

Why does Telstra need a new facility at Albert Park?

Many residents wonder why mobile networks carriers chose to locate antennas near residential areas – or at specific locations. To understand this, it is important to understand a little of how a mobile network works.

A mobile communications network is made up of a patchwork of cells, each relying on its own set of antennas. Each set of antennas provides coverage to a small local area, or “cell”. When you make a call, your handset will always “talk” to the nearest set of antennas to you – as you move around, the phone will “talk” to different sets of network antennas, which ever is the closest, or the least congested.

If you have ever experienced a call drop out – or been unable to make a call – that’s because you’ve gone into an area of the network that experiences poor or unreliable service. There are three main factors that cause poor service.

Firstly, you may be too far away from antennas to pick up a phone signal – or there may be objects blocking the signal from the nearest antennas – such as hills, large buildings or even trees. Secondly, a facility typically handles less than 100 simultaneous calls at any one time. If the facility is already congested with calls – you may not be able to make a call if the adjacent facilities are also congested or too far away. This is referred to as network capacity. Insufficient capacity in areas of high call demand can cause poor service. Thirdly, the depth of coverage – or the ability to make calls inside buildings, may be insufficient in some local areas.

In order to provide reliable, continuous network coverage, which is the basic expectation of our customers and of any mobile phone users, we need to install many low-powered antennas across the city to pick up phone signals.