

23 rd November 2011.

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Kilkivan Qld 4600.

RTIRC Secretariat,  
GPO Box 2154,  
Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Sirs,

**Re: RTIRC Review Issues paper 2011**

1. Impacts of the digital economy on regional Australia. (Growth in Local economies)

I live in an area east of the township of Kilkivan and just off the Wide Bay Highway on Spencer Road. We have very poor mobile phone coverage in my area and then on down the highway to past Lower Wonga. As you would be aware there is a blind spot on the Wide Bay highway stretching east from Kilkivan to past the Woolooga Substation where coverage is very difficult.

I believe that this lack of coverage is not only an impediment to the local people but it certainly will not encourage the movement of population to rural areas as we so often are told is needed to support rural economies.

2. Regional and health issues and business efficiencies for farming areas.

This situation (ABOVE) impacted on ourselves and many others in the area during the devastating floods earlier this year when many were isolated by road, some with no landlines and little to no mobile service. This situation put us all at risk due to no access to health care should the need arise.

My wife has a phone priority service due to major allergic reactions. This line was unable to be maintained during the floods. We also have a very unreliable landline into our property.

Then other issue that I am very concerned is that should there be a major road incident along this stretch of the highway, SES, Police, Paramedics would not have access to mobile coverage. As the Wide Bay Highway has now become a major route for B Doubles and Gravel trucks, the level of traffic imposes a greater potential for serious and possible fatal accidents.

3. Provision of Government Services in Rural areas.

Fire risk: Recently there was a fire alert along this stretch of the highway when someone inadvertently “dropped a match” beside one of the truck stops. Given it was a hot day and under very dry conditions, local SES was unable to cope with the situation and need to call in fire-fighters. This created a very difficult situation where it took some time to be able to contact fire-fighters to assist in the spread of the fire which very nearly entered the local Oakview Forestry where it would have been very difficult to extinguish.

I believe that the above issues cause a very high risk to the people of the region and certainly create great difficulty in any rescue from flood, fire or road incident.

We are told the role out of the NBN was to assist regional and remote people to enter the digital world that is accessible to urban areas. This is far from the case in many parts of rural Queensland.

I urge you not only to consider the above risks that we face daily out here but in light of them to make every effort to deliver to at least a degree of equity of services that may at least allow us a level of safety in time of disasters or accidents.

We do not believe that NBN will ever be delivered to these areas but simply ask that at the very least you renew old copper lines and place more adequate mobile towers for coverage that will at least allow us some level of safe living and access to health needs as required and particularly in emergencies.

Thank you for listening.

We look forward to hearing positive outcomes for rural and remote Australians.

Sincerely

Raymond C. Spencer