



Christel Lundh

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Acacia Hills

To Secretariat Telecommunication board,

Thank you for considering my submission with issues and concerns regarding the lack of phone and internet coverage in rural Darwin NT.

My name is Christel Lundh and I own 22 acers 45 minutes North of Darwin NT called Acacia Hills. My partner and I bought our block and built a new house in 2015 and have ever since had issues with our phone reception and internet.

I have been in contact with more than 50 residents in the Litchfield shire/ council area regarding the same issues- where 7 have asked me to submit their concerns together with my submission and I have attached them to this email (please see attached).

I have made several complaints to both Telstra, Litchfield Council and the NT Government, but have been told it is a Federal matter, hence making my submission in hopes this review will assist the residents of Litchfield to receive adequate telecommunications that has been an issue for many years.

Please see a summary of the issues and concerns I have to date:

- 1) I have spoken with Telstra regarding my concerns on multiple occasions for the past 7years as I was concerned when I was unable to make an emergency calls to the ambulance or police if there was an accident or one of my children was injured.
Telstra agreed (after I had made monthly complaints for 3 years) to install a booster under the 'black spot' program but the coverage only reaches if we are in the vicinity of the house and we would still not be able to call the emergency department if the accident happened outside on the block. When I spoke with Telstra last, they suggested to call back in 10 years when the population had increased and there are more people affected and dismissed our request for help.
- 2) Telstra offered to replace my Telstra booster with an independently owned booster (cel fifi 2) where the technology was upgraded and worked well in the rural area but I would have to pay for the installation and product myself (~\$2000).
- 3) My partner and I own a plumbing business and are trying to manage our client base, e-mails

and tax affairs but are unable to speak with our customers to make bookings, send emails or take emergency jobs as we constantly are cut off, the customers are unable to hear us or emails are not sent. This is causing us great frustration and loss of business.

- 4) It is impossible for me to study or work from home as my internet and phone reception does not allow secure connection. I have to travel to an area where I can get 1-2 bars and sit in my car if I have online classes or zoom/ teams meetings. This was increasingly difficult last year during lockdown as I could not operate and carry out my work. It was a difficult and stressful situation that made me feel isolated and disappointing.
- 5) My partner and I recently upgraded our phones and payed more money with the hopes that the reception would be better but this has not occurred either. We have also installed satellite WI-FI as we were told that we could not install ADLS but the reception is ad hock and has not improved our situation.
- 6) During the COVID-19 lockdowns, it is also of my understanding that the COVID-19 check point was moved from Acacia hills store due to the bad reception as the workers were unable to communicate with Darwin. I find this a concerning issue when emergency staff are unable to contact to update on COVID status due to the bad reception.
- 7) When speaking to other residents about the phone and internet reception issue in the rural area they all agree with me that it is also causing us mental health issues, loss of work and stress when we are unable to call emergency or speak to our loved ones. One resident explained that she had been kicked by a horse and was unable to contact emergency and had to wait until her partner found her to take her into the hospital. This is only one stories that was told to me but know of many more and more severe.

The concerns are also that we live in 2021 where technology steers our everyday life and we live outside a 45km zone to a mayor city but cannot use the basic phones or internet that is often an essential tool (and expectation) in today's society.

More of the Litchfield shire residents are willing to write a petition or have a discussion with anyone who is willing to support us in resolving this.

Thank you and I look forward hearing from you soon.

Kind Regards,

Christel Lundh

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Acacia Hills