

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:	Peter Delfs
Name of organisation:	Gracetown Bushfire Brigade
Phone:	██████████
Email:	████████████████████
Website (if applicable):	
Date:	20 th Jan 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):

I do not wish for any part of the submission to be treated as confidential.

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 Form

As the Officer-in Charge and Fire Control Officer of the Gracetown Bushfire Brigade I fully support the Government initiative to extend mobile phone coverage, particularly the Mobile Network Expansion Project, to improve mobile phone coverage in small communities and in locations prone to experiencing natural disasters.

I would strongly suggest that Gracetown receives money for Mobile Network coverage as Planning Approval has already been approved through the Margaret River Shire for a Telstra Tower but funds are not currently available for construction.

Gracetown is situated 270 kilometres south of Perth and 20 kilometres out of Margaret River, Western Australia and is a small coastal community of 220 houses and receives no mobile coverage.

Emergencies are compromised due to the lack of mobile coverage in the area and my support of this proposal is due to the following reasons:

1. Ability to call out members for a fire is extremely difficult as I can only access members on landlines, not really convenient during the day when members are out and about. Some fires we have attended undermanned due to lack of mobile coverage.
2. During the large fire we had here in January 2012 that started at 3.30p.m. we had difficulty contacting members to attend the fire. I had to have the Incident Control Point located four kilometres out of Gracetown alongside Cowaramup Bay Road in a paddock where we were able to get intermittent mobile coverage and more reliable radio reception. Not very appropriate or effective as Emergency Personnel were also unable to coordinate their units to effectively fight the fire.
3. During the January 2012 fire the landlines to Claret Ash Court and Seahawk Rest, where I and the majority of Gracetown Bushfire Brigade members live, was burnt and inoperable. This caused an extremely dangerous situation two nights after the initial fire when it flared up once again and no members were able to be rung and a member had to drive to everyone's house to raise the alarm. Mobile phone coverage would have averted this becoming an issue.
4. A recent house fire we had here in Gracetown last January resulted in nine trucks from neighbouring brigades turning up due to the 000 callout. Although, residents had the fire out very quickly I could not contact these trucks to turn them back due to no mobile coverage and extremely poor radio reception. It was a big waste of resources and could have led to a disaster in another locality due to all trucks being at Gracetown.
5. Fighting a fire in the Gracetown locality without mobile coverage or reliable radio communications is very dangerous and it is not right to expose volunteers to greater risks as a result of inadequate communications. Mobile phone coverage would allow our members to be alerted by SMS when an emergency arises.
6. All volunteer members of the Gracetown Bushfire Brigade also totally support Gracetown being included in the Mobile Network Expansion Project and fully endorsed the proposal at a recent meeting.

Submitter:

Peter Delfs

Fire Control Officer

Gracetown Bushfire Brigade.

20th January 2014