

Good morning,

As residents of western Queensland, my family and I currently have a HCRC service for our “landline” phone and have intermittent fringe reception from a mobile tower 62 km by road away.

We reside 225 km from both Blackall and Longreach, with dirt roads that can be closed for weeks with rain events. Our power can be cut for days at a time. Our local health service if needed is the RFDS. My wife has health issues, and our grandson is not quite five months old. Communications are essential.

Increasingly in periods of power outages we lose all Telstra services. While our HCRC unit is solar powered and has battery back-up, the facilities to provide larger network access do not have the requisites to work for long. The local networks relay through other networks before entering the main-stream system, amplifying the opportunity for a localised power issue to affect us and our local area.

For Telstra to be a reliable service provider for these isolated areas, they must also provide back-up power for their back-haul facilities.

As technology changes, obviously so does service delivery models. All changes should, at a minimum, ensure no degradation of service for residents. As residents, it should not be our responsibility to cover shortfalls in delivery models. Any replacement technology should be reliable in all weather events, irrespective of mains power, or it is not a suitable alternative for these isolated areas. Telstra until recent years has been a reliable service provider for decades.

Yours,

Andrew Pegler