

MC & BJ Paine

Central Highlands Regional Council
Councillors and Regional Telecommunications Hub

15 November 2023

Dear Mayor and Councillors,

RE: RURAL TELEPHONE SERVICES

In recent times it has come to our attention that Telstra plans to phase out or discontinue its land line telephone services. This is of great concern because in most cases, the landline telephone is the only form of reliable communication for residents in rural, remote, and regional areas. Landline, both cabled and radio, services are vital in these areas where other telecommunication services are lacking.

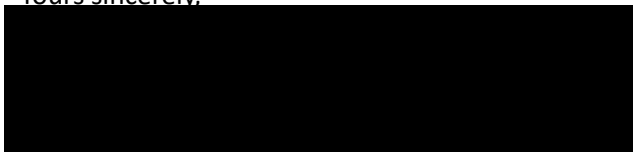
There are many reasons why landline telephones should remain in existence across the country:

- We are located some 110km from Springsure, where three households consisting of up to 9 people are relying on a landline telephone to run a business, for safety and to communicate with friends and family.
- Landline radio telephone towers can service multiple households with several users. On our station 3 households with up to 9 people utilise a single phone connection tower.
- If landlines are phased out, stations would be relying on satellite and mobile service. In our area there is no mobile service.
- Satellite and mobile services in rural areas rely on electricity to work, in an emergency there is often no power so communication would be impossible.
- Satellite services are slow, intermittent, and very costly.
- Satellite and mobile services are becoming oversubscribed and therefore unreliable. At any one time 15 devices could be in use, congesting data ways for telephone communication.

It is for these reasons, satellite and mobile phone services cannot be depended on in rural areas. Landline telephones are accessible, affordable and most of all reliable so **must not** be made obsolete.

Without doubt the current landline services are an effective network for communicating in the bush. To discontinue landline telephone services would be the death null of reliable communication in rural and remote areas. No longer having a dependable phone service would be isolating for individuals, stifling for business and potentially dangerous in an emergency. Until such times as a more effective and reliable system is in place across all areas of Australia, landline telephones will remain the best option and should not be switched off. They are the communication veins of our country and should continue to flow giving life and security to the regions.

Yours sincerely,



LANDLINES ARE OUR LIFELINE

LANDLINE TELEPHONE SERVICES MUST STAY

Landline telephones are the only form of reliable communication in the bush. They are the hub of business, the network linking families and neighbours as well as lines of communication in an emergency.



Mobile phone and internet services are lacking in rural and regional centres. In most places, there is no service and in the limited service area, mobile and internet is oversubscribed causing connection to be intermittent and unreliable. These services also rely on electricity to operate. Supply is often interrupted for lengthy periods during emergency time such as storm, flood and fire. Landline telephone does not need power to operate so is available 24/7 in emergency situations.



On average a single Station tower services:

3 households
6 people

Mobile and internet services oversubscribed rendering data ways slow and congested.

Any one station can have up to 15 devices connected on a single satellite service.

Mobile service not available in all areas.

