



David Littleproud MP

Federal Member for Maranoa

Media statement

March 19, 2018

Maranoa MP grills Telstra over prolonged Wallumbilla service outage

MARANOA MP David Littleproud today contacted Telstra's CEO, furiously demanding to know why the Wallumbilla area was plunged into service darkness since last week, resulting in a logistical nightmare during a local medical emergency.

"Today, concerned Wallumbilla residents contacted me over a Telstra mobile phone, landline and internet disruption of services and, in some cases a total blackout, since March 15. This ongoing outage is unacceptable and I demand to know why this community was left without service for such an extended period of time," Mr Littleproud said.

"Anxious Wallumbilla residents contacted me about this service outage because of the huge impact on the community in relation to safety and business practices.

"Unable to rouse members on the phone as a result of the coverage issues, I was horrified to learn the local Queensland State Emergency Service (SES) at Wallumbilla had to try and find members on the street to respond to a medical emergency.

"Late yesterday afternoon, there was an emergency callout involving a man who had sustained serious chest and other injuries as a result of a motorbike incident. He was stabilised at the Wallumbilla Community Clinic however, the medical team determined he needed to be airlifted to a larger hospital for further treatment.

"The SES controller, who lives just outside Wallumbilla, received a text message from Fire Comm yesterday afternoon in relation to this medical incident but he wasn't able to respond or contact fellow SES members for assistance due to the Telstra communications outage.

"The controller was able to obtain information regarding the pending medical evacuation on his landline telephone but was forced to go into town in an attempt to find colleagues as he couldn't reach them via mobile.

"Sheer luck meant the controller was able find a SES colleague, who happened to be walking down the street. The controller, his colleague and a member of the public were then able to secure a safe location – at the Wallumbilla State School oval – for the emergency helicopter to land to retrieve the injured patient.

"I fear this medical emergency could've turned into a tragedy if it wasn't for the quick thinking of the SES because the rest of the Wallumbilla SES team didn't receive the initial Fire Comm text until 9am today, many hours after the assistance call was first sent.

“Also, the pharmacist at Wallumbilla also contacted me, livid as he was unable to dispense medication as a result of the internet service disruption.

“This ongoing outage is totally unacceptable in this day-and-age and I demand to know why this rural community was plunged into communications darkness for such a long time without consultation.”

–ENDS–

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