

Dear 2021 Regional Telecommunications Review

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to put in a submission about the difficulties faced by people living in Regional Australia.

I live in Gum Scrub NSW. Gum Scrub is on a whole ignored. It is not even considered or named by the local Council which is Port Macquarie Hastings. It is called "Telegraph Point" and surrounds (17 klms away) or "Rollands Plains" and surrounds (22klms away) and bypassed because of this very fact.

In recent times when there has been a weather event such as the recent floods Communication is not adequate. I can see the tower from my property but after a few days of power outage (the last event 8 days power out) basic mobile phone communication does not exist, prior to this we have had large storms that had upended trees and also flooding events where the power is out for up to three to four days at a time. Same problem with the basic mobile connection. The culverts get flooded and the infrastructure gets overwhelmed and you are stuck.

I contacted Essential Energy the last time. I understand that due to Climate Change these events will become more frequent and more damaging, it is a fact, as it is already happening. Any long term Mid North Coast resident can recognise that.

A few years ago, for me to even get mobile coverage for Telstra I had to plug my mobile into a Vehicle Antenna which was installed on the apex of my shed roof. A special connector had to be purchased just for us talk to our family. I was told by a local some years later that there was a Court dispute over the nearest tower and that is why we could not get Telstra Mobile coverage.

We are often labelled as resilient
resilient

[rɪˈzɪliənt]

ADJECTIVE

(of a person or animal) able to withstand or recover quickly from difficult conditions.

"babies are generally far more resilient than new parents realize" · [more]

synonyms:

strong · tough · hardy · quick to recover · quick to bounce back · buoyant · difficult to keep down · irrepressible · adaptable · flexible

But I don't see it that way. I see that as a cop out for not providing what is needed for our community to thrive and function. Why do we have to be "resilient" when other communities enjoy BASIC NORMAL rights as a Australian and don't have to spend time petitioning and putting in submissions.

Mental Health decline is a big issue in "isolated" areas. If you cannot ring Family, Friends, your doctor or LifeLine then you are in big trouble.

If you cannot afford to have a NBN connection or a Smart Phone or plan then you are left behind. You cannot access basic services.

Money is tight and is spent on the roof over your head, the food you eat, the medicine you are prescribed and the vehicle you rely on. A 3G flip phone is all you can afford.

Our nearest Ambulance Station is located at Port Macquarie 32klms/40 minutes away. We know have a defibrillator but again that is at the Telegraph Point Hall 17klms away.

Our road has very heavy traffic on it, up to 66 tonnes gross and constant. There has been accidents.

Reliable, affordable Communication is vital to our Community and it;s members whatever their situation.

It is vital to our health and safety.

I would also like to note that the people who are supposed to represent us could do more.

I see a lot help for businesses and members of their parties in the local paper plus in the plethora of letters that are placed in my letterbox.

In recent times concerns communicated to my old federal member were ignored and I now live with increased risks on my local roads which are compounded by these communication issues.

How many people living on the Mid North Coast are expected to buy a UHF just to travel safely within their local community, where they LIVE !

Many thanks for your time.

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