



REGIONAL TECH HUB

CASE STUDY: SAM PHILLIPS, TASMANIA



Sam Phillips, Tasmania

Right advice proves invaluable for a reliable internet connection

It's knowing the 'right' terminology that has helped Sam Phillips and her family connect to fixed wireless at their property in Collinsvale, Tasmania.

Sam and her family had struggled with reliable internet service for many years. When Covid hit, the situation deteriorated further with Sam and her husband both working from home, managing the farm and their children doing lessons from home. The 4G technologies were not reliable and it was not uncommon for the family to have no internet access from 4pm in the afternoon through to around 11pm at night, with basic internet searches unable to load.

"We couldn't complete simple business requirements such as downloading documents or joining in to association meetings, watch a movie on Netflix or Disney with the kids or even check social media," Sam said.

"We only live 25km out of Hobart but our internet service was hopeless."

After starting her own research to improve their internet and phone connection, Sam said she found the number of options and the terminology overwhelming.

"I had no idea what the difference was between services nor which provider to go with. I didn't want to commit to a service without knowing if it was actually suitable for our location. I was getting frustrated and thought there must be someone that could help me work through all the marketing paraphernalia so I could make an informed decision. The Regional Tech hub came up in a google search so I decided to contact them to see if they could help," Sam said.

The problem

Sam was originally looking at ADSL2 but when she enquired, she was told the service was no longer available to new customers.

Some of their neighbours had NBN fixed wireless, so they investigated this, and discovered the service coverage map covered only part of their property. An NBN Co technician conducted an onsite test and achieved a passable signal which facilitated the reclassification to fixed wireless.

An installation technician then came out and was able to achieve a steady, passable signal from the rear of the house, but due to weather conditions - snowing - he was unable to complete the installation.

A second technician came out and scoped the property with conflicting advice to the original recommendation, advising he couldn't get a passable signal and believed the trees around the house were the problem.

He then proceeded to cancel the job, even on the basis that the trees could be removed. Sam has since discovered that a technician can choose to cancel the order or to reclassify it to a non-standard installation.

With the job cancelled, Sam had to start the process over again, with the result being a reclassification back to satellite.

The property is located just over 600m above sea level, and to the north and north west, the family can see approximately 100km; there was no feasible reason that a good connection couldn't be achieved.

"As for installation, neither technician discussed nor considered a non-standard installation. There are two sheds adjacent to the house that would provide between 3-4.5m extra height clearance if required to clear interference from trees. And should that have failed, we own 175 acres," Sam said.

A helping hand from RTH

Sam first reached out to Regional Tech Hub in May 2022.

The Hub gave Sam advice on the 'right' terminology to use in her communications with NBN Co, to ensure they took action, investigated the case and conducted site tests.

After visiting Sam's property and running site tests, an NBN Co field technician confirmed that NBN fixed wireless could be installed at the property, and the property was again reclassified. This technician was the first employee of NBN Co and not a sub-contractor to conduct testing onsite.



“From my first interaction with Regional Tech Hub to getting our NBN fixed wireless connection installed took around six months. The weather didn’t do us any favour, delaying the process, but we are thrilled with the result. It’s the first time that we have had reliable internet service,” Sam explained.

Sam admits she was very cynical at first and didn’t believe that NBN fixed wireless would make a big difference to their daily lives, but she said it has made a huge difference.

With reliable and fast connectivity, the family can now complete simple business transactions such as internet banking quickly and efficiently and can work from home as needed. The children can zoom into their school classes, stream their favourite movies and they can browse, and work as required.

“The power the Regional Tech Hub gave me, through their advice and support, knowing what to say and how to say it, was invaluable.”

"I needed advice on how to deal with NBN Co, what terminology to use, how hard and when to push and the Hub gave me this. They help people get the results they need and get connected. Without the support of our case manager from the Regional Tech Hub, there is no doubt that we would not have had our fixed wireless service connected,” Sam said.

“It was this guidance and support that was the decisive factor in our battle with NBN Co. Without this, we wouldn’t have got the outcome we did. We cannot thank the Regional Tech Hub enough!”



About the Regional Tech Hub

The Regional Tech Hub is a government-funded initiative, run by the National Farmers' Federation. We appreciate the strong support of the Minister for Communications and the Department in the delivery of this important service.

Visit the Regional Tech Hub website:

<https://regionaltechhub.org.au/>

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