



13 December 2011

RTIRC Secretariat (DBCDE)
GPO Box 2154
CANBERRA ACT 2601
Via Email: secretariat@rtirc.gov.au

Correspondence to:

The General Manager

PO Box 21

Mathoura NSW 2710

Administration / General Enquiries:

☎ (03) 5884 3302

📠 (03) 5884 3417

Engineering / Building & Planning:

☎ (03) 5884 3400

📠 (03) 5884 3417

email:

admin@murray.nsw.gov.au

website:

www.murray.nsw.gov.au

Head Office:

21-25 Conargo Street

Mathoura NSW 2710

Branch Office:

6 Meninya Street

Moama NSW 2731

Re: 2011-12 Regional Telecommunications Review

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the above review.

Council has been aware of the lack of mobile phone coverage and poor internet access in parts of the Shire and has been trying to rectify this issue for a long time.

Limited access to these vital services creates obvious issues and disadvantages for residents and businesses in the district. These issues affect areas such as business and tourism, education, health and safety, natural disasters, lifestyle and community sustainability.

To enable our rural communities to function well they require adequate phone and internet access, as do their urban counterparts. Appropriate telecommunication services would:

- assist traditional agricultural, as well as new, businesses to operate efficiently and further grow and develop
- encourage diversification of businesses
- encourage new ventures and R&D
- support education outcomes
- help achieve positive health and safety outcomes
- help prevent isolation
- assist communities to deal with natural disasters
- improve the lifestyles of residents

Community consultation was undertaken last month, as part of Council's Strategic Community Plan, with a focus on our rural communities. Following a morning's discussion about many and various ideas and concerns the community currently experience, the items raised were then prioritised. It was agreed by those in attendance that, out of all the issues discussed, "lack of mobile phone coverage and internet access" was the second highest priority for these communities. For your information, the highest priority was the Murray Darling Basin Plan and the impact it will have on sustainable farming.

Over the years, Council has made numerous approaches to Telstra regarding the need to upgrade services. Council consistently receives the same response from Telstra: "Currently there are no plans to deploy

additional mobile communications facilities to increase mobile coverage in the Murray Shire Local Government Area”.

Council is unsure how to address the issue of inadequate mobile phone coverage and internet access for our rural communities.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to submit Council’s concerns on this matter. Should you require further information, please contact Beck Hayward on 03 5884 3302 or bhayward@murray.nsw.gov.au.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Greg Murdoch', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Greg Murdoch
General Manager
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