



Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Inquiry
Department of the Senate
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600
AUSTRALIA

31 May 2024

Dear Committee Members,

AVA Submission to the Senate Standing Committees on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Inquiry into the Shutdown of the 3G mobile network

The Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) is the peak professional body representing veterinarians in Australia. Clinical practitioners work with companion animals, horses, livestock, and wildlife. Government veterinarians work with our animal health, public health, and quarantine systems while other members work in industry, research, and teaching.

We empower the veterinary profession to thrive by providing a voice, education, community, and support. We do this through a range of services, providing veterinary technical expertise to varied industry and government stakeholders, and connecting the profession.

Animals are deeply embedded into the Australian way of life. Animals, and their associated industries, contribute significantly to the social, cultural, environmental and economic fabric of society. Animals are also sentient beings, and the community rightly expects a certain level of care for their health and welfare.

The 14,3521 veterinary professionals registered in Australia are highly regarded, trusted members of our community. Veterinary services are seen as essential to the community, just like human health care or education.

The availability of veterinary services underpins the social licence by which animal industries operate. It's critical that people who are responsible for the health and welfare of animals have confidence that animal health care will be available when they need it. Similarly, to human health, the community expects the veterinary profession to not only provide services for private (individual) benefit, but to also deliver services that provide public benefit.

Many veterinarians practice in rural, regional and remote areas of Australia. Whilst the majority of these veterinarians will have their practice or home base in a town that has adequate coverage, they will pass through or travel to and service areas that currently only have 3G service. There are also a significant number who live on properties away from towns, who rely significantly on 3G services.

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These veterinarians rely on 3G services for their practice to make and receive calls from clients (particularly for emergency callouts), to communicate back to their base practice and for safety when outside of 4G coverage.

The AVA is concerned about the impact on rural and regional veterinarians, their clients and animals (livestock, companion animals, and wildlife) with the shut-down of the 3G network and seeks a commitment that investment in the 4G network is made so it will provide sufficiently broad coverage by the time of shut down.

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