

To Whom it may concern,

I am writing in response to your request for information in to the availability or lack of availability in regards to telecommunications services. As a resident, business owner and member of the Martinsville rural fire brigade in the small town of Martinsville NSW 2265 our greatest problem is mobile phone coverage. We have tried using Telstra next G, along with Optus and Vodafone all of which get extremely patchy reception and in the valley there is virtually no reception at all on any network. Our biggest frustration is that as we are only 7km by road from Cooranbong NSW 2265 which gets very good reception and only 12km by road from Morisset NSW 2264 which is aimed at becoming the epicentre of the booming Lake Macquarie it seems to be ridiculous that even though we are so close to these major area that we don't get adequate reception coverage.

This lack of reception issue also becomes an issue in regards to our safety as Fire Fighters in the past we have had our radio network crash leaving us in a potentially hazardous position not being able to communicate with Fire Control to find out what is going on. When these events happen we need to be able to rely on mobile phone reception in order to continue to communicate with fire control and necessary parties in order increase the safety and protection of not only our own lives but also the community as a large.

I do appreciate that having adequate mobile phone coverage all over Australia is something that will probably never happen but given the close proximity of our area to a major regional centre it would make sense for us to have decent mobile phone reception. Also one of the other issues is that the Watagan Mountains are a very popular camping and picnic location for people from all over the area and as a result a number of fires occur and because of the lack of mobile phone reception people are unable to notify the authorities for quite some time until they manage to locate some reception, in this time which can take 30minutes or more. It gives the fires a chance to spread and become very hazardous and hard to control, if the authorities were able to be notified straight away they we would be able to have fire crews on scene significantly quicker which means that we have more chance of getting the fire under control before it turns in to a serious threat to life and property.

Having very poor reception also has significant impacts on small business owners as well and given the current pricing of satellite communications even with government assistance the ongoing call costs make it simply not financially viable.

Myself, my family and community together sincerely hope that you are able to do something about the phone reception across all carriers for our area and help us to protect our community.

Kind Regards,
Kieron Pearce