

Submission Re NBN Rollout

Experience with Rural NBN from a base station (tower).

My initial experience with NBN issues started with installation. He who turned up was totally ill-equipped to do any sort of handy man job, yet alone a specific one. One adjustable wrench, and a tool for removing roof screws. Plus a Field strength meter, to tell him if the "Utility Box" (Antenna), was pointed in the right direction and could get a signal.

Then the installation of the antenna (Utility Box): This had to go on an approved fitting, on a roof: No flexibility: No understanding of radio waves. Putting it on a Studio (Steel Shed) was way out of the comfort zone & square. The hole cutter he had was inappropriate for metal and blunt. So we used my stuff (Farm). Obviously proper training is not a priority.

The fact that the Antenna had to be line of sight with a clear path to the NBN tower seemed irrelevant. So in the case of the neighbours, it took several months to get a variance so that it could be put somewhere where it could actually get signal: Where theirs was installed, there was none.

Another acquaintance up the road can't get a signal at all, as they have put the NBN tower in the wrong place. An understanding of the propagation of radio signals again, seems to not be a requirement for anyone associated with NBN tower (Base station) installation, nor the installation of the antennas (Utility Boxes). These people seem to be oblivious to the fact that the signal does not penetrate Granite, Buildings (especially metal) or large, centuries old Gum trees.

It is no wonder several people around here have inferior signal strength. I have been fixing radios for over 50 years & have built transmitting & receiving antennas. I would never dare put an antenna where some of theirs are. Naturally if there is an issue, that also takes forever to fix, as a member in a Club that I am in found out: Over six weeks without phone or internet before it was sorted by NBN: Much the same experience as the neighbour; This an aside from them not turning up for appointments in the first place.

Then we have the equipment: Cheap as. Here we see cost cutting at its finest. NBN signal here, as it may now be realised, uses wireless from a tower (base station). The actual connexion box (transmit / receive from modem) at my end cannot in any way comply with the regulations regarding Radio Frequency Interference (RFI). These connexion boxes create that much RFI that all but the very strongest stations are useable & even then, if you get too close to the box, signal will be wiped out altogether. In order to repair most radios here, it has to be shut off. All of these boxes should be forcibly recalled & replaced with ones that are compliant, as they refuse to do it.

Then we come to reliability, whatever that is? On average the signal from the NBN tower here, is lost regularly, something like every 4-6 weeks, often for hours (17hrs with one incident). Rural NBN shares the same dangerous failures as Mobile phones: No redundancy.

Redundancy relates to the loss of electrical supply causing total loss of signal.. The Landlines have this, too a point. If the power fails & the transceivers feeding the towers, go down, with NBN & Mobile phones. That leaves vast areas with absolutely no coverage, unless they have Landline phone lines that are fire resistant and maintained.

The majority of both rural NBN & Mobile towers, placed in rural locations, often fail to adequately cover the area that they are in. An example is the mobile phone one at Thoona Victoria. It's on a hill near the town, when it should have been on another hill closer to the Warby Ranges, where it could have reached another 10 to 15 subscribers who still have no mobile coverage and have to rely on an equally poor satellite service for NBN. Of course putting NBN Radiators & Mobile on the same towers is too sensible & outside the square, they have trapped themselves in: Even that it could save millions of dollars in the overall scheme of things: Typical modern Australian politics: No one looks at the big picture.

Clearly when you look at the performance of NBN corporate, NBN coverage, NBN data performance and domestic installation, it is an underperforming, over priced shemozzle. It needs an administration purge starting from the top, as we cannot continue to have it in the hands of those with poor management skills, poor performance & lack co-ordination, rolling it out like an Octopus without a brain.