



Senator the Hon Fiona Nash
Minister for Regional Development
Minister for Regional Communications
Minister for Rural Health
Deputy Leader of The Nationals

MS16-002217

19 DEC 2016

Mr Ross Vasta MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Petitions
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Ross,

Dear Chair

I am writing in response to the letter from the former chair of the Standing Committee on Petitions to Senator the Hon Mitch Fifield, Minister for Communications and the Arts concerning a petition for funding to improve mobile coverage at Wasleys in South Australia. Your letter has been referred to me as the matter falls under my responsibility as Minister for Regional Communications.

I note the Wasleys community's concern regarding mobile phone coverage. While mobile carriers claim to provide coverage to 99 per cent of Australia's population, there are still many parts of Australia where there is no coverage, particularly in regional and remote locations such as Wasleys in South Australia. Expanding mobile coverage has clear economic and social benefits, as well as public safety benefits for people living, working and travelling in regional and remote areas of Australia.

The Australian Government has committed \$220 million through the Mobile Black Spot Program to invest in telecommunications infrastructure to address mobile black spots along major regional transport routes, in small communities and in locations prone to experiencing natural disasters.

Unfortunately, Wasleys in South Australia will not receive any improved mobile coverage under rounds 1 and 2 of the Mobile Black Spot Program. At this point, there are no further rounds under which funding can be sought for this location. However I would encourage the Wasleys community to contact the carriers to make their coverage issues known and to identify ways of maximising their mobile phone reception.

Further information about the Mobile Black Spot Program is available on the Department's website at www.communications.gov.au/mobile_coverage

Yours sincerely

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