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Mobile Black Spot Program- Submission Round 5

I live in the of Telangatuk East, in the southern Wimmera, 65km south of Horsham. We like many others in the district are running an Agricultural business, and have a daily battle with both mobile phone coverage and internet services of an inadequate standard, to run our business. The lack of Internet was very apparent with the home schooling of school children during the pandemic.

Telangatuk East is in a relatively highly populated mixed farming area, with many thriving businesses. Along with that we also have Rocklands Reservoir and Toolondo Lake at our doorsteps which contributes to a large amount of tourism into the area, in the form of fishermen, campers, motorbikes, hikers and shooters.

With the amount of people living, working and travelling to and from our district I believe that in this day and age it is important that good phone coverage is provided, for safety reasons as well as for businesses to preform to their potential.

Telangatuk experienced a large bushfire in 2005, in which we were impacted personally. I can vividly remember that Mum was trying to business on the Satellite phone and how frustrated she was. The Public Hall was utilised as the staging area for the CFA, as it has been a few times recently since. The mobile reception at the Hall is nearly non existent, and no doubt hindered the organisation by the CFA.

Our proximity to Rocklands reservoir, is another reason why I believe it is necessary to have mobile service. Rocklands can have thousands camping for long weekends and in particular at Easter, this area also has no reception in most areas and limited 3G reception in other areas. Accidents often happen, as was the case a few weeks ago when a vehicle overturned and emergency services were required to attend.

We had hoped the Balmoral Telstra tower may address this issue but it is facing the wrong direction apparently. It is my understanding we are receiving a signal from the Mt Dundas tower, which is 50 plus kilometres away.

At the moment, we believe phone reception is sub-standard making it difficult to even make basic phone calls from the area.

I have contacted both Emma Kealy, Member for Lowan and Anne Webster, MP National Party, who have asked me to do this submission. Our community would be very grateful if we could be considered for a mobile tower or a solution to our sub standard mobile coverage. I did include signatures of residents and visitors to the area, who are keen to support better mobile phone coverage to the Telangatuk East/ Rocklands area, when I contacted the Members.