

TSO Review  
Information Technology & Telecommunications Policy  
Ministry of Economic Development

8-10-2007

**Re: Rural Telecommunications**

I started a campaign about 3 ½ months ago to get improved rural telecommunications because where I live in Mokoreta we only get very slow internet dial up and no cellphone coverage at all. The area I am campaigning for now includes the Southland District Council's Toetoes ward in the south Catlins, and also incorporates the Gorge Road area in the Waihopai ward and north Catlins, but because of all the phone calls and letters I have had, I now know that it effects all of rural N.Z.

I organized a public meeting for the Telecommunications providers to attend to see if we could get an improvement for these lacking services, those that attended were Telecom, Vodafone, Woosh and Farmside. Telecom and Vodafone said that they where not planning any investment in these areas, which for these communities is very frustrating. Woosh is still looking at expanding into some rural areas.

Farmside is an option but an expensive one at that and I don't see why just because we live in the rural community we should be disadvantaged and be made to pay more for these services.

The lack of decent internet/ cellphone services in rural N.Z effects a lot of people in their everyday lives from emergency services, tourism all rural businesses new and established, it also extends outside the rural community to include major companies, accountants solicitors, banks and many more.

The Telecommunications providers talk of the amount of revenue that they would loose improving telecommunications in rural N.Z, but what about the revenue that rural N.Z is loosing due to these poor services.


It is vital for the N.Z economy that we are allowed to move forward in the World of Modern Technology because SAFTEY & PRODUCTIVITY does matter in rural N.Z.

I think the Government should work with all providers and let rural N.Z know that they will do everything possible to improve the VERY POOR services so we are not disadvantaged by living in beautiful rural N.Z.

I have received 67 letters of support from emergency services, community groups, businesses and the general public and have included all of these letters so you can see how lack of telecommunications disrupts and frustrates them in their everyday lives.

This is a very serious issue and it needs to have immediate attention so we can move forward successfully like the rest of N.Z.

Yours sincerely



Rosanne Lawson

# Southerners call for better cellphone deal

by SONIA GERKEN in Gore

**RURAL** southerners, fed up with poor cellphone coverage they say has become an issue of safety and not just of convenience, are banding together to take on major telecommunications providers for a better deal.

The campaign, spearheaded by Wyndham-Mokoreta resident Rosanne Lawson, has rapidly grown since it was mooted. Initially centred on the Southland District Council's Toetoes ward in the south Catlins, it now incorporates the George Road area in the Waihopai ward and north Catlins, and may extend to Northern Southland's Waikaia area.

Mrs Lawson said the community buy-in and support had been tremendous.

The Catlins was a vast area fraught with virtually no cellphone coverage, and the many community

service groups, emergency services and businesses she had spoken to were unanimous in their support for better coverage, she said.

"In these days of technology, it becomes more than an issue of convenience. It comes down to being a fact of life for the majority and can sometimes be a matter of life for the minority."

In her Mokoreta area, emergency volunteers work from a pager system that could be activated immediately from a cellphone — "if they worked in the area".

Instead, valuable time was lost as the person accessed a landline, often travelling from the other end of the farm to their home, to activate the emergency callout service, Mrs Lawson said.

People involved in road crashes were forced to either wait for a passing vehicle or walk to farmhouses to raise the alarm, again wasting precious time, she said.



110245  
Scarcely cellular: Southland woman Rosanne Lawson wants cellphone coverage and is taking action to get it. JOHN HAGGAN

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## Better deal called for

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Southland district Toetoes Cr Paul Duffy said in terms of safety, business opportunities and the ability to freely communicate with family and friends, improved coverage would be monumental.

The Toetoes ward had a resident population of 2900 but key visitor spots in the district or neighbouring Catlins could attract between 45,000 and 60,000 visitors in the peak season, he said.

A public meeting to thrash out the issue would be held next month at Menzies College, in Wyndham.

Mrs Lawson said Telecom had confirmed it would attend the meeting.

She was still awaiting confirmation from Vodafone.

Invitations had been sent to several political and key stakeholder groups and local government representatives, including Southland District Mayor Frana Cardno, had already indicated they would be attending.

Before the meeting a survey would be sent to residents in the affected areas to find out what cellphone and internet services could be accessed in their homes.

Mrs Lawson urged people to fill out the survey.

"We need to know exactly what the community's needs are.

"If we don't know what is needed, we can't help anyone," she said.

Southland  
Times  
31<sup>st</sup> / 8 / 07.

# Rural communication frustrates

By SONIA GERKEN

to put up with in the Catlins-Wyndham area.

A PLEA went out last night to telecommunication providers and government to give rural southerners a better deal with their cell phone and internet services.

While Vodafone and Telecom representatives were sympathetic, they were unable to give those at the meeting much hope.

An estimated 150 people turned out to a meeting at Wyndham, united in their frustrations and concerns about safety and business productivity caused by the marginal and often non-existent cell phone and internet services they have

Most companies admitted they were not planning any investment to improve services to the area.

Preliminary results of a survey of southern rural Southland showed that two thirds of 269 respondents could not use their cell phone in their home.

Southland  
Times 25/9/07

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## Fight for coverage continues

BY SONIA GERKEN in Gore

THE Southland woman campaigning for improved telecommunications for rural people plans to take her fight to central Government.

Rosanne Lawson said yesterday she was overwhelmed by the turnout to a public meeting in Wyndham on Monday night to discuss cell phone and internet problems for residents in the Catlins and Wyndham-Mokoreta areas.

But she was far from happy with what major providers had to say and would keep up the campaign.

"I can't stop now. We've got to keep fighting," she said.

Representatives from Vodafone and Telecom told the estimated 150 people at the meeting they had no plans to extend coverage.

Southern rural areas have limited, and in some places non-existent, cellphone coverage and internet services.

Many at the meeting, including St Johns Ambulance Southland district operations manager Pauline Buchanan, spoke of their concerns for the safety of residents and the thousands of independent tourists who visit each year.

Telecom government relations manager Dean Schmidt said it would require seven sites, at \$500,000 each, to service the Catlins.

"Speaking honestly, we have no future planning for investment in this area," he said.

Mrs Lawson said rural people were immensely frustrated.

Southland  
Times  
26/9/07