

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

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Date:	28 February 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? Yes No

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

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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RDAWEP SUBMISSION TO MOBILE COVERAGE PROGRAM

MOBILE BLACK SPOTS IN THE RDAWEP REGION.

Background – RDAWEP Region

The Regional Development Australia, Whyalla and Eyre Peninsula (RDAWEP) region covers approximately 230,000km² (23%) of South Australia. The region is one of the most diversified economies in the State with key industries including agriculture, manufacturing, fishing, aquaculture, mining and tourism, supported by a vibrant and growing small business sector. Mining and tourism are the fastest growing industries and opportunities for significant development in both sectors are emerging. The region has a very strong export economy and makes a major contribution to State and national wealth, however economic growth is constrained by several infrastructure issues, including poor mobile communications for telephones and the Internet.

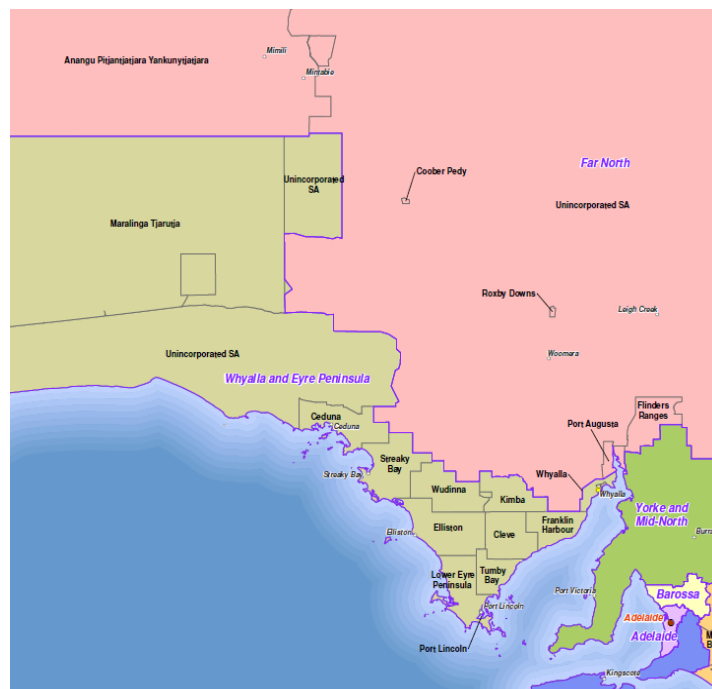


Figure 1: RDAWEP Region of South Australia.

The region has a small population of 55,651 people, 98.7% of which reside in 11 Local Government Areas. The collective Councils occupy only 43,778.6km² or 18.8% of the region. In order to pursue the long term and sustainable economic growth of the region it is imperative that mobile communications in the EPLGA sector of the region are improved as the highest priority.

Existing Mobile Coverage - Overview

Mobile communication coverage presently extends across the LGA sections of the region via Telstra Next G and 4G networks, giving broadband and mobile phone coverage to most rural townships and communities. Other network providers (Optus and Vodafone) have expanded their coverage and offer service alternatives in the cities of Port Lincoln and Whyalla.

But many areas near these cities suffer from communication black spots with fluctuating and non-existent mobile phone and wireless broadband reception. The black spots are largely caused by local topography and signal impact from the ocean at coastal locations. Areas to the north of Port Lincoln along the coast and in the Koppio Hills – i.e. areas within the District Council of Lower Eyre Peninsula such as North Shields, Poonindie, Louth Bay and Ungarra (about 30kms north-west of Tumbly Bay) - are notorious for poor communications with mobile and Internet services regularly losing signal.

A community meeting about this matter with Telstra at Ungarra in 2011 was informed that it was cost prohibitive to construct additional mobile phone towers to service small rural communities. This message was reiterated in August 2013 when Telstra Country Wide advised that the expansion of mobile services in the Ungarra area was not commercially viable. The Ungarra and Districts Progress Association has made several unsuccessful attempts over the years to have an additional mobile phone tower installed. (*Port Lincoln Times*, Phones not so mobile, Tuesday, August 13, 2013, p.3).

At the time of preparing this submission a petition was in the process of being circulated in the Poonindie, North Shields and Louth Bay areas due to community frustration with existing mobile services.

Population Growth on Lower Eyre Peninsula

Due to both topography and coastal location, the District Council of Eyre Peninsula has a large number of mobile black spots. This is particularly concerning because the DC Lower Eyre Peninsula is the fastest growing LGA in the region with positive growth of 17.2% since 2001, compared to the average regional growth of 4.5%.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT	2001	2006	2011	% Change
City of Whyalla	21,552	21,416	22,088	2.4
City of Port Lincoln	13,199	13,603	14,086	6.3
DC Ceduna	3,683	3,572	3,480	-5.8
DC Cleve	1,832	1,896	1,733	-5.7
DC Elliston	1,205	1,132	1,046	-15.2
DC Franklin Harbour	1,267	1,277	1,273	0.5
DC Kimba	1,181	1,116	1,088	-8.5
DC Lower Eyre Peninsula	4,070	4,402	4,916	17.2
DC Streaky Bay	1,986	2,024	2,102	5.5
DC Tumbly Bay	2,453	2,541	2,586	5.2
Wudinna DC	1,425	1,314	1,253	-13.7
TOTAL	53,853	54,293	56,396	4.5

Table 1: Population Change, Whyalla and Eyre Peninsula Region (ABS Census Data 2001, 2006 and 2011).

This demographic change is caused by several reasons, with the desire for a sea change lifestyle being a key factor. Due to having a number of very desirable coastal townships DC Lower Eyre Peninsula has numerous new estate developments at North Shields, Poonindie, Wangary, Coffin Bay, and the township of Boston (at the very edge of the City of Port Lincoln) to cater for growing housing demand, notably by retirees from the agricultural sector.

The District Council of Lower Eyre Peninsula also has several other locational and lifestyle advantages such as a growing tourism industry at Coffin Bay, and close proximity to the regional city of Port Lincoln and Port Lincoln Airport (at North Shields, 14kms north of Port Lincoln).



Figure 2: District Council of Lower Eyre Peninsula.

Slower population growth has been experienced at other coastal locations on the lower Eyre Peninsula, such as Tumby Bay (5.2%), but significant growth is anticipated within the next 3-4 years due to the impact of several mining developments. Centrex Metals Fusion Joint Venture mine at Koppio will bring a workforce of approximately 1,200 people to townships in the Tumby Bay region, and proposed port developments at either Lipson Cove (north of Tumby Bay) or Cape Hardy (south of Port Neill) will bring an additional workforce of about 100 port employees to the area.

Mobile communications demand is likely to increase substantially as a result of these developments, so it imperative that black spots on the lower Eyre Peninsula is resolved.

Business Growth

Business growth across the region as a whole is being impeded by poor communications. RDAWEP is presently conducting a major series of Business On-line workshops to enhance the digital capacity of the small business sector.

The on-line workshops in townships along the west coast of the Eyre Peninsula (notable in the region from Elliston to Ceduna) experienced smaller participant numbers largely due to non-existent, inadequate or unreliable mobile signal in these areas.

This lack of signal is severely impacting the ability of RDAWEP to develop a sustainable regional economy into the future.

Outer Areas of the Region

The RDAWEP region stretches from the Upper Spencer Gulf to the Western Australia border and includes the remote Maralinga Tjarutja Lands to the north of the trans Australian Railway Line.

The Eyre Highway from Port Augusta through Ceduna is the major east to west tourism and transport route across Australia. Several black spots have been identified along this highway, particularly in the section west of Ceduna across the Nullarbor Plain.

Telstra is well aware of, and has mapped, the black spot locations and it is desirable that the loss of mobile service in this part of the region is resolved to enhance the safety of travellers and commuters.

Local Government Survey

In order to prepare this submission, RDAWEP and the EPLGA conducted a black spot survey with the 11 member Councils of the EPLGA. Due to the tight timeframe to lodge submissions with the Department of Communications, only a limited number of Council responses have been received – see survey responses below.

Additional responses will be pursued with the remaining Councils to assist the development of the Mobile Coverage Program into the future. This information will be collated and held by our organisations for provision to the successful mobile network operator or operators.

Please do not hesitate to contact RDAWEP or the EPLGA if further information is required to support this submission.

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EPLGA Council Survey Responses – Mobile Black Spot Identification

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA, WHYALLA AND EYRE PENINSULA – MOBILE BLACK SPOTS IDENTIFICATION				
COUNCIL NAME: CITY OF PORT LINCOLN				
Black Spot Area Information	Issue Description	Estimated Number of Premises Impacted	Relationship to Transport and Tourism Routes	Impacts (e.g. emergency services, social and economic/business impacts)
Rustlers Gully, north edge of Port Lincoln township	Regular 'drop outs'; very slow internet connection on mobile devices	50 households, plus walkers/visitors	Off Lincoln Highway	Emergency contact risk; resident and visitor inconvenience; some home business impact

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA, WHYALLA AND EYRE PENINSULA – MOBILE BLACK SPOTS IDENTIFICATION				
COUNCIL NAME: District Council of Cleve				
Black Spot Area Information	Issue Description	Estimated Number of Premises Impacted	Relationship to Transport and Tourism Routes	Impacts (e.g. emergency services, social and economic/business impacts)
Rudall and surrounding areas	Frequent poor service. No signal at all or drops in and out.	Approximately 12 households. Numerous farm households	Birdseye highway between Cleve and Lock.	There has been three fatal accidents in the last 4-5 years in these areas and there has been no service available One fatality occurred on the Birdseye highway with another in close proximity.
Darke Peak and surrounding areas	As Above	Approximately 20 households. Numerous farm households	Balumbah Kinnard. Between Rudall and Darke Peak and north to the Eyre Highway This is a major grain transport route	As above. One of these fatalities was on the Balumbah Kinnard Rd.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA, WHYALLA AND EYRE PENINSULA – MOBILE BLACK SPOTS IDENTIFICATION

COUNCIL NAME: District Council of Lower Eyre Peninsula

Black Spot Area Information	Issue Description	Estimated Number of Premises Impacted	Relationship to Transport and Tourism Routes	Impacts (e.g. emergency services, social and economic/business impacts)
Port Lincoln Airport, 15kms north of Port Lincoln	Frequent poor mobile signal (phone and mobile broadband) throughout the terminal and surrounding buildings and area. Signal is intermittent and drops out during phone calls and emails.	Airport Terminal + Offices – 200,000 passengers per year	The Port Lincoln Airport is the largest regional Airport in South Australia and is the gateway to Eyre Peninsula.	Port Lincoln Airport is used as the CFS base and also locates the Water Bombing Planes during the Summer Peak Fire Danger season, the Airfield for Emergency / Ambulance flights from the Port Lincoln Hospital. Emergency services response
North Shields township, 12 kms north of Port Lincoln	Frequent poor mobile signal (phone and mobile broadband) throughout the township. Signal is intermittent and drops out during phone calls and emails. The use of an aerial does not notably improve reception. Signal is poorest on calm weather days.	CFS Shed and 80 households	Township is on either side of the Lincoln Highway. There is a popular caravan park on the southern side of the town with both permanent and tourists guests. There is also a popular Hostel on the Western side of the town with accommodation for 90 people.	Emergency service impact during bushfire. (The major Port Lincoln bushfire in 2005 went through the township of North Shields, lives were lost). Emergency services response

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA, WHYALLA AND EYRE PENINSULA – MOBILE BLACK SPOTS IDENTIFICATION

COUNCIL NAME: District Council of Lower Eyre Peninsula

Black Spot Area Information	Issue Description	Estimated Number of Premises Impacted	Relationship to Transport and Tourism Routes	Impacts (e.g. emergency services, social and economic/business impacts)
Gledstanes Terrace, Richardson Road, Hidden Valley Lane, Boston Area, 5 to 8 kms from Port Lincoln	Frequent poor mobile signal (phone and mobile broadband) throughout the area. Signal is intermittent and drops out during phone calls and emails.	90 households	The Boston area abuts the Lincoln Highway. The Boston area is newly developed and larger blocks than the normal town blocks	Emergency services response
Karkoo Area, 26 kms North Cummins	Frequent poor to none at all mobile signal (phone and mobile broadband) throughout the area. Signal is intermittent and drops out during phone calls and emails.	CFS shed and 15 households includes town centre and farms	It is on the main arterial road north of Cummins – Tod Highway.	Emergency services response
Yeelanna and surrounds, 15 – 40kms North East of Cummins	Frequent poor to none at all mobile signal (phone and mobile broadband) throughout the area. Signal is intermittent and drops out during phone calls and emails.	CFS shed and 30 households includes town centre and farms	Rural Settlement and farming district.	Emergency services response
Brooker and surrounds, 44 kms North East of Cummins	Frequent poor to none at all mobile signal (phone and mobile broadband) throughout the area. Signal is intermittent and drops out during phone calls and emails.	CFS shed and about 15farms	Rural Settlement and farming district.	Emergency services response
Ungarra and surrounds, 40kms East, North East of Cummins	Frequent poor to none at all mobile signal (phone and mobile broadband) throughout the area. Signal is intermittent and drops out during phone calls and emails.	CFS shed and 30 households includes town centre and farms	Rural Settlement and farming district.	Emergency services response

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA, WHYALLA AND EYRE PENINSULA – MOBILE BLACK SPOTS IDENTIFICATION

COUNCIL NAME: District Council of Lower Eyre Peninsula

Black Spot Area Information	Issue Description	Estimated Number of Premises Impacted	Relationship to Transport and Tourism Routes	Impacts (e.g. emergency services, social and economic/business impacts)
Coulta, 50kms North West of Port Lincoln	Frequent poor to none at all mobile signal (phone and mobile broadband) throughout the area. Signal is intermittent and drops out during phone calls and emails.	CFS shed and 35 households includes town centre and farms	It is on the main arterial road from Port Lincoln to Ceduna – Flinders Highway. South of Coulta is the Nyroca Scout Camp.	Emergency services response
Dutton Bay, Farm Beach and Little Douglas 40 - 50 kms West, North West of Port Lincoln	Frequent poor to none at all mobile signal (phone and mobile broadband) throughout the area. Signal is intermittent and drops out during phone calls and emails.	95 households includes town centre and farms	It is just off the main arterial road from Port Lincoln to Ceduna – Flinders Highway. Farm Beach Campsite – 25 campsites	Emergency services response
Louth Bay township, 23kms north of Port Lincoln	Frequent poor mobile signal (phone and mobile broadband) throughout the township. Signal is intermittent and drops out during phone calls and emails. The use of an aerial does not notably improve reception. Signal is poorest on calm weather days.	70 households.	Township is next to Lincoln Highway. There is a small camp ground regularly used by tourists (5-8 sites).	Emergency service impact during bushfire. (Louth Bay had to be evacuated during the major Port Lincoln bushfire in 2005).

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA, WHYALLA AND EYRE PENINSULA – MOBILE BLACK SPOTS IDENTIFICATION

COUNCIL NAME: District Council of Tumby Bay

Black Spot Area Information	Issue Description	Estimated Number of Premises Impacted	Relationship to Transport and Tourism Routes	Impacts (e.g. emergency services, social and economic/business impacts)
Ungarra and surrounding area, 25km NW from Tumby Bay,	No mobile signal in the town. Surrounding area has <u>very</u> limited signal available only with external aerial.	2011 census population 305, plus more in surrounding area	Major Central district agricultural transportation route. Reasonable level of through traffic tourism.	Emergency service impact during bushfire, with limited communication in the even of bush fires. The area has regular fixed line outages due to poor maintenance so are regularly left without any telecommunications. Ungarra has a primary school that is very limited without mobile availability. The major affected businesses are the agricultural businesses, which pump multi-millions of dollars into the economy, and are severely restricted and disadvantaged without access to mobile telecommunications and wireless internet. Weekend sport at the Ungarra oval includes football, cricket, and tennis.