

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:	[REDACTED]
Name of organisation:	Eurobodalla Shire Council
Phone:	[REDACTED]
Email:	[REDACTED]
Website (if applicable):	www.esc.nsw.gov.au
Date:	

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.

List of priority Locations in Eurobodalla for Improved Mobile Coverage

The Eurobodalla Shire Council area is located 2 hours from Canberra and 4 hours from Sydney on the NSW South Coast. It has a number of areas with no or poor mobile coverage. In particular and directly linked to the criteria for funding under this scheme, there are mobile coverage issues in regard to:

Major Transport Routes

The Kings Highway between Canberra and Batemans Bay has a high accident rate and also suffers from poor mobile coverage making it difficult for broken down cars or accidents to be reported to authorities.

Improved mobile coverage would address existing user concerns about this and would also improve coverage for small communities on the route like Nelligen and the many recreational users of the Clyde River.

Small Communities

The funding programme is also targeted at small communities - Central Tilba and Tilba Tilba are ones that have no coverage. They have about 90 residence and business premises. Other towns such as Bodalla, Nelligen, Dalmeny and Mogo have poor levels of service.

High Demand during seasonal holiday periods

Batemans Bay is the closest coastal holiday town to Canberra. This together, with its proximity to Sydney, means the population swells to three times its normal size during the peak holiday periods. This puts increased pressure on the mobile network both for holiday users, businesses trying to service these visitors and existing Batemans Bay businesses undertaking their normal operations. The number of holiday beds in Batemans Bay has been estimated to be in excess of 10,000.

Significant residential and tourist complaints have been received over both the last two peak seasons. At least one major local employer who relies on coverage has indicated they may need to consider relocating if the service does not improve.

Comments on the discussion paper about the process for allocating funds under this programme

All three mobile network operators service the Eurobodalla local government area. Funds should be allocated in a way which maximises the likelihood that network operators will share new facilities as the coverage provided by all is patchy.

The list that is established by the Commonwealth of the locations that are reported to have no or poor mobile coverage should be made available to the public and local government for comment before being finalised. As a minimum, those that impact the relevant local government area should be provided before finalisation of the list so additional comment can be made.

NBN should be required to work with MNOs under this scheme because:

- It improves the viability of towers in marginal areas
- There will be less impact on the local community in terms of less construction and less impact on the natural environment
- Less planning and regulatory approvals so quicker implementation

State governments should be approached at an early stage about the possibility of supporting their local councils. Those smaller regions who need improved coverage most may well be those with less funds to provide a co-contribution. The improved coverage will drive future economic growth but this does not mean businesses / local government will have funds available now.

The timescales for the Black spot programme look lengthy because the process does not seem to start until after the \$80m section is finalised. If much of the process could be run concurrently, this would assist in the timely delivery of improved services.