

The Murray Shire Council area is in Southern NSW with an area of 4328 square kilometres. The area borders Deniliquin to the North and the Victorian Border to the south. The eastern boundary is with Berrigan shire and the western boundary is with Wakool Shire. There is irregular mobile phone coverage throughout the Shire area.

Attached is a letter from the Caldwell Rural Volunteer Fire Brigade which clearly outlines the some of the problems experienced and the difficulty particularly for emergency services. This situation is common place through out the rural areas of the Shire.

Even adjacent to the largest town of Moama there are areas of unreliable reception. This area is a renowned tourist destination and its reputation is tarnished due to this unreliability for tourists and residents alike. Council officers travel the area on a regular basis and are continually frustrated with the unreliability in service.

I trust this information is of assistance to you in the Inquiry.

Regards

Greg Murdoch □ General Manager □ Murray Shire Council□

Caldwell Rural Volunteer Fire Brigade



All correspondence to:
C/- Secretary
"Brigadoon"
BARHAM NSW 2732

Brigade Captain
Kevin Barnes
"Lonely Gum"
BARHAM NSW 2732

Greg Murdoch
Local Emergency Management Officer
Murray Shire Council
PO Box 21
MATHOURA NSW 2710

8th February 2010

Dear Greg

I am writing to you in your capacity of Local Emergency Management Officer of the Murray District Emergency Management Committee to raise the issue of mobile phone coverage or lack thereof in the Caldwell, Bunnaloo and Tantonan Brigade areas of the Murray Shire.

For some time the members of the Caldwell Rural Volunteer Fire Brigade have raised concerns the mobile phone coverage in the brigade area is poor. As an emergency service provider the volunteer members feel it is essential that all brigade areas have full Telstra 3G coverage. Our reception at the moment is very patchy to non-existent. Mobile phones and landlines are used for the NSW Rural Fire Service - Mid Murray Emergency Response System which is used to respond to the brigades in case of a Fire or a Motor Vehicle Accident (MVA). It is difficult to receive the calls on a mobile phone when there is virtually no adequate reception. We hope we don't encounter a life or death situation where mobile phone reception may be a critical factor.

More recently and as a result of the "Black Saturday" fires in Victoria in February 2009, our brigade members have recently raised the issue of "National Emergency Warnings" being transmitted to mobile phones. The members and residents of the Caldwell, Bunnaloo and Tantonan Brigade areas would not receive these warnings as the mobile service is not reliable. It's great to see these initiatives put into place but if you haven't got the technology or systems to back it up, then it's to no benefit to our community.

We are seeking your support from the members of the Murray Emergency Management Committee to have this situation raised with Telstra as a matter of concern and hopefully rectified as a priority. One suggestion was that the existing tower at Bunnaloo maybe able to be used instead of a new tower.

The volunteers and I look forward to your response.

Yours faithfully

Kevin Barnes
Captain
Caldwell Rural Volunteer Fire Brigade

MURRAY SHIRE COUNCIL

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