



PLEASE QUOTE REFERENCE
ENQUIRIES

**CENTRAL
GOLDFIELDS
SHIRE
COUNCIL**

15 December 2011

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I am writing this letter in support of the Carisbrook Disaster Recovery Committees' submission into the Review of Regional Telecommunications.

Carisbrook is situated in the Central Goldfields in Victoria and has a population of approximately 900 residents. The town itself was severely impacted in the January Floods with over 200 residences being inundated with water.

At the time the floods occurred, an emergency warning message was sent out to mobile phones, alerting them of the severe weather. Due to poor service coverage in the area, not everyone received the message or it eventually came through the following day.

It has been brought to my attention that mobile coverage in the area has always been poor, with some exceptions to those with Telstra and that during the floods there was even less service coverage.

As you could imagine this has severely distressed the residents of Carisbrook and I hope that this letter of support will go a long way in helping them achieve their goal of obtaining improved mobile service coverage.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Emma Hutton'.

Emma Hutton
Flood Recovery Officer
Central Goldfields Shire Council

CARISBROOK DISASTER RECOVERY COMMITTEE Inc.
Building a Better Community

16/12/11

Ms Rosemary Sinclair,
Chair
Regional Telecommunications Review
Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Ms Sinclair,

2011-2012 Regional Telecommunications Review

Our community committee formed as a result of the devastating flooding of our town on 14th January 2011. Over 260 homes were flooded, over 50 are still awaiting completion of repairs. Our town has a population of just over 700 people. Carisbrook is located only 7 km from Maryborough and 70 km from Ballarat.

Our committee has conducted three surveys of the townsfolk since January primarily to gauge resident's recovery and needs. One of the three major issues identified soon after the flood and still remaining is that of poor mobile phone reception.

At a Christmas celebration hosted by our Lions Club last night of the 140 attendees 66 had mobile phones.

Of these

16 reported good coverage with Telstra,

42 had patchy service, such as could not get reception in their homes,

the 1 Vodaphone customer did not have reception in town,

the 5 Optus customers did not have reception in town

and the 2 Southern Phone customers had poor/patchy service.

One business commented that they could not operate their EFTPOS machine because of poor/patchy service.

Residents have commented that in addition to Carisbrook other areas/towns locally that have poor mobile phone reception are Talbot, Amherst, Laanecoorie, Clunes, McCallums Creek and particularly Dunach.

A local councillor commented at a recent public meeting that he had concerns over attracting business to this area as the council could provide all the infrastructure bar reliable telecommunications and he saw that as a real barrier to increasing work opportunities in the town.

On the day of the floods the emergency notifications to evacuate came after the town flooded for some residents and was not received by others. Residents have expressed concern that mobile telephones are not reliable enough to be used as a communication tool in an emergency. Many of the landlines failed on the day due to inundation.

After the floods the community was told that the mobile tower transmitters in Maryborough would be boosted but on checking with residents this does not seem to have improved many individual services.

Residents have also commented that their wireless broadband services are very slow.

Attached is a letter of support for our submission from our local council.

Our committee look forward to the outcomes the review is able to achieve.

Yours Sincerely

Lyn Symons

Secretary
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