

Hello Review Committee

apologies, I do not have the time or resources to prepare a detailed submission, so hope this will suffice.

I wish to draw attention to a widespread problem which is of great concern to many small and remote communities like ours in Erica and Rawson, Victoria. Our local population is about 700, nearest major towns are Moe and Traralgon, both about 35km distant.

When storms, or accidents, or network faults, or bush fires, interrupt our electricity supply, all communication with the outside world is lost after about three hours. Nobody can call 000 for help, or advise emergency services that help is needed. Neither can concerned relatives reach us to determine our welfare.

This failure in the telecommunications network happens because the landline exchange and mobile tower battery back-up systems do not have the capacity to maintain service (in our case) for more than about three hours. After that, there is no landline or mobile service until service is restored.

In our area, storm damage repairs often need to wait until conditions are safe for the line crews, but this usually means 5 to 15 hour outages. One recent incident lasted about two days, but that is rare.

Perhaps the panel could suggest a minimum mandatory battery life, or provision of auto-start generators, in remote locations that have no alternative way of communicating to the outside world?

Thanks!

Des Dowie



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