

2021 Regional Telecommunications Review Secretariat
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and
Communications
GPO Box 594
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Thursday 30 September 2021

Dear Committee Members,

I write this submission to the 2021 Regional Telecommunications Review Committee on behalf of Hornsby SES.

The peri-urban areas of Hornsby districts have consistently received sub-standard telecommunications services over many years. The combination of a significant number of mobile black spots, multiple areas with no more than 3G coverage and no or very limited access to the Internet, has caused significant stress for many residents and businesses and put lives at risk in emergency periods.

This issue has been particularly stressful during the COVID pandemic with lockdowns requiring people to work from home and school students restricted to remote online learning. The lockdown period has seen increased strain on already limited broadband services with multiple members of households seeking to work and learn from home. The telecommunications services delivered in our area have been inadequate in a lockdown.

As we approach summer we are particularly concerned about mobile blackspots. SES volunteers have found themselves without coverage and been unable to communicate during emergencies including storm/flood responses and missing person searches. This is in an area only 40 minutes' drive from the Sydney city centre.

Further to this, a concern that the 132 500 number (the NSW SES phone number) cannot be called in certain locations or at certain times where the network is unreliable; unlike the 000 number that be called when no network is not available.

The combination of unreliable mobile phone service and inadequate broadband services in this area is a source of immense concern for the communities and businesses in this area.

Our area is not currently receiving adequate or reliable telecommunication services. Please consider our area's need for improved mobile phone coverage, reduction of mobile blackspots and provision of adequate broadband services in our community.

Yours faithfully



Senior Group Officer Chris Mawn

Deputy Unit Commander – NSW SES Hornsby Unit