

ODEC Presentation to Senate Committee Telecommunications

The following is a dot point summary of issues presented to the above committee

1. **At the Outset, this presentation is not a TELSTRA bashing exercise, as some of the media have reported and it is not in reference to the proposed sale of TELSTRA.**
2. **It is a comment on the delivery of telecommunication services across Western NSW and its various providers**
3. ODEC's role 1/ a project facilitator for assistance for Australian Government programs 2/ a conduit of information from the community to Government, especially the Australian Govt
4. Board of ODEC represents 25% of NSW from Wellington to Cobar, Bourke to Walgett to Warrumbungle to Dubbo and all points between.
5. Comments today relate to voice services, both mobile and land based, fax and data services across the region.
6. It is unreasonable to expect the same level of service in remote areas of NSW as is available in George St Sydney. It is also unreasonable to expect the cost to be at the same pricing level. People make a choice to live in these areas, however in this age of modern technology it is reasonable to expect reasonable service at a reasonable price to be delivered under the accepted USO provisions. I do not believe the various TELCOs are delivering according to these obligations. I do not believe it is acceptable to have a data service where you can go and boil the jug and have half the cup of coffee half consumed before the data is downloaded.
7. For example, claims of mobile services from a variety of providers are just not true. One claim is the Newell Highway has continuous mobile coverage from one end to the other. This is not true as I own a property just 42 km from Dubbo on the Newell and coverage is not available. At Times I take three mobiles Telstra digital, Telstra CDMA and Optus Digital and program them to forward to each other in the hope one will be in range when I am at the 750 acre property. Each system has some coverage in various parts of the property. I believe all the TELCOS should be honest when they report their coverage and mobile footprint and the true details of their USO obligation
8. The provision of ADSL services even close to Dubbo is limited. I have a property 5.25 km from the Dubbo exchange as the crow flies and cannot get ADSL. I have been told on several occasions the service may become available sometime in the future. In the mean time my daughter who is in her senior years Dubbo Senior Campus has to go the Dubbo Library or to the ODEC Office after hours to get reasonable access to data and internet services for her education.. Data services are not adequate this close to Dubbo so I sympathise with those who live in remote areas.

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9. The activities under the trade practices act have had a direct impact on the delivery of communication services as one area of Company operations cannot be offset against another. This has in fact reduced competition. For example Vodaphone Global Star has a service which can provide mobile telephony and data services covering all of the Australian continent and two hundred kilometres out to sea. However the cost is excessive. Vodaphone Global Star could not offset the land operations against the satellite driven component of their operations under the Trade Practices Act and ACCC restrictions. If this had been allowed, under the currently monopolised USO access and service provisions, massively reduced mobile data and voice costs would have been possible for Australian consumers remote or otherwise. This is the claim of this TELCO.
10. The technology exists but the rules and regulations are inhibiting the delivery of services to many people sand communities in regional and remote areas of Australia.
11. Two actual cases will be presented by residents who live in remote areas from Louth and Brewarrina.

Yours Faithfully

Tom Warren

CEO

ODEC.

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