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Victoria, Australia

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B.
The General Manager
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Reference Digital Conversion of Self Help Television Retransmission

I am writing this submission on behalf of the people of Woods Point, Victoria. The submission isn't a large one, but important for us.

Woods Point is small mining town in the Great Dividing Range of Victoria, it has a population of about 30 people full time and is serviced by a Hotel and General Store. The major employers in town are the Morningstar Gold Mine and the Commercial Hotel. The town lies about 95 kilometres south of Mansfield (1 1/2 hour's drive) and about 119 kilometres north east of Warburton (2 hours drive).

The community of Woods Point are very self reliant and there has been a history of self help TV reception in the town, eg the placement of reflective Antenna System in order to receive transmission from Gippsland, usually placed on one of the ridges surrounding the valley. The town is situated in the valley of the head of the Goulburn River and as such cannot receive any local terrestrial Television Transmissions without this assistance. The town has never received any Government assistance in this regard due to the small nominal population.

The old analogue systems that were in place were finished off by the recent bush fires in the ranges and there are now no transmissions of Victorian Television into the valley. Most households in this town have their own DTH systems installed with a number of these households also having Pay TV Systems as well. Radio reception is also quite poor.

Generally the satellite transmissions are excellent however the biggest drawback is the fact that no one can receive any local Victorian Television or News Services. Whilst SBS is a National Service local coverage is small. The ABC does not broadcast any Victorian News or Current Affairs Services on the Satellite Free to Air Service. The closest service broadcast being ABC NSW. It would be a poor service to foist onto anyone who was currently receiving a full analogue service under their current self help system.

We at Woods Point do not expect the Government to assist us with conversion of the analogue system that was recently destroyed but if assistance was forthcoming for those of us with DTH services if there was a cost for conversion of equipment or cards. Ideally the Federal Government would change the rules or allow at the very least the ABC to broadcast Victorian Services over the DTH Satellite Service and at best allow commercial channels in Victoria to broadcast their digital signals through the satellite.


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