

# Mobile Coverage Programme Discussion Paper

## Submission Cover Sheet

### Submission Information

This cover sheet should be attached to submissions made to the Department of Communications in relation to the Mobile Coverage Programme Discussion Paper.

#### Contact Details

Name of respondent:	Rob Small
Name of organisation:	Colac Otway Shire Council
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Website (if applicable):	www.colacotway.vic.gov.au
Date:	11 February 2014

#### Confidentiality and privacy

All submissions and comments, or parts thereof, will be treated as non-confidential information unless specifically requested, and acceptable reasons should accompany each request. Email disclaimers will not be considered sufficient confidentiality requests.

Respondents lodging a submission should be aware that submissions (excluding any information agreed to be treated as confidential information) will be made publicly available, including on the Department of Communications' website. Submissions and comments will be subject to freedom of information provisions. Despite a submission being identified as confidential or sensitive, submissions may be disclosed where authorised or required by law, or for the purpose of parliamentary processes.

Do you want all or parts of the submission to be treated as confidential? Yes  No

If yes, identify below which parts of the submission are to be treated as confidential (and provide a reason):

If the submission contains personal information of any third party individual, indicate on this Submission Cover Sheet if that third party individual has not consented to the publication of his or her personal information:

#### Submission Instructions

Submissions are to be made by **5:00pm (AEST) Friday 28 February 2014**.

Where possible, submissions should be lodged electronically, preferably in Microsoft Word or other text-based formats via the email address [mobilecoverage@communications.gov.au](mailto:mobilecoverage@communications.gov.au)

Alternatively, submissions can be sent to the postal address below (to arrive by the due date):

The Manager  
Mobile Coverage Programme  
Department of Communications  
GPO Box 2154  
CANBERRA ACT 2615

All submissions lodged will be acknowledged by the Department of Communications by email (or by letter if no email is provided). Respondents lodging a submission who do not receive acknowledgement of their submission should contact the Department. Submissions which are not acknowledged by the Department as being received may not be considered. Respondents should be aware that emails greater than 10Mb may not be successfully delivered.



27 February 2014

The Honourable Malcolm Turnbull  
Minister for Communications  
PO Box 6022  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister

**Submission - Mobile Coverage Program Discussion Paper**

The following submission is made on behalf of the Colac Otway Shire on behalf of its communities relating to poor or non-existent mobile telephone coverage across a large percentage of the Shire.

There are three significant areas of the Shire with poor coverage and significant black spots.

The three areas can broadly be described as:

1. Gellibrand/Kawarren/Carlisle River
2. Beeac, Irrewarra, Birregurra, Yeo Gerangamete, Barwon Downs, Dreeite and Warrion
3. Cape Otway and Glenaire River Valley.

In addition to these areas, there are thirteen places along the Great Ocean Road where black spots in mobile coverage exist.

Along the holiday settlements of Wye River, Separation Creek, Kennett River and Skenes Creek, the peak holiday period has seen extreme loads on the existing system which has resulted in ordinary business access to wi-fi and mobile coverage being seriously curtailed to the detriment of our economic prosperity and community safety.

The key concerns expressed by local communities are the following:

1. **Fire Danger:** the Otway Ranges and the hills that lead back to the basalt plains contain eight of Victoria's most fire threatened communities (Barongarook, Barwon Downs, Carlisle River, Forrest, Kawarren, Lavers Hill, Marengo and Wye River/Kennett River/Separation Creek).

The ability to communicate becomes extremely difficult leading up to and during extreme fire events. People's capacity to keep themselves and others safe relies heavily on the communication capacities within a community.

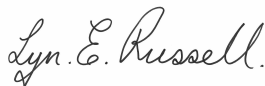
These issues are exacerbated by the high populations of "outsiders" and visitors during the summer months (the fire season).

2. **Individual Access to Medical Aid:** in the public meetings in both Birregurra and Gellibrand at which Federal Parliamentary Secretary of Communications, the Hon. Paul Fletcher MP spoke, many anecdotes were related about people having a fall or a farm accident. The imposts of no mobile communications seriously impacted in the health outcomes for these members of the community.
3. **Social Connectedness:** in isolated communities, particularly those where land based economies have been impacted by drought and storms, the need for contact with fellow community members is extremely high. The severe mental stress of isolated communities is made all the worse where the communication tools that so many in our urban communities have access to, is denied to them. The level of suicides within the agricultural sector strikes a harsh chord within our own farming based communities.

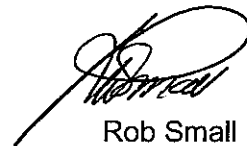
These three key considerations form the basis of the needs within the communities that we represent in terms of mobile telephone coverage. They have a critical impact on their health, economic and social wellbeing.

We urge you to make coverage of these areas within our Shire a priority when considering the implementation of your Mobile Coverage Program.

Yours sincerely



Cr Lyn Russell  
Mayor



Rob Small  
Chief Executive Officer