



FIONA PHILLIPS MP

FEDERAL MEMBER FOR GILMORE



Mr Chris Hayes
Secretary
Red Head Villages Association

Via email: rhva.secretary@gmail.com

28 March 2025

Dear Mr Hayes *Chris,*

As you know, in February I wrote to the Minister for Communications, the Hon Michelle Rowland MP, on behalf of the Red Head Villages Association (RHVA) regarding mobile phone reception concerns in the area. I have now received the attached response from the Minister.

I am really pleased to see that there is an upcoming round of funding under the Mobile Black Spot Program (MBSP).

I trust the response from the Minister is helpful, and again thank you for bringing this matter to my attention.

If I can be of any further help in the future, please contact me on 4423 1782 or email me at Fiona.Phillips.MP@aph.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

Fiona Phillips

Fiona Phillips MP
Member for Gilmore



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The Hon Michelle Rowland MP

**Minister for Communications
Federal Member for Greenway**

MC25-002494

Mrs Fiona Phillips MP
Member for Gilmore
PO Box 1009
NOWRA NSW 2541

Fiona.Phillips.MP@aph.gov.au

Dear Mrs Phillips

Thank you for your letter of 26 February 2025 on behalf of the Red Head Villages Association (RHVA) regarding mobile blackspots and phone reception in the Bendalong, Berringer Lake, Cunjurong Point, Manyana, and North Bendalong villages, New South Wales.

The Australian Government recognises that Australians deserve access to reliable, high-quality, and affordable mobile telecommunications. The Government is providing up to \$55 million (GST exclusive) for Round 8 of the Mobile Black Spot Program (MBSP) to improve mobile coverage and competition across Australia. Applicants for Round 8 close on 30 April 2025. I encourage you to talk with the telco industry about including a solution that addresses coverage issues in your region in their applications for grant funding. Further information about the MBSP (including Round 8) is available on the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts' website at infrastructure.gov.au/mbsp.

I recently announced the Government's new Universal Outdoor Mobile Obligation (UOMO), which will require mobile providers to provide reasonable and equitable access to baseline outdoor mobile coverage across Australia. The UOMO will require Telstra, Optus, and TPG to provide access to mobile SMS and calling in areas currently without mobile coverage by leveraging emerging direct to device mobile connectivity, enabled through Low Earth Orbit satellites. The UOMO is expected to commence by late 2027, and will benefit remote, regional, and peri-urban communities by transforming 000 access and expanding public safety connectivity.

In the meantime, I encourage residents in Bendalong, Berringer Lake, Cunjurong Point, Manyana, and North Bendalong villages to continue to liaise with their service provider about coverage. Service providers are best placed to respond to concerns about mobile coverage as they have the greatest knowledge of their customer's circumstances and performance of networks at their customer's location. Service providers can also provide advice on and deliver solutions to resolve concerns.

The Hon Michelle Rowland MP
PO Box 6022, Parliament House Canberra
Suite 101C, 130 Main Street, Blacktown NSW 2148 | (02) 9671 4780

If residents remain concerned, they may wish to contact the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman (TIO). The TIO is a free and independent alternative dispute resolution body for small business and residential consumers with unresolved complaints about their telephone or internet services. The TIO can be contacted through its website at tio.com.au/complaints or by calling 1800 062 058.

I also suggest residents contact the Regional Tech Hub (the Tech Hub), which is funded by the Government under its Better Connectivity Plan for Regional and Rural Australia and provides independent information to regional customers about their digital choices. The Tech Hub can be contacted through its website at regionaltechhub.org.au or hotline on 1300 081 029.

Please reassure the RHVA that the Government is committed to improving connectivity and understands the importance of telecommunication services to keep communities safe and connected. We are investing more than \$2.2 billion in regional communications, including \$1.1 billion through our Better Connectivity Plan to improve mobile connectivity and resilience in regional, rural, and remote Australia.

Your advocacy for your region is to be commended and I encourage you to work with local councils and communities to engage with mobile network operators, as experience has shown this increases the likelihood of issues being addressed or operators putting forward applications for co-funding under government programs. Members of Parliament can play an important role in facilitating dialogue between local communities and carriers to help emphasise the priorities and associated funding applications.

Thank you for taking the time to write to me on this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michelle Rowland". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michelle" and the last name "Rowland" clearly distinguishable.

Michelle Rowland MP

19 / 03 / 2025