

LORD HOWE ISLAND BOARD

BUSINESS PAPER

OPEN SESSION

Item

Telstra Mobile Phone Microcell and Tower

Recommendations

1. **Approve** That management Investigate to potential for improved and networked wi-fi solutions, and explore a business model that could provide that.
2. **Approve** that management advises Downer, on behalf of Telstra, to demonstrate compliance with CASA, Air Services Australia and World Heritage requirements.
3. **Note** that Owners consent will not be approved until such time as the above have been met.

Current position

The Lord Howe Island Board has received a proposal from Telstra to install a mobile phone microcell, funded through the blackspot program.

The tower is to be built on crown land, and as such, the Board's role is to determine whether or not to grant Owner's Consent.

At its September 2022 meeting, the Board requested management undertake effective consultation to inform its decision.

Consultation Summary

Consultation was conducted during October and November and a report developed (Attachment A).

In summary, residents of Lord Howe Island are protective of their unique way of life, and a majority wish to preserve that. Not being contactable is enjoyed by some tourists.

Those in favour of improved connectivity support that for business, safety and reliability reasons. Those people could be satisfied with improved wi-fi connectivity, which would be supported by the majority of respondents not in favour of the mobile phone microcell and tower as proposed.

Data gathered through the community consultation process, suggests that before approving Owners Consent the Lord Howe Island Board should:

- Investigate to potential for improved and networked wi-fi solutions, and explore a business model that could provide that
- Require Downer, on behalf of Telstra, to demonstrate compliance with CASA, Air Services Australia and World Heritage requirements.

Attachments

Attachment	Title
A	Consultation Summary
B	Consultation data – Closed
C	Submissions – Closed
D	Community led mobile phone survey

Approval and contact

Approver	Position
Suzie Christensen	Chief Executive Officer
Preparer	Position
Suzie Christensen	Chief Executive Officer

Mobile Phone Microcell Consultation Summary

Background

The Lord Howe Island Board has received a proposal from Telstra to install a mobile phone microcell, funded through the blackspot program.

The tower is to be built on crown land, and as such, the Board's role is to determine whether or not to grant Owner's Consent.

At its September 2022 meeting, the Board requested management undertake effective consultation to inform its decision.

Methodology

The methodology used mirrors that used for Development Applications and other Owner's consent determinations. The proposal was placed on the LHI website, and residents notified of the opportunity to make a submission via the Board's standard communication platform, the Householder. The householder is distributed electronically or in hard copy by previously advised preference of the recipient. They are also posted on noticeboard, and the invitation was extended via the local newspaper The Signal.

In addition, engaged local residents shared the Householder information via the LHI Community Facebook page, and conducted their own survey via Survey Monkey.

The submission period was open from xxx November until the 18th November.

Results

39 Individual Submissions were received

16 of the 39 (**41%**) individual submissions were in favour of the proposal, and 23 (**59%**) against. 3 of those against are also included in the petition figures

46 people signed a petition against, stating:

I am opposed to the introduction of Telstra's mobile phone service because it will disturb the peace and tranquillity of the Island which is valued so much by residents and visitors. At least 8 of those against are also in the group of 46 who signed the petition have also responded to the survey.

131 Survey responses were received

90 of the 131 responses (68%) were not in favour.

Half didn't want to be identified, so we are unable to identify duplication across methods for those individuals.

Of the 131 Survey respondents, only 61 were happy to be identified, and 16 had completed either the online survey or made a formal submission as well.

The data indicates 135 uniquely identified persons who formally responded.

Most are residents, though some are tourists (petitioners) and some off-island persons who strangely identify with the island.

70 of those 135 (51%) are against the proposal.

There are a further 70 survey participants who may or may not be additional respondents, from a sample that polled 68% against

The 2021 census identified 368 adults as resident on Lord Howe, thus across the various methods of consultation around 30-35% have participated in the consultation, noting that some respondents were non-residents. That response rate is considered statistically relevant.

What people said

People opposed to the installation on the basis of:

Lifestyle – 55/135 (40%)	85/130 (68%)
Tourism impact	93/130 (72%)

People in favour of the proposal on the basis of business advantages, safety and unreliable landlines. One argues for the proposal from a guest's point of view.

A majority of people who completed the survey disagreed that the proposed installation would improve emergency responses, and suggested the current radio service is adequate, and will continue to have much better coverage than the mobile phone service.

Issues

Most people, including those on favour of the proposal, did not consider the coverage of a single tower adequate, and were not in favour of a service that didn't cover at least the settlement area.

Many people believed that the future of mobile phone service for Lord Howe would be better facilitated by increased wi-fi coverage, and offered alternative technology solutions and or the tower or towers being located in what they considered better locations.

Constraints

One submission made a strong case for referring the proposal to CASA. Air Services Australia and suggested that an impact assessment may be required against the World Heritage status of the Island and surrounds. (*NB. Downer was advised to seek these approvals but indicated that they would happen after the Owner's consent is granted)

Summary

Residents of Lord Howe Island are protective of their unique way of life, and a majority wish to preserve that. Not being contactable is enjoyed by some tourists.

Those in favour of improved connectivity support that for business, safety and reliability reasons. Those people could be satisfied with improved wi-fi connectivity, which would be supported by the majority of respondents not in favour of the mobile phone microcell and tower as proposed.

Data gathered through the community consultation process, suggests that before approving Owners Consent the Lord Howe Island Board should:

- Investigate to potential for improved and networked wi-fi solutions, and explore a business model that could provide that
- Require Downer, on behalf of Telstra, to demonstrate compliance with CASA, Air Services Australia and World Heritage requirements.

LHI Mobile Phone Service Community Survey

This is an independent community survey created to gather information from Lord Howe Island adult residents about the Telstra Blackspot-funded microcell installation.

The survey has been based off the Lord Howe Island Board Householder and Business paper September 2022. It is designed to be impartial and to capture the feelings of the community about mobile coverage.

The results in this survey will be presented to the Lord Howe Island Board members before the December Board meeting.

It was made clear this survey does not replace feedback by community members directly to the Lord Howe Island Board.

This survey was distributed via the LHI Community Facebook page, Post Office and physical copies handed out. This method confirmed that all submissions were Lord Howe Island community members.

Each submission had a name only for verifying purposes. Names of participants are not disclosed in this document.

This survey was not open to tourists or visitors.

This survey was only open to community members 18+. Only 1 submission per person.

All together there were 131 submissions.

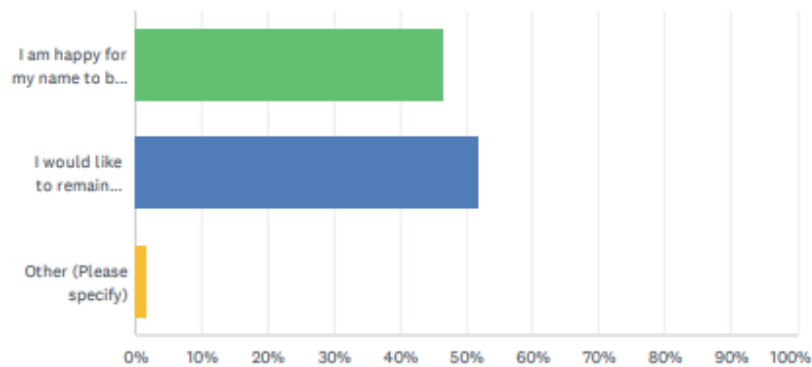
In the 2021 Census the LHI population was at 445 people. 77 were children under 18.

This survey represents the opinion of 35% of the LHI adult population.

* 1 participant wished to retract/ change their submission (FOR the microcell installation to AGAINST) after the Community Meeting held at the Public Hall. This data could not be changed once submitted.

Q2 How my comments/ information will be used

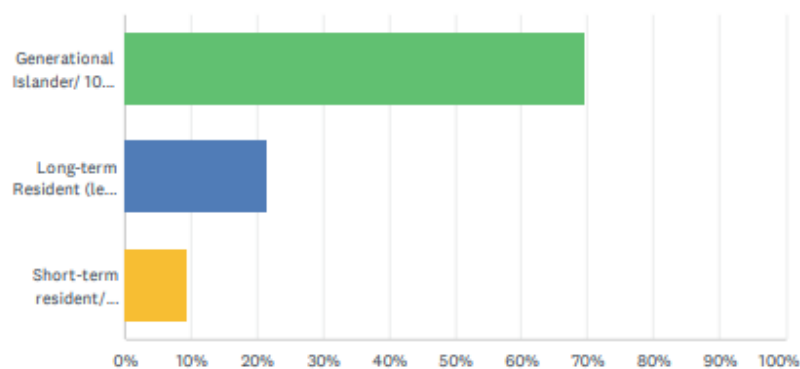
Answered: 131 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I am happy for my name to be mentioned (if applicable) in relation to my comments	46.56%	61
I would like to remain anonymous and only be used to contribute to percentages	51.91%	68
Other (Please specify)	1.53%	2
TOTAL		131

Q3 What is your residency status on Lord Howe Island

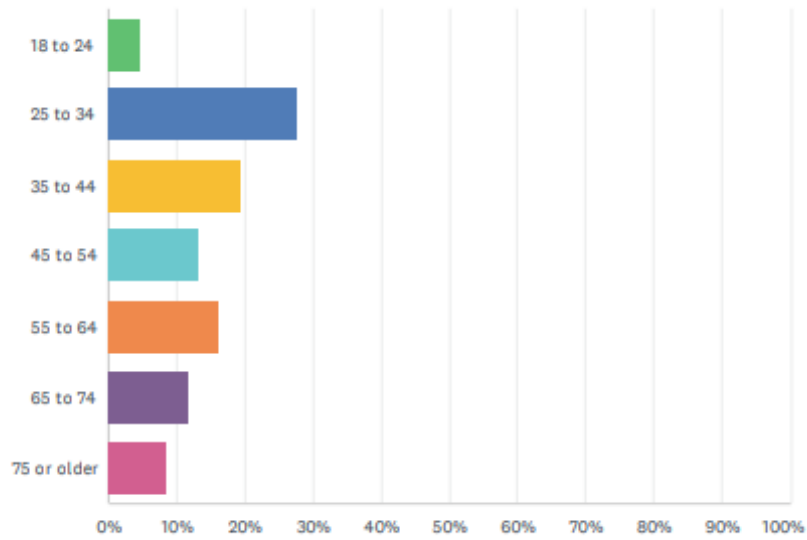
Answered: 131 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Generational Islander/ 10 year + Island Resident	69.47%	91
Long-term Resident (less than 10 years)	21.37%	28
Short-term resident/ Seasonal Staff	9.16%	12
TOTAL		131

Q4 What is your age?

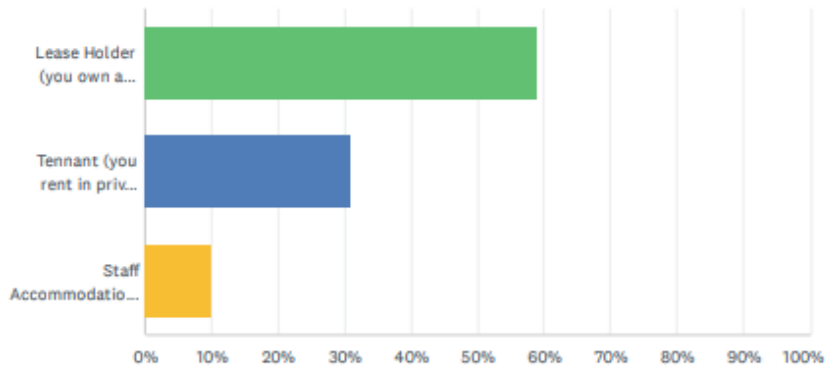
Answered: 131 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
18 to 24	4.58%	6
25 to 34	27.48%	36
35 to 44	19.08%	25
45 to 54	12.98%	17
55 to 64	16.03%	21
65 to 74	11.45%	15
75 or older	8.40%	11
TOTAL		131

Q5 Please tick which option best applies to you

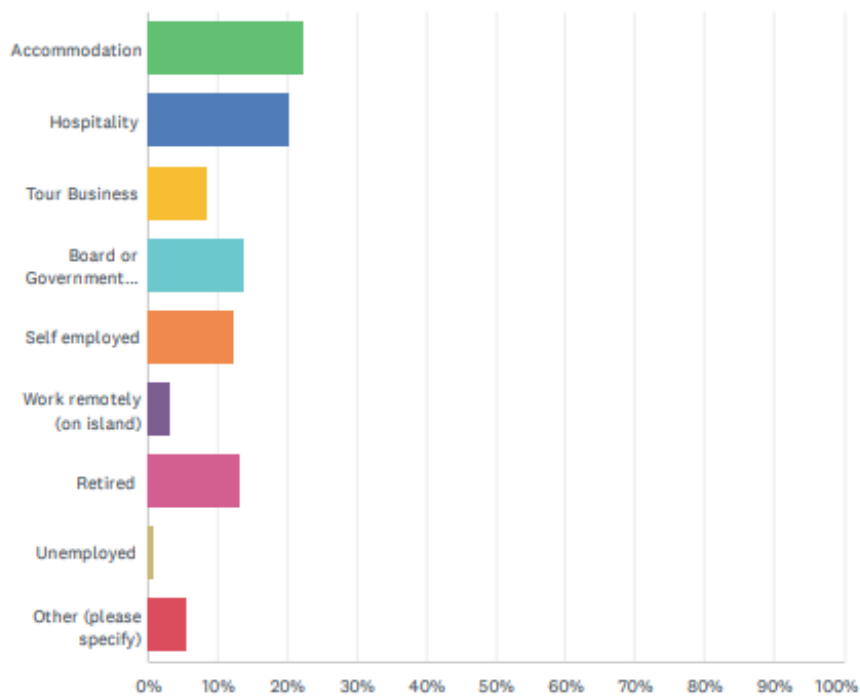
Answered: 129 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Lease Holder (you own a property on LHI)	58.91%	76
Tennant (you rent in private accommodation)	31.01%	40
Staff Accommodation (you live in staff accommodation/ government housing)	10.08%	13
TOTAL		129

Q6 In what industry do you work on Lord Howe Island or tick which option best applies to you

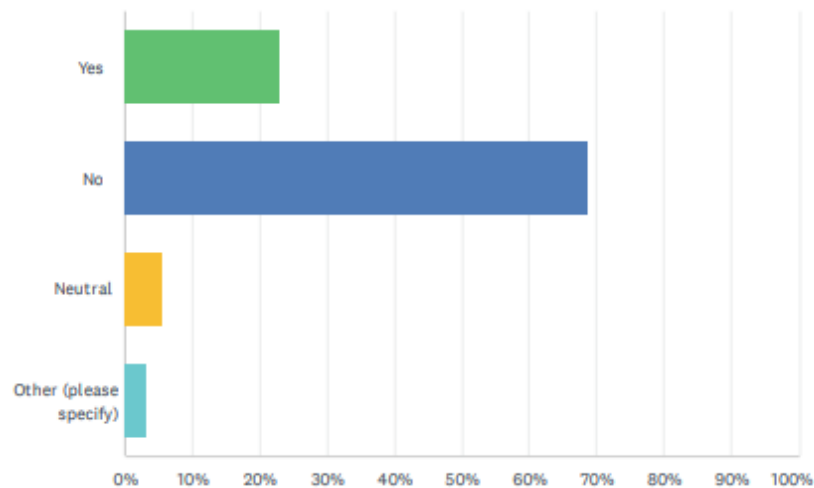
Answered: 129 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Accommodation	22.48%	29
Hospitality	20.16%	26
Tour Business	8.53%	11
Board or Government employee	13.95%	18
Self employed	12.40%	16
Work remotely (on island)	3.10%	4
Retired	13.18%	17
Unemployed	0.78%	1
Other (please specify)	5.43%	7
TOTAL		129

Q7 Do you support the Telstra Blackspot-funded microcell installation?

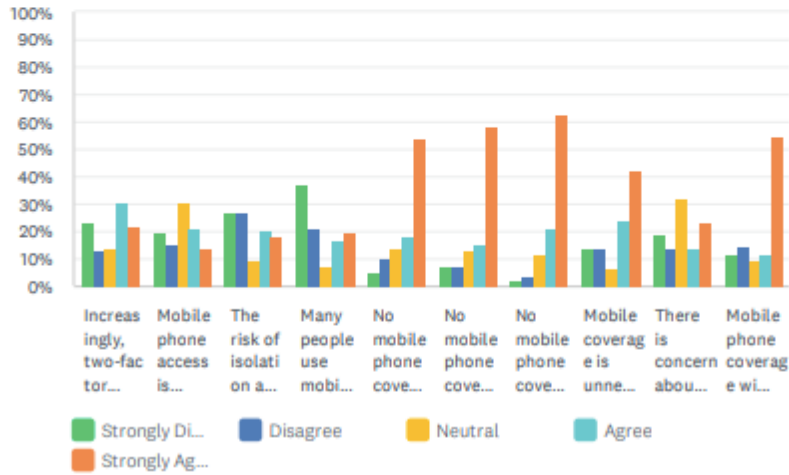
Answered: 131 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	22.90%	30
No	68.70%	90
Neutral	5.34%	7
Other (please specify)	3.05%	4
TOTAL		131

Q8 It is recognised that a diverse range of views pertaining to mobile phone service on the island exist. Resources have not permitted broad consultation on the matter to date, however anecdotally they range from wholesale support and advocacy, to a strong preference for the service to remain unavailable. (please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of these statements in relation to mobile phones on Lord Howe Island. Please tick one option per statement)

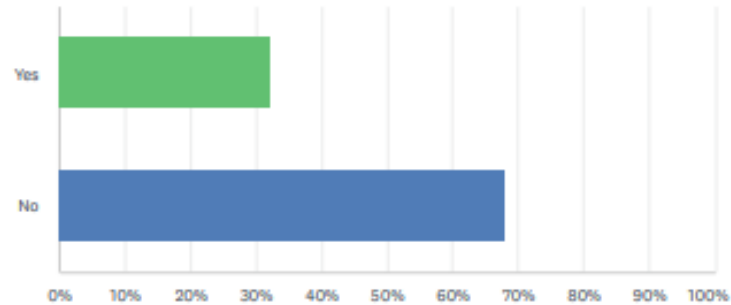
Answered: 130 Skipped: 1



	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Increasingly, two-factor authentication is required to access banking, government and other essential services	22.48% 29	12.40% 16	13.18% 17	30.23% 39	21.71% 28	129	2.84
Mobile phone access is assumed in health service, and enables the provision of these health services and products (eg. Pace-makers)	19.23% 25	15.38% 20	30.77% 40	20.77% 27	13.85% 18	130	3.05
The risk of isolation and to first responders in times of crisis and emergency (health, weather or otherwise) could be reduced if mobile phone service were available.	26.15% 34	26.92% 35	9.23% 12	20.00% 26	17.69% 23	130	3.24
Many people use mobile phones on island now, over wi-fi. The time of 'no mobiles' on LHI has actually passed already	36.92% 48	20.77% 27	6.92% 9	16.15% 21	19.23% 25	130	3.40
No mobile phone coverage is part of the island's tourism marketing and is one of the elements most tourists enjoy	4.62% 6	10.00% 13	13.85% 18	17.69% 23	53.85% 70	130	1.94
No mobile phone coverage encourages children to play outside and enjoy the environment	6.98% 9	6.98% 9	12.40% 16	15.50% 20	58.14% 75	129	1.89
No mobile phone coverage is enjoyed and preferred by some residents, particularly in restaurants and public places	2.31% 3	3.08% 4	11.54% 15	20.77% 27	62.31% 81	130	1.62
Mobile coverage is unnecessary, with radio technology adequate for emergency response and island wide communication	13.85% 18	13.85% 18	6.15% 8	23.85% 31	42.31% 55	130	2.33
There is concern about the health impacts of electro-magnetic radiation, particularly in close proximity to the site of transmission	18.46% 24	13.08% 17	31.54% 41	13.85% 18	23.08% 30	130	2.90
Mobile phone coverage will negatively impact Lord Howe Island's culture and way of life	10.85% 14	13.95% 18	9.30% 12	11.63% 15	54.26% 70	129	2.16

Q9 Concern has also been registered that the proposed microcell will not cover the entire settlement area, resulting in dissatisfaction for those who will not achieve access to the service. Would you support the proposed service if it covered the entire settlement area?

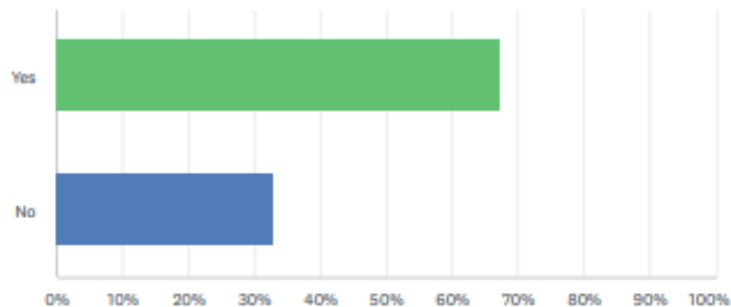
Answered: 131 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	32.06%	42
No	67.94%	89
TOTAL		131

Q10 Would you like further information and consultation by the Lord Howe Island Board about this and other community matters

Answered: 131 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	67.18%	88
No	32.82%	43
TOTAL		131