Committee for Ballarat is a membership organisation representing companies and organisations employing 50% of the workforce within the Ballarat region, including Selkirk Bricks, Haymes Paints, Bendigo Bank, Federation University, Mars, McCains and St John of God Hospital.

All our members rate mobile communication as an essential business tool which is not reliably accessible within our region or indeed on the train service route to Melbourne. We are frustrated and disappointed by the service offerings and believe we should be able to access modern telecommunications within a city of 100,000 population and growing as an important part of the Australian economy.

We are strongly of the view that investment in communications infrastructure is essential for future growth and prosperity and are aware of the difference in availability for rural and country users who rely on Telstra’s investments over many years to maintain current services, albeit at a somewhat higher price. This is justified to provide the access we currently enjoy, even though we would prefer wider availability and reliability rather than the black spots which still affect us detrimentally on a regular basis.

We would be concerned if any changes aimed at improved access did anything to reduce incentives for competition in the region and thus have a counter effect to that intended.

It is simply a matter of thriving regional cities competing in global markets being treated fairly rather than feeling our metropolitan counterparts have superior access to "first world” technology.

Janet Dore
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[www.committeeforballarat.com](http://www.committeeforballarat.com/)