COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

BLACK SPOT REDUCTION AND GREATER INTERNET CONNECTION

Mitchell Shire Council is seeking a commitment from the State and Federal Governments to reduce mobile blackspots and improve internet connection in our towns and rural areas which are at most risk from natural disasters such as fire, and are at an economic disadvantage due to lack of communications access.

THE ASK

Mobile towers to enable faster and wider spread communications from emergency services alerts
To help prevent further devastation and loss of life through faster and wider spread emergency messages during natural disaster events, the following areas are in immediate need of mobile towers:

> Glenaroua
> Pyalong
> Whiteheads Creek
> Beveridge
> Kilmore
> Mitchell Shire’s rural Western fringe

Mobile towers and internet connection to increase economic potential
To help unlock economic potential in our towns, rural communities and growth areas, mobile reception and reliable internet connectivity is needed. In particular, it is most needed for those trying to operate small businesses and farm enterprises where lack of mobile coverage and dependable Internet is a significant disadvantage.

BENEFITS

Mobile towers to prevent destruction and loss of life from natural disaster events
Mobile towers in our most vulnerable areas will enable faster and wider spread communications from emergency services alerts, potentially saving lives. In addition, community members may feel safer living in our rural areas when they have access to emergency alerts, enhancing the liveability of the Mitchell Shire and attracting more residents to our rural areas.

Mobile towers and Internet connection to increase economic potential
Greater mobile reception and reliable internet connection in our towns and rural areas will encourage and create more opportunities for economic growth. In particular it will give small businesses and farms a better chance to make their business more secure and potentially more competitive, creating the opportunity for more local jobs and tourist opportunities.
Mitchell Shire has a current population of approximately 45,000\(^1\) and is one of the fastest growing councils in Victoria\(^2\). In the next 25-30 years, our population is expected to grow to over 230,000\(^3\).

In the 2016 Census over 2,000 households in the Mitchell Shire reported having no internet access\(^4\), and there are multiple reports of limited or no mobile reception in isolated rural communities\(^5\).

In 2009, Mitchell Shire was impacted by the devastating fires of Black Saturday, which claimed the lives of 173 people\(^6\). In 2014, Mitchell Shire communities were impacted again by the Kilmore/Mickleham fire, which burnt over 22,000 hectares and destroyed 13 houses\(^7\).