



Mobile Coverage Programme Discussion Paper Submission Cover Sheet

Submission Information	
This cover sheet should be attached to submissions made to the Department of Communications in relation to the Mobile Coverage Program Discussion Paper.	
Contact Details	
Name of respondent:	Michelle Finger
Name of organization:	(private landholder, beef cattle)
Phone:	[REDACTED]
Email:	[REDACTED]
Website (if applicable):	
Date:	22/1/14
Confidentiality and privacy	
<p>All submissions and comments, or parts thereof, will be treated as non-confidential information unless specifically requested, and acceptable reasons should accompany each request. Email disclaimers will not be considered sufficient confidentiality requests.</p> <p>Respondents lodging a submission should be aware that submissions (excluding any information agreed to be treated as confidential information) will be made publicly available, including on the Department of Communications' website. Submissions and comments will be subject to freedom of information provisions. Despite a submission being identified as confidential or sensitive, submissions may be disclosed where authorised or required by law, or for the purpose of parliamentary processes.</p> <p>Do you want all or parts of the submission to be treated as confidential? No</p> <p><i>If yes, identify below which parts of the submission are to be treated as confidential (and provide a reason):</i></p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 30px; width: 100%;"></div>	
<p>If the submission contains personal information of any third party individual, indicate on this Submission Cover Sheet if that third party individual has not consented to the publication of his or her personal information:</p>	
Submission Instructions	
<p>Submissions are to be made by 5:00pm (AEST) Friday 28 February 2014.</p> <p>Where possible, submissions should be lodged electronically, preferably in Microsoft Word or other text-based formats via the email address mobilecoverage@communications.gov.au</p> <p>Alternatively, submissions can be sent to the postal address below (to arrive by the due date):</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The Manager Mobile Coverage Program Department of Communications GPO Box 2154 CANBERRA ACT 2615</p>	
<p>All submissions lodged will be acknowledged by the Department of Communications by email (or by letter if no email is provided). Respondents lodging a submission who do not receive acknowledgement of their submission should contact the Department. Submissions which are not acknowledged by the Department as being received may not be considered. Respondents should be aware that emails greater than 10Mb may not be successfully delivered.</p>	

Thank you for this much-needed intuitive to improve the mobile service coverage in regional Australia.

While it is a great step in the right direction, it sounds as if major roads and tourist destinations are set to see the most benefit - while the rural landholders and most remote areas missing out again.

Of course the populations and therefore customer numbers in these areas are low, however the more remote and less-populated areas are arguably the areas that are in GREATEST NEED of reliable mobile service coverage - to bridge the remoteness and also improve safety.

Our property is only 40 minutes west of Clermont QLD, but we have no coverage at all over most of it.

As staff numbers on rural properties dwindle, the situation is becoming INCREASINGLY DANGEROUS as we now find ourselves doing more and more work on our own in remote locations - with no-one to raise the alarm in the event of a breakdown or accident, and often not even anyone left at the homestead to raise the alarm if someone does not return home.

The cattle industry is in such a sorry state that my husband now spends most of his time working away - leaving me to run the property, whilst looking after our 2 young daughters (3 & 4 years). Obviously I can't leave them at home by themselves, so I have to take them with me everywhere I go.

I live in fear going to check one of our back dams or fences - around 20 km from the house - and having a vehicle breakdown, snake bite or injury.

No mobile service. Up to 20 km over rough terrain from the house. With a 3 and a 4 year old child. And at the moment it is 44 degrees. It's likely that all 3 of us would perish. And with my husband away, no one would even miss us for days.

If regular mobile coverage is not going to be extended into these areas - then **improving access to Sat Phone technologies for people in no-service areas needs to be included in this initiative.**

I have looked into getting a Satellite Phone - just for emergency calls. There is a subsidy to help with the purchase of the handset, but after that the monthly plans are very complicated and very expensive. I could not find a plan that didn't pre-include payment for a set amount of calls. I don't want to use regularly, I only want it on-hand in case of emergencies. But it is simply unaffordable. I have even looked into the marine-style Personal Locator Beacons, but at around \$350 each these are still very expensive and for that price are very limited in their usefulness as they only send a distress call to the emergency services. Do we really want an emergency services helicopter called out if my vehicle has simply broken down? I could probably call a neighbour to help me out in that case ... IF I had an affordable Sat Phone, or mobile coverage.

Thank you for considering my submission.

Regards,

Michelle Finger.

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