

Phones for outstations and people going to country

Remote Indigenous Communities of less than 50 people are encouraged to apply for a satellite public telephone service. Communities of up to 6 people can receive a mobile satellite phone. Fixed phones are for places where 6 - 50 attend regularly for half the year.

Michelle Williams and Paul Sutton, who have been working in Cape York and the Torres Straits since 2000, have been employed to help communities get a public phone service. Phone them on 0418 750 236.

Background

The objective of the Indigenous Communications Program (ICP) is to improve access to essential telecommunications services for remote Indigenous communities. It aims to support the **supply, monitoring and maintenance** of community phones, as well as support for public internet and information and communications technology training facilities. The program is funded until 30 June 2013.

The current Telephones element aims to provide and support public satellite phones for communities of less than 50 people (including outstations and camps) that meet eligibility criteria.

Communities of between 6 and 50 people will be supplied with a public fixed phone. It will be a satellite service powered by solar panels. These communities may be able to obtain a mobile handset until a fixed phone is installed.

Communities of less than 6 can be supplied with a mobile satellite handset.

Phones are free. Some calls are free and maintenance will be provided, though malicious damage may not be constantly supported.



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Fixed phone story

Solar powered satellite phone that looks like a public phone with solar panels on top and satellite dish placed in the best position for a signal.

It works like a public phone.

All calls to landlines and emergency services are free. Calls to mobiles require a phone card which people will have to buy. Supply, local issue and care for phone cards will be discussed during the application process. There is no rental on the phone. Incoming calls are free.

If the fixed phone takes too long to install, there may be some hand held phones available while you wait, particularly if people need constant medical help.

It is inside of a robust casing and designed to withstand environmental extremes and damage.

Communities of between 6 and 50 people, inhabited/used for about half the year can get a fixed phone.

Mobile handset story

A mobile handset with solar charger and car charger in a protective case will be supplied.

There will also be 300 minutes of calls provided by phone cards per six months. Additional cards can be purchased. Calls to 000 numbers only will be free. Incoming calls are free.

Communities of 6 or less (including children) can apply for a mobile handset.

In some cases it may be possible to obtain a mobile handset and share it amongst people who are travelling intermittently to country.

Community Liaison Officers have been appointed for Cape York

Michelle Williams and Paul Sutton have been appointed to talk to people about getting a public phone and to make it happen for eligible communities.

They will

- Visit you or talk to you on the phone
- Help a community complete the nomination form and get it signed by the right people
- Submit the form
- Assist the supplier to install the phone
- Ensure the phone is installed and working properly
- Follow up with training, technical checks etc.

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Who can nominate a community?

Community groups
Councils, Govt officials
Cape York organisations
Family groups
Any person with interest

Two signatures required

1. Local person acting as a coordinator for the phone
2. Govt officer – state or Commonwealth or Cairns ICC

What makes a community eligible?

- Very remote area – designed as remote or very remote by ABS (Cape York is eligible)
- Between 1 and 50 people including children
- Distance to nearest public phone is more than 2 km
- People attend the community for about half the year

What is the community's responsibility?

Provide access for the Community Liaison Officers and phone installers to the site for a geological survey, installation and maintenance.

Ensure the phone can be used by everybody in the community

To encourage the community to look after the phone and that it is as secure as possible

Report when the phone is not working or has been stolen/ damaged immediately

Develop a system for phone card use where necessary

What to do now?

If you want a phone or know someone who needs one, contact Michelle Williams or Paul Sutton so they can check eligibility, talk to you and visit. Phone 0418750236

Tell everybody you know about this project. Pass on this information and the poster.

Provide feedback. If you think a place or community needs a phone and may be a special case, talk to Michelle and Paul and they will try and help. There is opportunity to influence the design of the project, so speak up and have a say.

If in doubt or want to know more, ask Paul and Michelle.



