

**NICK DAMETTO**  
Member for Hinchinbrook

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## MEDIA RELEASE

31/1/2020

### Telstra abandons Upper Stone customers

RESIDENTS in Upper Stone fear their calls will go unanswered in a potentially life-threatening situation due to failing Telstra infrastructure that has left them largely without any landline phone service for almost a month.

Hinchinbrook MP Nick Dametto said his office had been inundated with emails, mobile phone calls and visits from furious residents, with Telstra no closer to restoring a regular landline service.

"Telstra was supposed to have fixed this problem two weeks ago but every time our office is told they have fixed the landline, we get a mobile phone call or email from a resident the next day saying their landline is out of action again. The situation is getting absolutely ridiculous," Mr Dametto said.

"It's 2020 for god's sake. These residents should not be forced to live in the dark ages. It's bad enough they don't have access to full mobile service and now Telstra can't even keep their landlines connected."

Mr Dametto said as telecommunications was a Federal responsibility, he had been passing on complaints from residents to Federal Member for Kennedy Bob Katter's office so they could lobby Telstra to fix the issue.

"The usual practice for my office is to lodge a constituent escalation request form with Telstra any time a customer complains to us about their mobile or landline service. This is normally effective, however we have reached a point where the situation at Upper Stone has become intolerable for residents, which is why I am working with Bob's office in order to put more pressure on Telstra to urgently fix their telecommunications infrastructure at Upper Stone," he said.

"We have residents in this area who are on a medical priority list and others who are part of the local rural fire brigade. Mobile phone reception there is patchy at the best of times so everyone relies on their landline. When that's been cut off, we have a major problem, especially in an emergency."

Mr Dametto accused Telstra's hierarchy of "negligence" for their unwillingness to upgrade the infrastructure at Upper Stone and their blaise approach to the issue.

"They are not taking this problem seriously and I believe are doing the bare minimum to patch up the existing landline, all in the name of saving money," he said.

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"Telstra has a responsibility to provide telecommunications in this area. Residents should not have to justify why they choose to live in a rural area in order to have access to a basic working phone service.

"Do the lives of these people not matter to them? I think their CEO needs to get out of his ivory tower in Melbourne and come and meet with these residents to see the problem first-hand. Upper Stone has had enough of Telstra's incompetence."

—ENDS—

### **Media Enquiries**

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