

To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the House of Representatives

This petition of concerned residents and small business owners in Wilcannia, far western NSW, draws to the attention of the House the need to improve mobile communications in Wilcannia beyond the current extremely poor service.

We ask the House to address the limited broadband and internet connectivity in Wilcannia through a significant service upgrade. Without fast and reliable mobile and internet connectivity, economic development and access to services taken for granted elsewhere in Australia, including access to information and social networking opportunities for individuals, families and small businesses in Wilcannia, are severely limited.

Wilcannia is one of only two Indigenous remote service delivery communities in NSW where government is investing considerable resourcing and services to address Indigenous disadvantage. Without high quality mobile telecommunications, the capacity of government investment to bring change will be limited.

While the roll out of satellite and cable broadband services will ultimately address some of these issues, mobile communications offer greater flexibility and need less investment by individuals and small businesses, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. In locations with challenging economic conditions as is the case for Wilcannia, the power of high quality mobile communications is critical to creating niche enterprises, diversifying the local economy, generating new employment and development opportunities, and marketing local products and services nationally and globally.

High quality mobile telecommunications are essential to overcome the tyranny of distance, both social and economic, for Wilcannia residents and small businesses.