

THIS WRITE IS A LITTLE LONG, SORRY, BUT IT CONTAINS IMPORTANT INFO THAT IS THE ESSENCE OF THE ISSUE FOR MANY COUNTRY PEOPLE.

My wife and I hate "large" mobiles and it seems small ones are disappearing fast, as +6.7" seems to be the standard screen size these days. To this end I always try to have us on smaller ones that do the job, but for our country location just north of Melbourne some dust and water protection is important. To achieve this aim, I always have to hunt around for suitable smaller units.

We have been with Aldi for ages, and got the "your phone won't work after the 3G turnoff" messages from Telstra when it first occurred, and our old phones (Redmi 4A) were eventually disconnected. Temporary replacements were Opel Smart55R (total crap phone and eventually returned), then a Telstra A3 SE for her which worked but not great to use, and an older Blade A3 2020 temporarily for me. Both of these were the smallest I could find that worked, but they had many flaws. I kept looking... Along the way I found Soyes XS18 Pro Max, and XS14 Pro, more on these a little later.

It is important to note that if Telstra actually offered reasonably priced, physically small and dust/water resistant mobiles we would buy them, but they don't. None of the big carriers do, which is a problem for many people in our situation. And it's not just a case of price and size combined. It is simply that there is nothing SMALL. Standard 6.7" size these days is simply way too big for ease of fitting in a pocket when you're doing physical work. Even 5" is too large in some instances. Many mobile users are just like us, we don't do any banking etc on our phones, they are simply phones, camera, messaging, bluetooth and occasional browser and special app use.

I finally stumbled onto Phonemax and their R4 mini and purchased them in April 2025. They have proven to be an excellent choice, and were carefully researched to ensure they were ok for Australian frequencies. Since purchase and starting use, Telstra has insisted that they are not suitable for Australia. Initially I was receiving the:

"Your device may have reduced network connectivity and will not always be able to call triple zero. For your safety, upgrade to a compatible device now. Contact your service provider"

and then, for over a year now, I have constantly received the:

"Limited Coverage - action needed. The phone you use with number xxx (Phonemax Technology (HK) P2) does not support Telstra's main 4G network frequency (700MHz). This means you may have reduced and intermittent network connectivity and will not always be able to make calls including emergency calls to triple zero. To remain connected upgrade to a compatible device now. Contact your service provider for more information. If you've already upgraded your device, disregard this message."

This message is a convenient **LIE**, it is **NOT TRUE**. I have **PROVEN** that the phones connect fine to 700MHz by observing connections using Netmonster. As well, I have also proven that they DO connect perfectly OK to 000. The phones have continued to work fine for over a year since put in use with Telstra constantly complaining that they aren't suitable.

It is clearly a case of "convenient discrimination" by Telstra against a phone that they do not sell, or can't be bothered to accurately reflect it's abilities in a database.

The truly astounding thing is that if I connect either of the two previously mentioned Soyes models using the same sim, NO warnings whatsoever arise, yet these phones come with a large amount of malware installed at the root level that is exceptionally hard to delete. So Telstra is quite happy to allow a phone full of malware onto it's systems (and allowed database?), but a phone that is clean and fully capable, is not. It is truly insane, and simply smacks of corporate arrogance and lack of accountability.

It is also noticeable that by our living in country Vic in a hilly location, as I move around our house I constantly connect onto different towers. In doing so, the phone shuffles frequencies and only occasionally lands onto 700. But if I'm doing a few days' work in Melbourne I can see that the phone is using 700 far more often. The texted warnings reduce in number for a short whilst working/staying there but resume once I'm home. Rather than the phone not being suitable, this points to a lack of capacity in my area, which Telstra then says is my phone is not being "able" to connect to 700. Well...it's not able to connect because 700 is not currently available, which is a vast difference to not ever accessible at all. So it is either a database issue, a lack of capacity, or a puzzling combination of both.

Summary:

- 1). Telstra's whitelist/database is full of errors and discrimination. Perfectly capable phones get told they won't work, yet they do.
- 2). Part of the cause of my constant stream of messages from Telstra seems to be a lack of capacity in some areas, which appears to force the phone onto alternative frequencies rather than 700.
- 3). There urgently needs to be an alternative method of testing for 000 ability, based on EXACTLY the same method used for 000. Basing current testing advice on anything on the databases developed by the various providers results in a landmine of discriminatory errors.