



COOMA-MONARO SHIRE COUNCIL

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26 September 2002

Mr Dick Estens
Chair
Regional Telecommunications Inquiry
(Submissions)
via e-mail: rti@dcita.gov.au

Dear Mr Estens

REGIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION INQUIRY

Council wishes to make the following comments on telecommunications services within the Cooma-Monaro Shire.

Council's submission to the Besley Inquiry focused on the poor mobile phone coverage throughout the Shire. Since then improvements to coverage have been made along the Monaro Highway between Canberra and Cooma and a reliable service is now provided, but there is still no coverage in other areas which I will detail later.

Fixed telephone services and repairs of faults appear to have improved as Council has received no comments from residents. Internet service is available but data speeds are quite often slow. It is difficult to determine if the slow speeds are because of telecommunications infrastructure or due to Provider issues.

Telstra Country Wide have kept Council and the community informed of new products and services and future infrastructure improvements programs. There appears to be a genuine attempt by Telstra Country Wide to improve levels of service to clients.

As indicated above, there are still a number of areas of the Shire, including highways, which have no mobile phone coverage. Council realises that a satellite phone service is available but call rates are expensive. The highways include the Snowy Mountains Highway between Tumut and Cooma and between Nimmitabel and Pipers Lookout, sections of the Monaro Highway between Cooma and Nimmitabel and Nimmitabel to Bombala.

Council realises that a contract has been let to provide CDMA coverage for the Snowy Mountains Highway between Tumut and Cooma by 2004. Consideration should be given by

“Building a Better Community”

the contractor to not only provide a service to Highway users and residents of Adaminaby but also to the large number of recreational users who visit the Kosciuszko National Park.

In conclusion, some improvements have been made to telecommunication services within the Shire, but there are still improvements required, in particular to mobile phone coverage.

Yours sincerely

NEIL WATT
GENERAL MANAGER