



PAUL FLETCHER MP

Federal Member for Bradfield
Minister for Communications,
Urban Infrastructure,
Cities & the Arts

MC21-004685

Mr Josh Wilson MP
Member for Fremantle
PO Box 1224
Fremantle WA 6959

Dear Mr Wilson *Jash*

Thank you for your letter of 27 May 2021, regarding mobile phone coverage in Treeby, Western Australia. I can well understand how a situation of the kind you describe would be frustrating for your constituents. I am sorry it has taken me so long to respond.

Mobile Coverage

The predictive coverage maps published by the mobile network operators (MNOs) – Optus, Telstra and TPG Telecom (formerly Vodafone Hutchison Australia) – indicate that Treeby should be receiving 3G and 4G mobile coverage from Optus, Telstra and TPG Telecom. Telstra has also upgraded its network in some parts of Treeby to 5G.

There are a number of factors that can interfere with mobile reception and therefore impact a user's ability to obtain or maintain a mobile phone signal at any given time or place. These factors include hilly terrain, buildings (including their internal structure) or other physical obstacles such as trees interrupting the line-of-sight from the nearest mobile base station. Sometimes residents with good outdoor mobile reception can experience reception issues inside their home.

Products are available to improve mobile reception, including the use of an external antenna or authorised repeater, for example, Telstra has released a 'Smart Antenna' to improve indoor reception on its network. The particular type of handset and its settings can also affect mobile reception. For example, customers will need a compatible mobile device in order to access the MNOs 4G and 5G networks. Each of the mobile phone providers are able to provide advice on the best products, handsets and settings for local conditions.

I would therefore encourage residents in the area to contact their mobile service provider to make their coverage issues known and to identify if there are ways to maximise their reception.

Wi-Fi calling is also available on the mobile carriers' networks for use with a compatible device allowing some customers to call and text over a Wi-Fi connection. This can be particularly helpful for those experiencing poor or no mobile reception inside their home. Residents can obtain further advice regarding this option by contacting their mobile service provider.

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For residents who do not already have a broadband connection, the NBN Co Limited (NBN Co) website indicates that the National Broadband Network (NBN) is now available in Treeby and that residents are ready to connect to the NBN FTTN network. Further information about network availability in the area, including how to connect and a list of providers in the area, is available on the NBN Co website at www.nbnco.com.au.

Mobile Black Spot Program

The Australian Government has committed \$380 million to date to the Mobile Black Spot Program (the Program) to invest in telecommunications infrastructure projects that improve mobile coverage and competition across Australia.

As the Program primarily targets regional and remote parts of Australia, Treeby is ineligible to receive funding through the Program due to its location within the Major Urban area of Perth. Mobile carriers continue to heavily invest in expanding their networks to improve mobile coverage across Australia. In major urban areas, such as in Treeby, this investment is being driven by strong competition and economic pressures.

Ultimately, any investment in new mobile network infrastructure remains a commercial decision for the MNOs. However, following receipt of your letter, I have referred your constituents' mobile coverage concerns on to the MNOs and asked if they may help by investing in further mobile infrastructure in the area.

Thank you for bringing your concerns to my attention. I hope the information in this letter is of some help.

Yours sincerely



Paul Fletcher

31/7/2021