

Regional Telecommunications Review.

Submission.

The area of concern is the Braidwood (NSW) district, with special emphasis on the Mongarlowe area, 13kms from Braidwood.

Radio.

Apart from a community radio in Braidwood, it is nigh on impossible to receive any other radio broadcast without an external aerial.

A major concern for the residents of the district is an absence of radio reception broadcasting emergency news and updates. This is further compounded by the fact electricity needed for the home radio is often the first service lost during a flood/inferno.

Over twelve months ago a petition of nearly half the population was presented to the Federal member for Eden Monaro requesting a transmitter be installed to provide ABC broadcasts. The ABC local radio service has an excellent reputation for providing coverage during emergency events.

This provision was denied due to cost ~\$25,000 and lack of spectrum.

The cost point is self explanatory, whereas the Spectrum issue is a bit more complex.

It is believed the required analogue Spectrum needed for a FM transmitter will become available mid 2012 when the Braidwood television service is switched over to Digital only.

There is a concern the analogue frequencies have been earmarked for other purposes. Notwithstanding the district needs should be seriously considered first.

Mobile phones.

The existing towers servicing the Mongarlowe area fails to provide a consistent service, in particular the Charlie's Forest valley in which there are numerous black spots.

This could be overcome if a mobile phone tower was erected on the Budawang Range. Not only would all of the area, which is presently denied being satisfied, benefits would be realised at the adjacent area of the South Coast and the Clyde Mountain as well.

In the absence of a mobile phone service in many areas, there is a total reliance on landlines.

There is significant concern of the eventual demise of these landlines when the new owner, NBN, decommissions the necessary copper cables. What happens then to replace the landline? Is the area to be devoid of any telephony?

Broadband.

The Mongarlowe telephone exchange has not been upgraded to provide an ADSL service, despite the requisite fibre-optic cable being installed some 15 years ago to the exchange.

Representations to Telstra failed to gain a positive answer for a future upgrade. It is understood the main problem is concerned with the poor quantity/quality of the in-ground cables with many being pair-gained to satisfy demand. Apparently, a pair-gained cable is incapable of transmitting data.

Users in the area are reliant on Wireless Broadband, which has significantly less features than Cable while costing more and incapable of providing a service anywhere near that enjoyed by Cable.