

Hello,

My name is Pauline Whiting and I am a business owner / operator.

We live in a rural area and operate our business from our home.

We have always had limited internet service, and limited to no mobile service.

Since starting our business 5 years ago, the need to be able to communicate and provide service to both our clients and contractors has increased to the point of needing to supply a better internet and mobile service to our location.

To this point, with NO assistance from any provider, due to their lack of care or understanding, we had to fund our own addition of a Yagi aerial on the roof to provide a wireless connection for a wireless only internet service. This was done at our own cost and time some 3 + years ago. At that stage, there was only 3G in its early stages, and apparently not even then available to my location. There were no other options as previously all that was available was dial up internet, or satellite, of which we did try the satellite and found it to be worse than dial up.

So we opted for wireless instead, with no other carrier available to compete with other than Telstra. Therefore, we had no choice but to pay whatever they wanted in order to get a service that was dearly needed, not only for the benefit of the business, but also for the family with our 3 children already in or heading into Higher School education, and the requirement from schools that the children have internet access to be able to access class information and subject matter.

We are at the point now, of total frustration, anger, disappointment, disgust. For the past 6 months, I alone, have been trying endlessly to sustain my current wireless connection, given that the modem device supplied to me by Telstra for the use with a Wireless system, faulted and failed, requiring a replacement modem (once again at a cost to me) as the other one was out of warranty, only to find that since supplying, the modem is a 4G pick modem, the aerial is a 3G pick up and does not communicate very well, if at all at times, with the 4G tower it is picking up from some 30+km away with many hills and ground cover between us and it, and the 4G modem itself.

I have spoken to MANY people, both professional and not, and gained enough understanding and advice to know that the equipment I have, is not suitable for the location or for the connection between each other, yet this is the equipment that was supplied or was all that was available at the time.

I took this matter to the Communication Ombudsman only just recently, and after doing so, received communication with Telstra (even though I had previously spent hours, days, weeks trying to get someone at Telstra to understand the concerns I had and the problems being experienced).

It took me going over their heads to actually get them to look at me more seriously. In doing so, I had a representative from Telstra contacting me daily to see about results that was up to me to get done. Now, I run a business, and my time is very limited, so it took some time (2 weeks) to gain the information that I did, and was then able to relay to the Telstra representative.

The result: NOTHING. I was told that a new aerial would need to be installed that was compatible with the 4G modem device I was supplied by them, that I am paying for, and the 4G tower that is

currently in existence. I was also advised that I would also need to pay for the new aerial being approx. \$1200.00 and that someone from the installation team would be in contact with me regarding all of this to arrange for an installation.

That was over 2 weeks ago, and I have heard nothing from anyone.

The Telstra representative advised that he would be putting a credit on my Telstra account of \$540 to compensate for approx. half of the cost of installing a new antenna, and to compensate for the past 6 months of limited to NIL connection service.

The NBN roll out completely bypassed our location. There is no talk of when or even if it will be coming to this location. I contacted Cathy McGowan's offices previously whilst Malcolm Turnbull was not Prime Minister and still in the position of Communications minister, and he advised via her, that my concerns at that time, were valid, however, there was no indication at that time of a better outcome, as there were no plans to roll out the NBN to my location either then or in the foreseeable near future. He suggested that I look into the Satellite options, as there was no other available service.

All this, I already knew. I had already done all my homework and research.

This answer proved nothing and provided nothing.

I was still no better off than before.

I have gone to the extent of trying anything I can to boost my service, even looking for trial equipment to experiment on what may be a better result.

And now, after suffering constant dropouts with my non compatible service, or a lot of the time, not connectable service, and finding that there is no competition against Telstra to be able to get a FAIR price on the service being offered under limited conditions, we are paying top dollar for a lousy service.

My business has suffered for the inability to be as accessible as my competitors are. We have lost work not only for the internet down time, and inability to get required paperwork lodged as needed electronically, but also for the lack of mobile service that has become critical for business futures.

We need the NBN here. We need the freedom to choose who we wish to deal with as a supplier, instead of it only being one carrier allowing them to overcharge.

There are a lot of small businesses in the area, and each of us rely on connectivity to run our individual small businesses effectively and productively. The no service, and no mobile reception issue we all suffer, is debilitating to not only our businesses, but our personal productivity, and that of our children in this day and age of technological communication and interaction.

Something needs to be done. I for one, am SICK of putting my hand in my pocket to provide for something that 90% of the countries other residents can get for minimal cost and maximum effect.

This is supposed to be the lucky country. Yet we are still so far behind international countries, and even third world countries, who still seem to have a better communication system available to them, than we do.

I believe a better option is available, and that people like myself in rural areas, should have better access than what we are getting, or even better assistance with services that can supply an alternative to what may currently be available, or at least to testing to see what can be done.

I am happy to meet with anybody to discuss this situation, and help them gain a better understanding of the position I and my family are in because of it.

I sincerely hope you may find this letter of value and that it may aid in the decision to rectify a problem that exists not only in my little corner of the country, but I'm sure in many others.

I look forward to hearing from you and hopefully getting the opportunity to present a very valid case to you.

Kind Regards

Pauline Whiting