

Advocacy Priority:

# Equitable Digital and Telecommunications Infrastructure



## Overview

Strathbogie Shire is *Investing in Tomorrow* – but to unlock future regional economic growth, industry attraction and community resilience, our digital and telecommunications infrastructure must match the expectations of modern life and commerce. Reliable connectivity is no longer a luxury; it is the foundation for safety, productivity, liveability, and economic participation.

We are calling on the state and federal governments to invest in targeted telecommunications upgrades across Strathbogie Shire that will close the connectivity gap between regional and metropolitan communities.

## The Problem

Despite our region's strengths in agriculture, manufacturing, tourism and liveability, digital inequality continues to hold us back. Many areas in Strathbogie Shire suffer from unreliable internet, persistent mobile black spots, and insufficient infrastructure to support emergency response, remote work, and digital enterprise.

Key issues include:

- No mobile coverage in key areas like Mitchellstown and areas across the Shire
- Inadequate broadband access in towns such as Avenel and Violet Town
- Patchy service impacting emergency management, education, business, and telehealth access.

These gaps limit business growth, housing development, public safety, and social equity across the region.

## The Solution

A staged, place-based infrastructure upgrade program backed by \$2 million in state and federal investment will deliver:

- A new mobile phone tower in Mitchellstown and an additional tower in Nagambie
- Fibre broadband connection to Avenel and Violet Town as Stage 1 of a Shire-wide rollout
- Elimination of remaining mobile black spots across Strathbogie Shire

Council's role will be to advocate and develop partnerships between governments and private providers to deliver locally driven solutions.

## The Benefit

Improved digital and telecommunications infrastructure will deliver immediate and long-term economic benefits to Strathbogie Shire. It will enable local businesses to operate more efficiently, reduce productivity losses caused by poor connectivity, and support the growth of high-value industries such as ag-tech, tourism, and remote professional services. Reliable connectivity is also a key factor in attracting new investment and unlocking the full potential of our housing and population growth corridors, particularly in currently under-served areas like Avenel and the Nagambie region.

Socially, better connectivity will help bridge the digital divide between metropolitan and rural communities. It will

improve access to essential services such as education, healthcare (including telehealth), and enable residents to maintain strong personal and professional connections. This is especially important for vulnerable populations, young people, and older residents, who rely on reliable digital access to stay informed, engaged, and safe. Improved digital infrastructure will also support community cohesion and liveability by enabling more inclusive participation in civic and cultural life.

Environmentally, enhanced telecommunications can support remote and hybrid work models, reducing the need for long commutes and lowering emissions. It also paves the way for smarter infrastructure, more efficient land use planning, and better integration of sustainability technologies. By enabling

data-driven decision-making and real-time monitoring across sectors, improved digital infrastructure becomes a foundational tool in building a greener, more resilient future for our communities.

## Conclusion

To realise the full potential of Strathbogie Shire's economy and community, equitable digital infrastructure must be treated with the same urgency as roads, water, and power.

Reliable telecommunications are the bedrock of modern regional development. With strategic investment now, our region can become a place where businesses thrive, families stay connected, and emergency services function without fail.

We are ready to *Invest in Tomorrow* – we just need the tools to connect.

