

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 Programme Discussion Paper.

Contact Details

Name of respondent:	
Name of organisation:	Parkes Shire Council
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Website (if applicable):	
Date:	28 Feb 2014

Confidentiality and privacy

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.

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.

Do you want all or parts of the submission to be treated as confidential? **No**

If yes, identify below which parts of the submission are to be treated as confidential (and provide a reason):

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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:

Submission Instructions

Submissions are to be made by **5:00pm (AEST) Friday 28 February 2014**.

Where possible, submissions should be lodged electronically, preferably in Microsoft Word or other text-based formats via the email address mobilecoverage@communications.gov.au

Alternatively, submissions can be sent to the postal address below (to arrive by the due date):

The Manager
Mobile Coverage Programme
Department of Communications
GPO Box 2154
CANBERRA ACT 2615

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.



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LF:AW

Contact Person: [REDACTED]

28 February 2014

**The Hon Paul Fletcher MP
Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Communications
Mobile Coverage Programme
GPO Box 2154
CANBERRA ACT 2601**

Dear Mr Fletcher

Mobile Coverage Programme

Council would like to thank the Minister for the opportunity to comment on mobile phone coverage in the Parkes Shire. We also thank the Federal Government for their commitment to spend \$100 million to extend mobile phone coverage and competition in regional Australia.

This is a wonderful opportunity for the community to have a say in how telecommunications infrastructure is rolled out and improved in region NSW. The tyranny of distance is often spoken about as being a disadvantage to business in regional NSW. Technology has the power to address this issue and open up the regional areas of NSW and Australia to businesses but for this to happen technology and communications systems have to be fast and reliable.

The Federal Government has committed to regional policy and speaks positively about decentralisation. Technology is the key to conquering the dilemma of distance.

Summary of Current situation in Parkes

In preparing this submission, Council asked the community about mobile phone coverage in the Parkes Shire and received over 30 responses from the community. (please see appendix 1).

The request was made to identify locations that meet the criteria of poor reception under stage 1 of the \$20 million black spot program.

Council feels that the \$80 million Mobile Network Expansion Project is vital and especially as the Parkes Shire includes many remote roads and communities. Council went out and asked the community where the mobile 'black spots' were and an overwhelmingly response from local people identified the Henry Parkes Way between Parkes and Orange as a major concern especially as people travel between Parkes and Orange for medical reasons including women who maybe in labour and can not birth in Parkes.

The Renshaw-McGirr Way between Parkes and Wellington was also identified as an area of poor mobile phone coverage. One member of the public came into Council and told the story of coming across a young P plate driver who had had an accident about 25km north of Parkes



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and not being able to call for help due to the poor mobile phone reception. The Newell Highway between Parkes and Forbes especially at Tichborne was also identified as area of frustration especially for people who do business between the two communities.

Council also received phone calls and emails from local residents who live on rural properties which have little or no mobile phone and internet access (pls see appendix 2). Residents are not only concerned about safety on their properties but also being able to run their businesses. Additionally to this the education curriculum is now reliant on being able to have access to fast and reliable internet and mobile coverage. The absence of these services severely disadvantage rural communities.

The value of the \$20 million mobile black spot programme is also important. Within Parkes township several locations have been identified as "black spots". When Council consulted the community the main area identified was east Parkes especially Lorking Street, Moor St , Bowditch Cr Area, Evans Parade and Waratah Street. Residents reported low or non existent mobile phone coverage. Due to the large hill in the centre of the town. A tower in East Parkes would rectify the long term problem. We also received letters from Small Business owners who work from home about the difficulty of conducting business when they do not have mobile phone coverage. (Please see attached appendix 3).

In Summary

Council welcomes the opportunity to respond on behalf of its community in relation to the discussion paper on the proposed mobile coverage program.

Lacking the technical expertise to respond to the discussion paper's questions relating to the \$80 million mobile network expansion project, Council has limited its response to conveying the black spot areas within the Shire in response to stage I of the \$20 million black spot program and to making general comments on the importance of reliable mobile phone coverage to the Parkes Shire and regional Australia.

1. Council agrees with community feedback that coverage development or improvement is urgently required:

- State Highway 61 - Parkes to Orange
- Town of Parkes - eastern side
- Rural area between Peak Hill and Tullamore villages
- 4G network readiness and its ability to possibly rectify or non-existent cellular and data coverage in areas across the Shire.

2. It is Council's position that adequate, consistent and quality mobile coverage is a public community service obligation and not necessarily a commercial product driven by market forces. The cost of technology is decreasing and improvements occurring which should assist the Federal government in its efficient allocation of the \$100 million project. Council is informed that network technology developments such as adaptive capacity-on-demand, local call routing, optimised voice and data compression, equipment miniaturisation, satellite integration and alternative power sources are making backhaul costs less of a barrier to a wider cellular network coverage area.



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3. Cellular data is also so critical to daily life (social, education and business) that regional areas cannot continue to be disadvantaged in terms of availability purely due to a cost benefit analysis exercise.

4. Transport efficiency and freight supply chain optimisation is emerging as a nation building project. It has been calculated that a 1% improvement in transport efficiency translates to a monetary savings of approximately \$1 billion in the system nationwide. The Shire of Parkes is recognised as a "crossroads of the nation" where the Newell highway linking Melbourne and Brisbane by road intersects the east-west intercontinental rail corridor. The development and implementation of the inland rail project linking Melbourne and Brisbane will also compliment the Shire's transport hub status. To this end the entire road and rail network requires above-average mobile coverage to drive supply chain efficiencies and deliver value to stakeholders in the whole transport and freight logistics sector. Council strongly urges that the \$80 million mobile network expansion project includes the Parkes Shire to improve mobile coverage at the confluence of a number of major road and rail transport routes.

5. Council is very proactive in its advocacy of decentralisation. Key to empowering people to move to regional areas is reliable and accessible mobile phone coverage. Young families seeking to relocate to regional Australia can be enticed by lifestyle benefits, housing affordability and employment prospects but will not make the move if their access to the digital economy is restricted or non-existent. It is widely publicised that mobile coverage and its accessibility plays an important role and is a key factor in attracting and retaining a workforce in regional Australia. The Federal government is urged to keep this in mind when prioritising locations under the program.

I would like to take this opportunity to again thank you for the opportunity to respond to the discussion paper. On behalf of Mayor Cr. Ken Keith I extend an invitation to the working party to visit Parkes to witness first-hand the issues and further discuss the aspects of Council's submission.

Yours faithfully

Kent Boyd
GENERAL MANAGER



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Appendix 1- Location of Mobile Phone Black Spots in the Parkes Shire as identified by the Community.

	Black Spot	Comments
1	Molong Rd / Gunningbland & Bogan Gate / Orange Rd	Have reported to telstra
2	From 10km out on Henry Parkes Way	No mobile phone reception at all
3	7-8km out on Henry Parkes Way	No mobile phone reception at all in residence & limited service outside
4	Condobolin Road, between Cooks Myalls Lane to Lynton Lane	Telstra reception is intermittent or poor at best (GPS Co-ord. -33.088679 Lat., 148.237093 Long.)
5	Molong Road Parkes	Mobile phone service terrible with Telstra & non-existent with Optus
6	Kelly Road Parkes	Mobile phone service is patchy, often only 1 bar
7	Moor Street Parkes	Mobile coverage problems with Telstra, limited reception throughout residence
8	Mandagery	Reception unreliable, usually only one bar coverage with Telstra
9	Deep Lead Rd Parkes	no mobile reception
10	Renshaw McGirr Way Parkes	No mobile reception
11	Lorking Street	no coverage
12	East Parkes - Lorking St/ Moor Street and Bowditch Cr Area/ Evans Parade	no coverage
13	Nadine Lane Parkes	no Coverage
14	Tichborne near billabong Creek	no Coverage
15	Lorking Street Parkes	no coverage/ the hill is stopping the signal according to telstra
16	Wongalea Rd Parkes	no
17	Waratah st, Parkes	no coverage - trying to run a small business from home
18	Trundle in the Bruie Plains area	limited mobile coverage on most of our properties
19	Danilenko st Parkes	telstra - very low coverage
20	Moor St Parkes	no coverage
22	Moor Street, Lorking Street not good.	
23	Gunningbland	Very low coverage
24	Orange Rd near tanks lane	Very low coverage
25	East Parkes appears to be a bit of problem - I have had feedback about Thornbury Street, Hillcrest	



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	Avenue etc.	
26	Wellington Road (31 North east of Parkes)	No coverage
27	Alec Town - Near Harvey Rangers (north East Alec Town)	No Coverage
28	Bogan Road, Parkes/Goonumbla	No Coverage
29	Bowditch Cres Parkes	no coverage
30	Middle Trundle Rd	No coverage
31	Between Parkes and Bogan Gate	Very low coverage
32	Western Part of the Shire	Very low coverage
33	Lake Endeavour Dam	Council currently undertaking an \$11million upgrade
34	Back Trundle Road	Very low coverage
35	Cooks Mydalls	Very low coverage
36	Anywhere outside Trundle CBD	No/ Very low coverage

Please note: Council can supply full names and addresses of most of the people who contacted us, however due to privacy concerns we have not included them in the submission.