



Sat 11/07/2015 6:14 PM

Tony

Telecommunications - Mobile Black Spots

To secretariat@rtirc.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am the owner of an Outback Tourism Resort in the Flinders Ranges.

Thank you for sending this through. Lack of Regional Telecommunications is the biggest risk to business that we face.

Most of the developed world (and particularly Asia) are amazed that we are so backward in Regional Australia. There is a strong expectation from International visitors that they will be connected to the rest of the world.

There are Telstra and Optus towers at Hawker 35km south of our business at Rawnsley Park. We are on the extreme edge of reception so we are able to get coverage to a mobile device provided it is linked to a suitable aerial.

I made submissions to the previous review in 2011 – but unfortunately there has been no change in our situation in 4 years

I made the comments (below) to the ACCAN review in 2011 that were included in the report. (attached)

Box 1:

We live in a region with no mobile coverage. Tourists come to stay on our station. We are located about 35 kilometres from Hawker. We believe there is an issue of visitor safety in a major tourism region. Since Spring 2011, there have been three incidents where tourists have injured themselves and it has taken 1.5 to 2 hours for someone from their party to walk back to alert us to contact the emergency services because there is no mobile coverage. While these incidents were not life threatening, it will only be a matter of time. Telstra is looking at putting in a repeater tower which will provide mobile coverage. There would be a small cost to install a small antenna which will pick up the signal in Hawker and retransmit in Rawnsley Park. Rawnsley Park Station, South Australia

Box 2:

Lack of Mobile coverage in certain areas effects small business in the tourism sector as tourists will not come unless they have some coverage. Rawnsley Park Station, South Australia

The following responses are to questions contained in the 2015 review.

. Do people in regional Australia believe their reliance on telecommunications differs from those in urban areas? How does it differ and can you provide examples? See ACCAN Report 2012 (nothing has changed in m circumstances)

Q2. For those users already connected to an nbn network service, has the service met your N/A expectations?

Q3. Having regard to the technical solution likely to be used in your area, do you have views on the adequacy of that solution in terms of meeting needs now and into the future? There is no likelihood of Fibre Optic being used at Rawnsley Park. The best option would be to improve the mobile signal from Hawker. We approached Telstra in 2012 to quote for a booster tower near Rawnsley Caravan Park. Price quoted was \$200,000 which we were not prepared to accept.

Q4. Irrespective of the adequacy of your local access, are there issues with backhaul or long distance carriage that impacts on your use of telecommunications services? We currently use a parabolic antennae to get the 3G signal for internet. The standard of this signal seems to be quite erratic. We consistently have very slow transmission speeds 5.00pm-6.00pm and again 9.00pm-10.00pm. This does not seem to be related to weather conditions so we can only assume that it is related to usage of the network during 'after school' and 'end of banking day' periods.

Q5. For users living in areas without mobile coverage, what priorities, other than specific locations, do you consider should be recognised in future efforts to improve coverage? The issue of public safety in small communities and areas of high visitation should be considered.

Q6. What opportunities do the mobile network industry see for extending coverage in regional Australia and increasing investment in mobile networks? N/A

Q7. Do you have any views on co-investment approaches that might help to improve the

broadband technology outcome in your area? There has to be cross-subsidization between high volume users and low volume if we are to get better coverage. There also has to be more providers allowed access to the Australian market. My son was able to do a job interview from a remote camping ground in Mozambique because Indian Companies provide low cost telecommunications in that country.

Q8. How might new applications and services that utilise mobile networks for voice and data transform the way you live and work? We probably cannot imagine the outcomes. There are huge possibilities for education and training with this technology

Q9. What communications barriers have you experienced in expanding or operating your business or providing services, such as health or education? Have you been able to overcome these barriers and if so, how? We have difficulty attracting younger visitors who expect to stay connected. The same with younger staff members – they cannot survive with out good communications

Q10. What communication functions (e.g. speed, mobility, reliability, data, etc) would best suit your needs, noting the limitations of each technology (e.g. mobile, wireless, satellite, fibre)? The critical factor is 'Mobile Coverage'. Most younger people have Smart phones that are part of their anatomy.

Q11. Do we need to continue to guarantee the standard telephone service for all (or only some) consumers, and if so, to what extent? The stardard phone service is no longer relevant. It is 'Mobile' coverage that is important.

Q12. Are there new or other services, the availability of which should be underpinned by consumer safeguards? Mobile Coverage, Mobile Coverage, Mobile Coverage, Mobile Coverage

Q13. What standards should apply to your services? How might they best be enforced? The technology is available to provide vastly improved mobile coverage with the use of signal amplification. People without mobile coverage would be quite happy to have a poor service rather than no service at all.

Rawnsley Park Station

