

**PRIORITY  
PROJECT**



**MORNINGTON  
PENINSULA**  
Shire

# DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY

## What we are asking

Funding to improve mobile coverage with a priority on the townships of:

- Tuerong
- Dromana/Arthurs Seat
- Red Hill
- Main Ridge
- Balnarring Beach
- Somers
- Cape Schanck
- Flinders
- Shoreham
- Point Leo.

Funding to develop a business case for black spots across the Peninsula – including an assessment of existing infrastructure/technology and a forecast of future mobile and broadband requirements.

## What makes this unique

Digital connectivity on the Mornington Peninsula is an intrinsic issue, more similar to regional Victoria than metropolitan Melbourne. Like regional Victoria, the Peninsula has fewer people over greater distances, an ageing population and lack of public transport, which is negatively impacting social inclusion and the lived experience.

Poor digital connectivity in some areas of the Peninsula is putting lives at risk.

Significant bushfire risk, high numbers of tourists and poor connectivity pose a substantial threat to emergency management, especially around Dromana/Arthurs Seat, Red Hill, Cape Schanck and Flinders.

Post-COVID-19 population changes and the pursuit of a sea-change lifestyle will see the establishment of new businesses across the Peninsula, many of which will require good digital connectivity.

Despite all of the above, the digital connectivity needs of specific areas on the Peninsula are overlooked by the eligibility criteria of the Federal Mobile Black Spot Program (MBSP).

## KEY POINTS

- Numerous 'black spots' throughout the Shire
- Increase funding to improve mobile and broadband coverage
- Greater demand for broadband from increased visitation and sea-changers
- Significant mobile network congestion during peak season (50% increase to Shire population)
- Ongoing impacts to businesses, home working and schooling
- Risk to Emergency Services communications during bushfire and peak holiday season





## The Benefits – Supporting Evidence and Strategies

Congestion across the local mobile network during peak seasons impacts the exposure and access to online services for visitors across the Peninsula.

The ability for tourists to access information online regarding attractions, events, accommodation, directions and retailers, is a critical element in connecting visitors with business services.

A comparison of mobile and data connectivity issues across the Peninsula against visitor dispersal presents a convincing case for funding to help mitigate the impact of COVID-19 and support economic uplift.

Our Journeys Research (2019) shows the Southern Peninsula sub-region (Portsea, Sorrento, Blairgowrie) attracts 40% of total annual visitation, with the remaining sub-regions attracting between 14% and 16% of visitation per annum.

Improvement to digital connectivity is a priority for industrial parks and businesses, particularly across the Southern Peninsula, where visitation is heavily weighted over the summer. This is partly due to the concentration of residents and holiday homes, the presence of key visitor attractions and good road access via the Mornington Peninsula Freeway.

We are currently liaising with the Victorian Government Connecting Victoria initiative.

## Alignment to Council Plan

**Theme 3:** A flourishing, healthy and connected community – specifically 3.2.8. advocate for improved telecom networks to ensure a strong digital connection and increase social inclusion.

## Why this is important

Areas such as Western Port, Somers and St Andrews Beach have poor mobile reception yet are ineligible for funding from the MBSP, as they are considered part of the Melbourne urban centre.

The red dots in the diagram below are identified blackspot areas that have been given consideration as part of the MBSP program. Grey areas (coastal) are considered ineligible and the yellow square denotes where mobile infrastructure has been approved under the MBSP (Merricks).

Note - Shoreham and Red Hill were approved, but subsequently removed under the MBSP. Neither site could proceed with upgrades, due to land agreement and planning scheme issues (unforeseen site acquisition/landscape/amenity impacts) and the two sites were removed from the MBSP.

There are currently no alternate coverage solutions, to meet the needs of the areas under the MBSP.

