

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:	Michael Leonhard
Name of organisation:	Corryong Neighbourhood Centre
Phone:	██████████
Email:	██████████
Website (if applicable):	www.corryongnc.org
Date:	27 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? **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

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.

We wish to make a submission for inclusion in the Mobile Coverage Program upgrades on behalf of the Upper Murray region and, in particular, the town of Corryong, Victoria.

While the issues and questions raised in the *Mobile Coverage Programme Discussion Paper* are important, the reality for the Upper Murray is that we already have a monopoly situation, with Telstra the only provider who fully service the area, and the logistics of any upgrades to mobile or broadband services will be dictated by the MNO and no doubt heavily influenced by our remote location and low population.

However, we feel it is important for us to bring the Upper Murray area to the attention of the Department. Corryong is a remote, rural town in North East Victoria with a population of just under 1500. The Upper Murray area serviced by the town covers parts of Tumbarumba and Towong Shires, stretches along the Murray River in both Victoria and NSW and includes a population of approx. 4000, many of whom live in remote, isolated valleys. The region is prone to weather anomalies and extremes, bushfires and floods and is heavily dependent upon tourism, festivals and events held each year for economic sustainability. The largest of these is the Man From Snowy River Bush Festival which brings up to 20,000 additional people to Corryong on the first weekend of April.

The Upper Murray is a low socio-economic region with the average fortnightly income a little over half the Victorian average. Together with higher service and delivery costs and limited radio coverage, this creates a situation where many homes only have access to mobile phone services for all their communication needs.

Mobile phone and broadband coverage in the area has always been inadequate and for most part, only available to Telstra customers with limited service, including in the centre of Corryong. During times of peak demand, such as festivals and holidays, there is little or no mobile coverage across the region.

In times of emergency, this could have disastrous repercussions if those in the path of a fire or flood cannot be contacted. Even emergency services rely upon the mobile telephone network as the communications used are not compatible across the Victorian/NSW border.

We believe our region qualifies for consideration under both components of this program – as a small community in a disaster prone area and as a location with coverage problems particularly in times of high demand - and therefore request that the Upper Murray is included on the “list of locations” for this project.



Michael Leonhard
Chairperson, Corryong Neighbourhood Centre
on behalf of the Upper Murray Community