been forgotten.

All we are asking is that this issue be properly investigated. Not simply a call to Telstra or a letter that gives no hope of help from Government but passes us off to local councils and back to the Mobile Network Operators. Your department should be working to escalate our problem, not simply move it sideways.

I have attached with this letter responses from our survey where you will see that people are having to drive to areas of better service to complete downloads Such as the NSW Service App. Customers pay Telstra for a service. They pay for their plan which is an agreement by Telstra to provide the listed services, such as calls, messages, data. Telstra have customers signing these contracts every day; however, they are not fulfilling their agreement to a large percentage. If a customer failed to fulfill their part of this contract there would be severe penalties. Why then won't the government hold Telstra accountable.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marlene Taylor". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends across the width of the name.

Marlene Taylor: Quandialla Progress Association.

Have you had trouble making calls on your mobile?

- Everyone who responded answered yes to this question.
- Further Details:
 - # No mobile service for at least a month
 - # Many problems especially during August this year
 - # Constant lack of service and takes several minutes to connect
 - # I have had to put on Telstra WiFi assist
 - # Over the last 2 years especially proper service has been sporadic
 - # Far too many issues with lack of service to list.
 - # No service or only 1 bar. Never more than one bar since Jan/Feb
 - # There are many parts of the farm where there is no service. (common response)

Do you have trouble receiving calls?

- 100% of responses indicated YES to this question.
- Further Details:
 - # 50% of calls don't actually ring and go straight to voicemail.
 - # Have had trouble in the past but WiFi assist helps
 - # Make most of our calls on our landline. Home WiFi assists mobile.
 - # Far too many days when issues occur to list the dates. Problems especially on cloudy/stormy days.
 - # I have missed many calls over a long period, approximately 8 months.
 - # Weak signal results in calls going straight to voice mail

Can you send and receive SMS ?

- Majority of people said yes, however, most also indicated no as well.
- Further Details:
 - # Only when the service is working.
 - # Shouldn't have to buy a booster to receive the quality of service others get for the same cost.
 - # Always have difficulty sending images, especially with images attached.
 - # Have trouble sending images which is a problem when trying to order parts for machinery, without travelling to town.
 - # Takes a long time for messages to be sent. Have to stand near the back door or be outside.
 - # Depends on service. Generally have to be inside with the Cell Fi Booster.

Have had to travel to a near by road where there is better service to download apps such as NSW Service.

Can you receive them inside your home?

- Majority of replies indicated no. Those that said yes can do so because they have, NBN Satellite or some form of WiFi assist. Most farmers have NBN Satellite internet, but still need to install a Booster/Repeater of some type.
- Further Details:
 - # Have to be near the Booster
 - # Can only receive them trough internet which is NBN Satellite.
 - # Only with WiFi Assist
 - # Can only receive them when the service is working, strong enough signal.
 - # Can never receive them
 - # Very slow at any time
 - # Can sometimes receive messages when outside
 - # Shouldn't have to buy a booster to receive the quality of service others get for the same cost.
 - # Depends on the weather.

Can you only receive them when outside?

- A number of people that answered No to “ Can you receive an SMS inside your home” also answered NO for this question. Some indicated they can receive messages when outside but the signal is patchy and slow.

Have you had to purchase a repeater to improve your service?

- Mostly Boosters/Repeaters have been purchased by those on farms. However, this does not improve their safety in the work place as signals are very patchy to non-existent over the area of a farm. One farmer indicated that even with a booster they still can't get 4G. Farmers have spent from \$800 to \$1300 trying to boost signal at their house. Many still have landlines because of the poor service.
- Further Details:
 - # Telstra's repeated advice regarding poor service is to purchase an aerial or booster of some sort. A number of those who completed the survey indicated that the cost was prohibitive.

Shouldn't have to buy a booster to receive the quality of service others get for the same cost. Once again regional areas are overlooked.

Internet Coverage:

- Most replied that access through mobile data was unreliable. Most access internet on their phones via their WiFi.
- Further Details:
 - # Mobile service drops out depending on the weather.
 - Mobile Data service has become worse over time.
 - # Through Mobile Data unreliable.
 - # Can't access Internet via Telstra mobile.
 - # No mobile data service without WiFi (Comment by resident/ Business Owner in town)
 - # Paying for data I can't use unless in larger towns.
 - # Flickering internet, drops out often.

Other Issues/ Comments:

- **Constant outages for 7 weeks due to an issue with the tower. Very difficult to run a business effectively with such poor service.**
- **Cuts out often, especially on TV link ups, Netflix etc. Have to search Telstra Network on my TV through the advance menu. Often when I choose app it say's not connected. Annoying to say the least.**
- **No Hotel ATM, No Hotel EFTPOS, Fuel Station system not working, all because of the poor service we receive in Quandialla. All systems out between 18/1/21 to 27/1/21 then 10/2/21 to 24/2/21.**
- **Not happy with the service considering how much we pay per month. We should be able to expect a service comparable to that in Young.**
- **Internet speeds via Telstra are too slow.**
- **Complete black hole in some areas of my property. Must drive around to find service.**
- **Have reported numerous issues with Telstra, two current complaints neither of which have been resolved.**
- **"Being Polite" dreadful service but it seems no one at Telstra cares. Get the same sympathetic response from the complaints department each time. Nothing ever gets fixed.**

