



Reference: DW561192

24 February 2010

Standing Committee on Broadband in Rural and Regional Communities
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2790

Dear Sir

RE: Telecommunications Availability in Rural and Regional Communities

I refer to your invitation to make a submission to the inquiry regarding the availability of telecommunications and other technology services in rural and regional communities.

The availability of broadband services, and in particular ADSL, has been of concern to Lithgow City Council. Examples of issues noted include:

- **Poor infrastructure:** This has resulted in no lines being available for ADSL enabling in the area of South Bowenfels Strathone Estate. This is an area that is expanding. Broadband via 3g devices are being offered as a solution for availability, but the costs of these plans are not comparative with those of standard ADSL.
- **Quality of the lines available:** Extensive use of pair gains telephone lines in our area has resulted in the inability to have ADSL enabled on these lines. This problem has impacted on Council's business activities, resulting in having to use the more expensive 3G network to provide connectivity to a Council facility in Portland.
- **3G Blackspots and areas of poor strength:** Capertee, Clarence and some areas of Portland have little or no 3G coverage. In areas with poor coverage external YAGI antennas are required to prevent drop out from occurring.

The social and business impacts of the digital divide are significant for regional Councils, and we appreciate the opportunity to provide a submission to the inquiry.

Yours sincerely

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