

I wish to make a submission to the Regional Telecommunications Review 2021. My wife and I live in the centre of the populated area of Bribie Island, part of the Moreton Regional Council and the Federal seat of Longman. The populated area represents about the bottom ¼ of a large island about 1 kilometre off the Queensland coast, east of Caboolture. The rest of island comprises a State-designated National Park.

The population of Bribie Island is estimated to be approx. 23,000 people. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics data, Bribie Island is within the top 4 areas of Australia to have to highest median age. My wife and I are one of many retirees, and one of a growing number of couples choosing to live in “over-50 lifestyle communities”.

In our location (more specifically [REDACTED]), we find telecommunications provided to our community very ordinary. I say that because: -

- 1) Our mobile telephone provider is Optus, who we chose because I like the Optus Sports Channel, included in our phone and device package. However, the coverage to our [REDACTED] complex is deplorable. Within our house, I have to send and receive calls on my mobile phone via my computer’s WiFi, because the signal from Optus is not good enough for a continuous call. Indeed, before activating my PC’s WiFi, I missed many a phone call because connectivity was zero! For the technically minded, I cannot make a call through my PC’s “Windows Phone” program (which uses Bluetooth), because I’m already using WiFi to get my phone signal inside my house.
- 2) Our internet service provider (ISP) is NOT part of the NBN, because being a gated community, Gemlife’s owner allowed Opticomm to provide a direct fibre-to-the-premises internet service. We chose an ISP (“Harbour ISP”, 1 of 8 on Opticomm’s panel) that has a local representative. He established a quick internet connection to our house. The price was good. Recently, however, both Harbour ISP AND Opticomm were purchased by Uniti. Thereafter, we’ve had frequent service dropouts, and a markedly inferior internet service. Even before the sale, our internet speeds were no better than the NBN speed which we enjoyed while renting a house nearby.

We seek mobile phone and internet services more consistent with services provided to capital cities like Brisbane. In particular, I feel that our [REDACTED] complex (being in the centre of the habitable area of Bribie Island) is poorly served by Optus phone towers. Despite frequent advice from Optus of “service updates”, the actual mobile phone service has got worse!

We also feel that gated communities should not restrict residents to selecting ISP’s from a panel selected by a large wholesaler like Opticomm. Although we don’t necessarily recommend these ISP’s, I note that neither Telstra, Optus or Vodaphone are on the panel. Surely the Federal Parliament could legislate to allow residents like us freedom of choice to choose other “non-panel” ISP’s.

Thank you for reading and considering this submission.

[REDACTED]