

Minister for the Environment
Minister for Innovation, Science, and the Digital Economy
Minister for Community and Cultural Affairs
Minister for the Arts and Heritage

Level 5, 4 Salamanca Place HOBART TAS 7000 Australia
GPO Box 123 HOBART TAS 7001 Australia
Phone: +61 3 6165 7686
Email: minister.ocilvie@dpac.tas.gov.au



Mr Mark Shelton MP
Liberal Member for Lyons
C/O: Laura.Ross@parliament.tas.gov.au

Dear Mr Shelton,

Thank you for your constituency question on 26 March 2026 regarding Tasmania's regional telecommunications network resilience.

The Government recognises that Tasmania's regional telecommunications networks face unique pressures during peak tourist seasons, and we are taking practical, targeted action to ensure services are resilient, reliable and capable of meeting increased demand.

Following the nationwide 3G shutdown in October 2024, we have been working closely with telecommunications providers and the Australian Government to monitor and address connectivity issues, particularly those arising from seasonal congestion on existing infrastructure.

Key actions underway include:

- Strengthening mobile capacity in high-demand regions, including the East Coast, Central Highlands, West Coast and Tasman Peninsula, where visitor numbers can significantly exceed local populations during peak periods.
- Supporting and advocating for new infrastructure through national programs, including the Mobile Black Spot Program, the Regional Connectivity Program and the Mobile Network Hardening Program. Across all Mobile Black Spot Program rounds to date, around 60 Tasmanian sites have been funded and built, improving both coverage and resilience.
- Investing directly in resilience and peak-load solutions, including co-funding mobile upgrades, battery backup systems, automatic transfer units and backhaul improvements to ensure services remain operational during periods of high demand or power disruption.
- Deploying temporary capacity solutions during peak tourist seasons, such as mobile "Cell on Wheels" infrastructure, which has been successfully used at St Helens during summer and at major events such as Agfest, Cygnet Folk Festival, Foo Fighters and at the Party in the Paddock, to relieve congestion and maintain service quality.
- Targeted regional upgrades, including:
 - Commitments from Telstra to upgrade infrastructure in the Central Highlands, particularly around Miena, following congestion during Easter and peak visitation periods.
 - Delivery of significant mobile uplifts on the West Coast, supported by a \$9.8 million Australian Government commitment to improve capacity, backhaul and disaster resilience.

- New and upgraded infrastructure on the East Coast and Tasman Peninsula, including permanent 4G and 5G upgrades and microcell installations to address tourism-related congestion.
- Improving resilience during emergencies, with Tasmania securing funding for 22 projects under the Mobile Network Hardening Program, including battery upgrades, backhaul improvements and automatic transfer units at key regional sites.
- Leveraging new technologies, including early participation in satellite services, which improve safety and connectivity for visitors and residents in remote tourism areas where terrestrial networks are under strain.

Importantly, the Government continues to advocate for better targeting of national telecommunications investment, ensuring that seasonal tourism demand, regional safety and economic activity are properly reflected in infrastructure planning decisions.

These actions ensure Tasmania's regional telecommunications networks are not only expanding in coverage, but are becoming more resilient, more capable, and better equipped to support residents, visitors and businesses during our busiest times of the year.

Thank you again for taking the time to raise these important issues and for your ongoing advocacy for resilient mobile telecommunications.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Ogilvie', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Hon. Madeleine Ogilvie MP
Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy