



Enquiries:

Our Ref: SC323

9 November 2016

Ms Christine McDonald
Secretary
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

By email: ec.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Ms McDonald

RE: RADIO RECEPTION AND MOBILE PHONE COVERAGE OVER THE SNOWY MONARO REGIONAL COUNCIL AREA

The Snowy-Monaro Regional Council represents over 20% of the Eden Monaro Electorate. This very large area contains many rural residents and many kilometres of roads. There is neither mobile phone coverage nor ABC 1602 AM Local (Cooma) Radio reception over most of the area. This is concerning for the safety of residents in rural areas as the ABC is the designated local emergency broadcaster. This is unhelpful if there is no reception in a regional town, on a rural property, or on one of the roads.

Bushfires, road traffic incidents and electrical transmission line problems are the major emergencies in this area. The first two of these are frequent occurrences.

In 2013 there were over 182 fires in the first 10 months, including the Yarrabin fire in January which took 11 days to extinguish at a cost of \$3.8 million.

Rural residents in that situation relied on land-line phones for information on the direction and proximity of the fire until the lines went down. Eventually the police door knocked to evacuate them. In 2014 a similar situation occurred at Murrumbucca with the fire proceeding towards Canberra. In 2003 Adaminaby was evacuated as the fire approached. In these situations frequent, timely and accurate information is required both at home and on the road, or the type of chaos encountered in the Canberra 2003 fires will recur.

I would ask that the Senate Inquiry gives serious consideration to the upgrades to the Cooma transmitter as the safety of our residents is at the utmost importance.

Yours sincerely

Dean Lynch
Administrator

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