

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

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Date: 28 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

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.



Submission – Discussion Paper

Mobile Coverage Programme

1 About the Shire

As the birthplace of European settlement in Victoria, the Glenelg Shire enjoys a prominent place in history. Lieutenant James Grant was the first European to chart Victoria's south west coastline in 1800. From his ship 'Lady Nelson', he sighted and named Portland Bay after the English secretary of State, the Duke of Portland. The Portland Bay has continued as an important natural asset and a hub for community life.

The Shire is located in the traditional lands and waters of the Aboriginal Gunditjmara, Bunganditj and Jardwadjali people. The Council respectfully acknowledges and recognises their important contribution to the Shire's cultural heritage and identity. The Council is pleased to partner the local Aboriginal organisations through the Aboriginal Partnership Plan and to advocate for the National Heritage listed Budj Bim landscape to be recognised with World Heritage listing.

From the rugged coastline of south west Victoria through to prime farming land the Shire offers Aboriginal and European heritage at the doorstep. It's regional living at its best with its international deep sea port and local harbour providing a robust economic base for tourism, fishing, agriculture and sustainable energy projects. It has great schools, health services and one of the best regional airports in Victoria. It's the birthplace of the kelpie contrasted with landscapes that vie for World Heritage listing. It's a place of pride, prosperity and unveiled potential.

As one of the largest local government areas in the State the Glenelg Shire covers an area of 6,212 square kilometers. About 19,764 people live in the Shire¹ with nearly 14,000 rateable properties and over 2,500 kilometres of local roads².

The Shire boasts the localities of: Allestree, Bolwarra, Cape Bridgewater, Cape Nelson, Carapook, Cashmore, Casterton, Condah, Corndale, Dartmoor, Digby, Drik Drik, Drumborg, Dunrobin, Grassdale, Gorae, Gorae West, Heathmere, Henty, Heywood, Homerton, Hotspur, Lake Mundi, Lyons, Narrawong, Nelson, Merino, Mount Richmond, Myamyn, Paschendale, Portland, Roseneath, Sandford, Strathdownie, Tyrendarra and Winnap.

¹ ABS LGA population statistics 30 June 2012.

² As at 30 June 2012.

2 Visitor Statistics

The Discovery Coast is not only the western gateway to the Great Ocean Road, but the perfect holiday destination for those who enjoy beaches, bays, history and heritage.

The attractions and activities in our Shire are endless, from hiking, fishing, whale watching and tours of aboriginal heritage sites to historical architecture and magnificent botanical gardens.

The Shire has three (3) Visitor Information Centres at Portland, Casterton and Nelson.

Visitor numbers through the centres in the past 3 years 2011 – 2013 were 190,331 Portland, 30,466 Casterton and 67,280 Nelson.

3 Emergency Management

Residents and visitors rely on their mobile phones and devices to stay in touch with their families, friends and work sites. In an emergency these devices will be used for warnings and alerts to improve safety, preparedness and response times. At present mobile devices do not have reliable coverage throughout the Glenelg Shire.

In times of emergencies the services that are available seem to lack capacity to cope with the traffic dependent on them.

Portland is the site of a busy international port facility and the Alcoa aluminium smelter. Although there is mobile coverage at Portland there are still areas of Portland with poor to intermittent service.

The following recent emergencies demonstrated the adverse impact on residents and business and the reliance of emergency services for mobile phone coverage:

December 2012	Koppers Liquid Pitch Spill
November 2012	Telstra Fire Warrnambool
January 2013	Kentbruck Portland/Nelson Road Fire
March 2013	Cashmore Fire
August 2013	Portland Flood

4 General Comment

The Council has over many years argued and lobbied on behalf of the community and businesses for better mobile phone coverage throughout the Shire.

The arguments for improved service are focused in four main areas.

4.1 The high fire risk that is evident in the area.

Plantations surround isolated small communities. Many of the main road links between the forests and the international port facility at Portland either do not have coverage or have intermittent coverage.

It is important that secure and timely communication is available for people at risk in the area and also the professionals and volunteers who are fighting fires.

4.2 Connectivity.

The normal expectation to enable the day to day use by local residents, visitors and businesses (including farming, fishing and forestry operations) is not satisfied at present. The farming community needs to be able to engage in business discussions while actively pursuing on farm activities away from the homestead and landlines.

Businesses need reliable coverage to transact day to day activities.

Annual sales of livestock at the Casterton Saleyards are in the order of \$12million however there is no mobile coverage at the site.

4.3 Visitors/Tourists

The region experiences a high number of visitors to the area accessing the natural beauty of the Shire and national parks. Many of these visitors are unaware and surprised by the lack of mobile phone coverage in this area. The contemporary tourist expects adequate coverage to communicate with family and friends and to on-book their holiday. Tourism operators also need to engage in business discussions while away from their business location and landlines.

4.4 Road Connections

There are a number of highways and main roads connecting towns and tourist destinations that do not have mobile phone coverage. Lack of coverage by both mobile phone and radio networks along these routes raises safety concerns for residents, visitors and isolated workers especially if there are natural disasters, vehicle breakdown and accidents.

The links include:

Glenelg Highway
Princes Highway

Henty Highway
Portland Nelson Road
Bridgewater Road
Dartmoor Hamilton Road
Casterton Penola Road

5 Specific Locations needing Improvement

Listed below are locations within the Shire based on the current level of service.

Non-existent Service

Lake Mundi area
Merino (unless connected to 3G)
Nelson
Lower Glenelg National Park
Cobboboonee National Park

Poor to Non-Existent

Brimbol area poor to non-existent
Casterton area
Casterton Road – Drumborg to Merino
Casterton Saleyards
Dartmoor to Nelson Road
Gorae
Grassdale
Mt Richmond
Nelson area
Strathdownie

Poor Service

Bridgewater
Casterton – northerly
Cashmore
Digby
Henty district
Myamyn
Nelson
Paschendale
Portland
Tahara

Intermittent Service

Bolwarra
Cape Nelson
Condah area
Drumborg
Greenwald
Heathmere
Homerton
Hotspur
Lyons
Winnap

Coverage scored as 8/10 (being just adequate)

Allestree
Heywood
Narrawong
Sandford
Tyrendarra

6 Summary

Resolution of the issues mentioned by improving mobile phone coverage has had very strong local support over a number of years but given the recent events with fires in Victoria and South Australia, the local community is clearly of the view that phone coverage must be addressed to provide a safer environment for the region. Coupled with the disastrous impact on business operations caused by the Telstra fire in Warrnambool in November 2012, there is a need for significant improvement to mobile phone coverage in this region.

7 Further Information

Ms Sharon Kelsey
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GLENELG SHIRE

