



# *Pastoralists' Association*

*of West Darling Inc.*

Registered under NSW Government Fair Trading

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## **Mobile Black Spot Program—Round 5A—Submission**

The Pastoralists' Association of West Darling (PAWD) is an agripolitical organisation that has represented pastoralists in the far west of NSW since 1907. The majority of our members live in remote communities or on isolated properties, and many have limited access to mobile phone and data services.

The Association nominates three locations, one being the locality of Packsaddle (approximately half way between Broken Hill and Tibooburra on the Silver City Highway) as a black spot, and recommends installation of a mobile tower at this location. This would benefit the local community, pastoralists, tourists, transport operators and exploration companies.

The sealing of the Silver City Highway from Broken Hill to Tibooburra is almost complete. This has already lead to a significant increase in tourist traffic, and trucks carrying freight into the Cooper Basin and south west Queensland. There are several community events that take place in the Packsaddle area that attract hundreds of people annually. As a result of the increasing activity in the area the Royal Flying Doctor Service is upgrading the Packsaddle airstrip. Mobile phone service would help the public to communicate with the RFDS and vice versa. It would also assist the SES unit based at Packsaddle in times of emergency, such as bushfires and floods.

There is also a black spot area North of Wentworth on the Silver city Highway which is a major thorough fare for traffic moving between Victoria and Western NSW. A significant length of highway (approximately 70km) is without mobile service. The highway supports continuous movements of trucks and workers in and out of Gingko sand mine as well as large volumes of tourists moving between the two states.

The third vital area is located on the Eastern boundary of the Barrier Ranges on the Barrier Highway, a major arterial road providing a freight corridor between the Eastern sea board and Western Australia. The Barrier Highway also accommodates large volumes of tourist traffic travelling East and West. It must be noted that the number of tourist movements along the Barrier Highway has increased significantly in recent years.

Pastoralists in the three nominated areas are unable to maximise the use of technology in managing their pastoral businesses more efficiently. The rapid development of remote monitoring of stock water points makes access to a mobile phone signal vital in order to use this technology.

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There are a number of existing Telstra towers in the district that no longer provide the level of service that users were accustomed to in previous years. PAWD would like to open a discussion as to how the ongoing issues with these towers can be resolved, and would appreciate advice as to how we can progress this matter.

The Association looks forward to a favourable outcome in regard to the nomination of the above mentioned locations as mobile black spots.

Kind regards,

Matthew Jackson.  
President.

