

NARROMINE SHIRE COUNCIL

ABN 99 352 328 405

"Times Change... Values Don't"



26 February, 2010

Standing Committee on Broadband in Rural and Regional Communities
Parliament House
Macquarie Street,
SYDNEY. NSW 2000

Attention: Ms Vicki Buchbach

Narromine Shire Council wishes to provide information to be considered by the Standing Committee on Broadband in Rural and Regional Communities into the availability of telecommunications in rural and regional communities.

Narromine Shire comprises an area of 5,242km situated in the heart of the Macquarie Valley, 39 kms from the regional city of Dubbo. Narromine Shire includes the townships of Narromine, Trangie and Tomingley and is primarily an agricultural area.

Mobile telephone coverage continues to be far inferior to that experienced in metropolitan areas. The townships of Narromine and Trangie are well covered; however the service deteriorates rapidly at any point in the Shire outside of an approximate 20km radius of either town. Indeed, in the south west and east of the Shire, there are 'blackspots' of limited or no coverage.

The standard of broadband internet services delivered to regional areas is also of major concern. The fastest broadband connection ADSL2 is only available within 5km of the main exchange at Narromine, and not available for Trangie residents. This severely limits the ability of people in regional and remote areas to effectively conduct business which increasingly relies upon efficient internet service. If Telstra was to improve the 3G network throughout the Shire with particular attention to the south east and west areas, the availability of broadband would be much improved. There are no other wireless broadband providers within the Shire other than Telstra or Optus.

The very fact that our community is geographically far from the major coastal cities makes the provision of effective communication imperative. The additional stress suffered by people living in regional areas who rely upon agricultural pursuits for their livelihood has been well documented. The provision of an acceptable level of communication is paramount to the survival of these communities.

V Roberts

Vas Roberts,
Acting General Manager.