

The Nundle Branch of the CWA of NSW has shown concern with the fact that when an electrical blackout occurs in our area we are unable to phone out, either by landline or mobile. This poses a grave problem on a medical level as these blackouts are often caused by a storm event, a time when the risk to the community is greatly increased. We are unable to access any emergency services, including Ambulance and our local Nurse Practitioner. She is then, in turn, unable to access backup, should she need it.

Telstra say they have recently replaced the batteries in the back up equipment (after three years of pleading), but at the time of the last blackout a couple of months ago the same situation occurred. This means someone has to drive a round trip of 15-20 Klms to access another tower to make sure the electricity co. are aware of our situation. Telstra state the batteries have a life expectancy of six hours. It is very common to have a blackout of much longer duration, often up to twelve hours. Being left with no communication with the outside world can be very frightening, not to mention dangerous.

There are ,of course, many medical issues at stake during a blackout:- the loss of stored vaccines, the non- functioning of equipment such as oxygen pumps, beds, chairs and medi-alerts to name a few, but these are multiplied many times over when one is unable to access help.

We would like you to be aware of this problem and should any available solution come to your attention, we would be grateful for your intervention and help.

Sincerely,

 President.