

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: Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup

Phone:

Email:

Website (if applicable): www.donnybrook-balingup.wa.gov.au

Date: 26 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):

The author of Attachment 2 wanted their letter included with the submission, but not their personal details. The letter has been redacted accordingly.

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.

MOBILE COVERAGE PROGRAMME

Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup

Background

The Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup is situated 213 kilometres south-west of Perth and covers an area of 1,541 square kilometres.

The resident population of 5320¹ is growing at a rate of 2 per cent per year, and the Shire attracts some 56,000 day visitors and 43,000 overnight visitors a year².

The main highway through the Shire - South Western Highway – is a State Road, carrying some 6000 vehicles a day, including heavy haulage vehicles.

The Shire's undulating topography makes it a popular tourist destination, but contributes to patchy mobile phone coverage. Residents in several areas report having to walk to a nearby hill to get mobile reception, and even then the connection is only suitable for text messages.

It is difficult for these people to conduct business and many residents are isolated from important bushfire and other emergency warnings.

Mobile Phone Blackspots:

The following 'blackspots' have been identified by residents (including local brigade members) and Shire Rangers. The locations correspond to areas marked on the attached map in either pink or green. The pink areas are of significant concern. Those marked green are likely to improve when the new Wilga tower is commissioned in the near future.

1 Paynedale

Residents complain of 'no useful mobile coverage' in the location of Paynedale (see map and attachment 2).

2 Brookhampton / Newlands

No reliable reception available in marked area, including a section of South Western Highway.

¹ 2011 Census

² Tourism WA Profile of Donnybrook-Balingup 2007

3 Brookhampton / Thomson Brook

Very poor along Brookhampton Road from north of Wildmere Road towards Kirup, and east out along Thomson Brook.

4 Upper Capel Road

Very poor.

5 Yabberup and Lowden

“Hit and miss’ along sections of the Donnybrook-Boyup Brook Road but particularly bad from Trevena Road, east to Chapman Road.

6 Southampton

No mobile coverage in the valleys, some unreliable cover on hilltops.

The following areas are expected to improve once the new Wilga tower is commissioned:

7 Grimwade old settlement

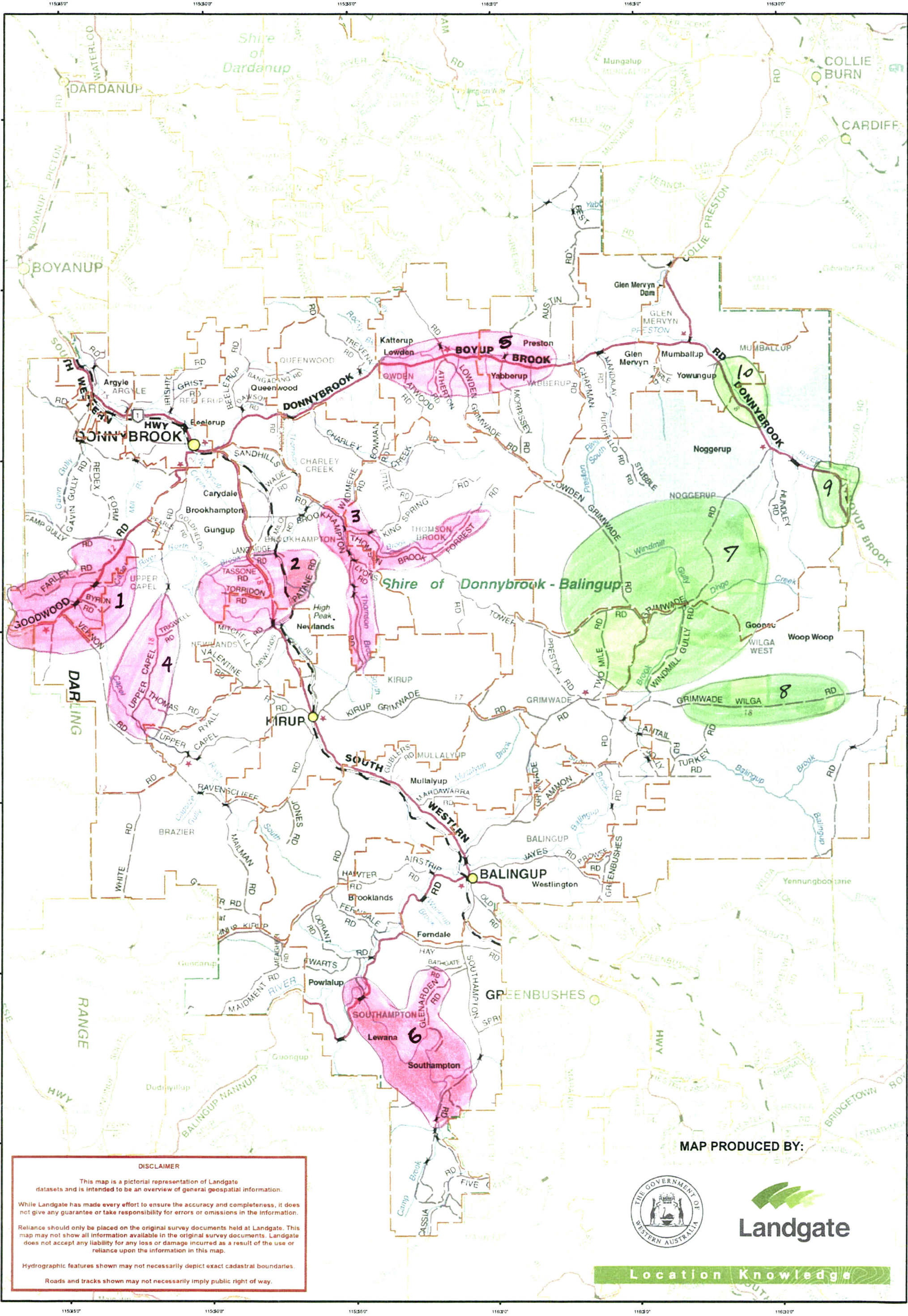
8 Grimwade-Wilga Road

9/10 Sections of Donnybrook-Boyup Brook Road

Attachments:

1 – map of the Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup showing areas of poor or no mobile coverage

2 – letter from member of the community regarding locality 1, Paynedale.



Donnybrook WA 6239

16 February 2014

Mobile Coverage Programme

In this region of Paynedale there is no useful mobile coverage. Some with super phones are able to get reception when at certain places on their farm. Reception within the house is unheard of. Others can receive text if the phone is in a certain window sill but no voice.

In our particular case there is no reception with a Telstra phone but if we go out on to the lawn we can use an Optus phone. This phone does not work once inside the house.

Our landline is a spur line and with our provider iinet and AAPT before it is beyond their total comprehension that we have no mobile reception and unless they speak to us to run through a house phone fault finding session they will not report the fault. Faults and down time on our spur line is not unusual.

To use our Telstra phone I have to travel to Pearls Road 7 kms from our farm

Telstra will not let us report a fault.

All residents of Paynedale farm to a professional standard and most follow professional occupations.

Profile of owners is

- 2 geologists
- 1 surveyor
- 2 veterinarians
- 1 GP
- 1 physiotherapist
- 1 contractor offers 24/7 hi tech services to mining and port loading
- 2 teachers one a deputy who must arrange relief at short notice
- 2 who offer special services to mining
- 1 industrial builder
- 1 packing shed manager
- 1 cattle dealer
- 9 other farmers most of who have off farm interests
- 2 police officers
- 1 vigneron/cellar sales and state manger to a forest growing company

From the above it can be seen that communications with the outside world is critical to conduct their professions and businesses. Couple this with in parts a dodgy landline we can be isolated for a week or more. In my case Telstra, AAPT now iinet cannot will not comprehend that when I ring on my mobile to report a line fault I am 7 kms from home and cannot conduct a fault finding exercise as they direct. It must done over the phone. Unless this is followed they will not report the fault. When all phones are down on the same line surely they can deduce the fault is not within the house.

Telco's can do all sorts of clever things but not be able to identify that we are in a mobile dead spot. Mobile reception maps are available on the net but it appears not available to Telco's

All computer connections in this area are by satellite some of which are through NBN. All television reception is by satellite – there are one or two exceptions.

From the outline above it can be seen that we are a farming/professional group and couple this with not so good landline telephone service and the intransigence of Telco's when it comes to reporting faults we are a very isolated group.

Finally bushfire advice/warnings are to come via mobile/landline phone. Farley Road is a no through road and services 10 farmers. The bush surrounding Paynedale has not been burnt in the past 20 years and with the amount of fuel on the ground we are in a fire hazard area.

I look forward to your favourable decision.

Thanking you *[Handwritten signature]*