



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Communications**

Our Reference: MC15-004100

Ms Vanessa O'Keefe  
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Dear Ms O'Keefe

**Telecommunications availability on Dangar Island, NSW**

Thank you for your letter to the Minister for Communications, the Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP, concerning access to telecommunications services on Dangar Island. The Minister has asked the Department to respond on his behalf. Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding.

*Broadband Availability*

In relation to your concerns on behalf of the Dangar Island League relating to broadband availability, the Department of Communications has investigated current availability of ports in the Dangar Island region and any planned upgrades to the exchange.

You can obtain updates about works that would result in increased ADSL availability in Dangar Island area using the following report:

**<http://www.telstrawholesale.com.au/products/broadband/adsl/adsl-reports-plans/index.htm>**

After reviewing this report on your behalf, it appears Telstra plans to increase its capacity at the exchange service area of Brooklyn in October 2015.

As retail service providers are private companies, operational decisions such as upgrading telephone exchanges to support additional ADSL connections or improve network performance are commercial matters for each company to consider, subject to the regulatory framework within which they operate.

The residents of Dangar Island may be interested to know that Telstra may be able to offer customers the opportunity to go onto a waiting list for when a port becomes available. If they are interested in this option, they will need to place an order with Telstra (or preferred retail service provider) for an ADSL service. If they don't currently have a home phone, this will be connected (and paid for each month) and the ADSL part of the order will go onto the port availability waiting list for the local exchange. Importantly, Telstra has advised that it places an order on the waiting list where it considers a port may become available within the following 12 months.

When a customer relocates or disconnects their ADSL service, the port remains attached to the address for a period of one month to facilitate easy reconnection to the same address. If that port is not re-used at the same address within a month, it can be used anywhere else within the area covered by the local exchange, and will be allocated to the next person on the waiting list.

On 2 July 2015, an updated NBN Co National Rollout Plan was released which provides an indicative view of construction currently underway and scheduled construction work up to December 2016. The complete forecast is available on the nbn website at **[www.nbnco.com.au/content/dam/nbnco2/documents/mtm-rollout-plan.pdf](http://www.nbnco.com.au/content/dam/nbnco2/documents/mtm-rollout-plan.pdf)**

The Plan demonstrates the continued momentum of the rollout with construction work currently underway to expand the network to more than one million premises across the country in addition to the more than 500,000 homes and businesses already connected and enjoying the benefits of fast broadband.

The Australian Government has committed to ensuring that Australia's new broadband network will be made available to every Australian family and business by 2020. To deliver this rollout commitment, NBN Co has developed a set of deployment principles aiming to utilise existing infrastructure where possible, factor in construction partner capacity across Australia and take advantage of advances in technology.

NBN Co is also committed to providing regular updates of planned activity across Australia to capture any changes to the schedule identified through process and technology improvements or variations in the rollout. Accordingly, I encourage you to monitor the NBN Co website, particularly via its blog at **[www.nbn.com.au/blog.html](http://www.nbn.com.au/blog.html)** for regular updates on the network rollout schedule and all matters operational, as well as registering your interest about being notified when you will be able to connect to the new broadband network at **[www.nbnco.com.au/connect-home-or-business/check-your-address/outside-rollout.html](http://www.nbnco.com.au/connect-home-or-business/check-your-address/outside-rollout.html)**

### *Mobile Coverage*

The Australian Government understands your concerns regarding mobile phone coverage in your area. While mobile carriers claim to provide coverage to 99 per cent of Australia's population, there are still large areas that have no coverage, particularly in regional and remote locations. 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.

The Government's Mobile Black Spot Programme is investing in telecommunications infrastructure to address mobile black spot locations in regional and remote Australia. The programme is improving mobile coverage along major transport routes, in small communities and in locations prone to experiencing natural disasters.

The Programme has received significant interest from across Australia since its announcement, with over 6,000 regional locations reported nationally which have been added to the Government's database of reported mobile black spot locations.

On 25 June 2015, the Government announced that under Round 1, 499 new or upgraded mobile base stations will be deployed across regional and remote Australia -- 429 Telstra base stations and 70 Vodafone base stations. The number of base stations funded nationally is well in excess of expectations.

The new or upgraded base stations funded through Round 1 will provide new handheld coverage to 68,600 square kilometres and new external antenna coverage to over 150,000 square kilometres of regional and remote Australia. Over 5,700 kilometres of major transport routes will also receive new handheld or external antenna coverage from the base stations. The programme is improving mobile coverage for thousands of people that live, work or travel in regional and remote Australia.

Under Round 1 of the Programme, a new or upgraded mobile base station will be built at Sackville North, which may provide some improved coverage to Dangar Island. The extent of improved mobile coverage that a particular location will receive from a funded base station is dependent on its proximity from it and also the topography of the local area. The precise coverage footprint of each funded base station will not be known until the detailed design stage of each base station is complete, including obtaining the necessary planning approval.

#### *\$60 million for Round 2*

The Government has announced that it will commit \$60 million for Round 2 of the Mobile Black Spot Programme, with funding to be available over a two year period from July 2016.

Round 2 of the Programme is expected to operate under similar guidelines as the first round, although the Government will review the results of Round 1 to determine if there should be any changes for Round 2. The Government will again seek to leverage additional funding from the mobile network operators and other levels of government, with a view to maximising the number of new or upgraded base stations which can be delivered.

Round 2 will continue to utilise the database of mobile black spot locations nominated by members of the public. The Government has re-opened the database to allow members of the public to nominate further regional locations which have poor or no mobile coverage. Nominations can be emailed to: [mobilecoverage@communications.gov.au](mailto:mobilecoverage@communications.gov.au)

The competitive selection process for Round 2 is expected to commence in 2016, after allowing time for further locations to be reported and a review of the operation of Round 1. The locations to be funded under Round 2 are expected to be announced by the end of 2016.

*200 Telstra 4G 'mini base stations' across Australia*

As part of Telstra's offering under the Programme, it will deploy up to 200 4G mini base stations in small towns around Australia where suitable infrastructure is available, with the locations to be mutually agreed between Telstra and the Government.

These mini base stations will provide mobile data coverage to a radius of around 200-300 metres and will support voice services as the technology for 4G based voice becomes available. The Government expects to agree the locations for the 4G mini base stations with Telstra during the second half of 2015, with the rollout commencing after that.

*Continued network expansion by the operators*

In addition to government subsidised network expansion, the mobile network operators continue to extend their networks around the country. You may wish to highlight to the mobile network operators your interest in obtaining improved mobile coverage in the areas you mentioned. The contact details for Telstra, Optus and Vodafone are enclosed for your information.

Further information about the Mobile Black Spot Programme is available at:  
**[www.communications.gov.au/mobile\\_coverage](http://www.communications.gov.au/mobile_coverage)**

Thank you for bringing your concerns to the Minister's attention. I trust this information will be of assistance.

Yours sincerely



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Director  
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