

To: The Standing Committee on Broadband in Rural and Regional Communities

Although Cowra Council received this invitation in Dec last year, it has only filtered down to me in the past couple of weeks, so I hope it is not too late to submit to the inquiry on behalf of the community of Greenethorpe.

The village of Greenethorpe is in Central Western NSW, roughly at the centre of the triangle formed by Grenfell, Young and Cowra, 30km from Grenfell and 40km from Young and Cowra.

As our small exchange is not ADSL-enabled, most of us rely on satellite connections for broadband, with a couple of residents using Telstra Wireless with an external aerial. The village is also unable to use mobile phones, as we are in a complete blackspot. TV reception is patchy, with digital reception dropping in and out in the evening.

Despite being touted as an alternative to ADSL broadband, the satellite connection has never lived up to this. Dropouts on the connection are frequent, at all times of day and night. I use my own connection to maintain several websites, including the Greenethorpe community website, so I am probably online more than other users, and I have frequently been cut off in the middle of an update. I and others have been cut off while making transactions via eBay and Paypal. If the dropout happens during a large download or update, the process usually needs to be started again, with extra cost incurred in downloading again.

One of our residents is a graphic artist, and relies on her connection to upload her finished work to her customers, and has experienced difficulties doing so because of dropouts.

I have been keeping track of dropouts on my own connection for several months, which list I have attached to this message. **These are only days and times when I have been using the computer and noticed dropouts.** Other users tell me of dropouts after midnight, and on days when I am away from the computer.

I repeat below a message I and other Wideband users received last summer:

Date sent: Thu, 29 Jan 2009 14:55:38 +1100 (EST)
To: swadling@wideband.net.au
Subject: Important Information regarding your Satellite Service
From: "Wideband Networks" <support@wideband.net.au>

Dear Satellite Customer,

A number of customers across Australia are experiencing intermittent drop out problems on our Satellite service. These faults have been attributed to the extreme heat that many parts of Australia are currently experiencing.

The outdoor transmission equipment on the Satellite dish is rated to 55 degrees, however with the reflected heat off the roof it is pushing the equipment past the rated temperature.

When the equipment exceeds the rated temperature, it causes the unit to transmit off the designated frequency which causes the unit to go

offline.

Some customers are also experiencing problems with the indoor units which are rated to 40 degrees. We would recommend that if your indoor unit is tucked away under a desk, that you bring it out into the open, and away from your PC which will also be expelling hot air. All air vents and fans should not be impeded so that the maximum airflow is possible.

With temperatures in many parts of Australia expected to exceed 40 degrees over the next few days we expect these problems to reoccur during the hottest parts of the day. If you have an urgent need to use the service during this time, some customers have reported that hosing the outdoor equipment down will return the unit to service for a period of time until the temperature of the chassis climbs again.

We apologise for any inconvenience caused in this matter.

Yours Sincerely,
Phillip Britt
Managing Director
Wideband Networks

I was never able to attribute my dropouts to heat problems, but I wonder at this equipment which is **paid for by the Australian Government for use in outback areas**, apparently not being rated to cope with the heat of Australian conditions. I point out that **dropouts occur all year round**, not only in the heat of Summer.

Despite lengthy negotiations with Wideband, the email quoted above is the only acknowledgement that the fault may be in anything other than my own equipment. Each time I have contacted the company, I am run through the same fault-finding procedure which is looking for a fault in my equipment, not theirs. As I have told them, the dropouts occur in many machines in the area, so the fault seems more likely to be in the satellite or their ground station. This is always brushed off. Other users in the area use different providers, but all use those experiencing dropouts seem to be using the ipStar satellite.

A national broadband initiative would need to **start** with small and isolated communities, giving them reliable broadband connections, not with the cities, which already have much faster and more reliable broadband.

thank you

(Mr) Lindsay Swadling
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02 6343 6353

Dropouts on Wideband (Aussiebroadband) satellite connection, Oct 2009 to Feb 2010, on Lindsay Swadling's connection in Greenethorpe.

These are only days and times when I have been using the computer, and noticed dropouts.

30 Sep	8:12am	8:23am	9:27pm		
1 Oct	8:40am	8:53am	5:09pm	10:15pm	
2 Oct	5:05pm				
3 Oct	7:50am	10:46am			
6 Oct	5:03pm				
8 Oct	6:46pm				
9 Oct	7:14pm	10:21pm			
10 Oct	5:58pm	6:27pm	9:20pm		
12 Oct	once between 8 and 8:30am		5:11pm	7:21pm	
14 Oct	9:09am	9:15am			
16 Oct	8:25am	2:42pm			
17 Oct	12:14pm	1:26pm	1:29pm		
18 Oct	2:16pm	3:23 slowed down dramatically, finally logged off at 3:27			
20 Oct	9:16am	6:10pm			
21 Oct	8:33am	8:59am pages not responding, 9:01am logged off			
25 Oct	abt 10:45am	11:58am	3:10pm		
26 Oct	8:44am				
28 Oct	4:30pm	4:34pm	4:48pm	5:21pm	etc
29 Oct	8:12am				
31 Oct	8:19am	9:16am	9:40am	4:30pm	9:55pm
1 Nov	9:23am	10:11am	5:45pm		
3 Nov	10:36pm	10:50pm			
4 Nov	7:40am				
6 Nov	7:56am				
9 Nov	9:14am	10:45am			
10 Nov	9:36pm				
12 Nov	8:09am				
14 Nov	8:26am				
16 Nov	dropped out sometime after 7pm, unable to login again. shut down computer.				
17 Nov	home at 4:30pm, turned system on, unable to login. switched modem off (waited 15 min) and on, logged in.				
			5:50pm	6:14pm	
23 Nov	twice between 11:30am and midday		12:09pm	12:15pm	
24 Nov	9:36am	6:01pm	6:25pm	6:37pm	
25 Nov	8:28am				
29 Nov	11:30am	5:03pm			
30 Nov	12:42pm	1:42pm	1:59pm	4:37pm	
6 Dec	5:02pm				
13 Dec	2:05pm				
14 Dec	7:35am	7:38am	8:03am	8:19am	
17 Dec	7:46am	about 4:20pm	4:34pm		
21 Dec	5:10pm				
22 Dec	10:34am	6:08pm			
23 Dec	9:14am				

1 Jan	8:56am	9:10am			
2 Jan	2:18pm	4:27pm	4:34pm	5:50pm	
5 Jan	6:53am				
6 Jan	1:12pm	3:15pm	10:14pm-10:27pm, shut down and went to bed		
7 Jan	8:30am	6:45pm			
11 Jan	6:36pm				
18 Jan	9:18am	9:40am			
20 Jan	3:28pm				
29 Jan	9:56am	6:50pm			
1 Feb	6:40pm				
2 Feb	5:14pm	10:25pm	10:32pm	10:54pm	
3 Feb	6:29pm				
4 Feb	8:21am				
6 Feb	5:18pm	5:25pm	6:48pm		
7 Feb	11:04am	11:30am	1:50pm	2:23pm	2:39pm
8 Feb	10:18pm				
9 Feb	7:09pm	7:30pm			
10 Feb	2:05pm				
11 Feb	5:17pm	7:04pm			
12 Feb	10:30am				
13 Feb	10:17am	12:21pm	1:36pm	3:37pm	5:40pm [paypal]
14 Feb	9:10am	11:07am	2:37pm	2:45pm	3:26pm
15 Feb	10:44am				
17 Feb	9:08am	4:48pm	4:52pm	4:57pm	
18 Feb	8:36am	8:56am	8:22pm	9:08pm	
20 Feb	5:11pm	8:27pm			
21 Feb	8:46am	10:44pm			
22 Feb	7:45pm				
23 Feb	9:17am	5:59pm			
24 Feb	10:09am	12:17pm	12:53pm		
28 Feb	8:49am	11:50am	12:35pm		

Alan Holland's connection in Greenethorpe, during several days in October 2009:

14 Oct	5:35pm	6:15pm	9:48pm		
15 Oct	1:09pm	9:22pm	10:28pm	11:33pm	11:51pm
16 Oct	12:16am	9:19pm	10:44pm		
17 Oct	11:59am	1:00pm			
18 Oct	2:46am	10:30pm			