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Geelong

## Poor phone reception in St Leonards leaves war window out of pocket

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St Leonards resident Norma Willoughby makes a point to Corio MP Richard Marles about her issues with phone reception. Picture: Nathan Dyer

NORMA Willoughby has been left hanging on the telephone with her poor reception costing upwards of \$200 a month.

The war widow moved to the Bellarine Peninsula a year ago and immediately encountered problems with the coastal town's poor mobile service.

She said numerous calls to Telstra had failed to resolve the issue and she had "been fobbed off with a litany of excuses".

“The cost was just incredible,” Mrs Willoughby said. “At the height of the troubles, I was paying more than \$200 a month for both the landline and the mobile, which, as a war widow, was just unaffordable.

“The mobile service keeps dropping in and out which gets very expensive when you are having to constantly call someone back.”

Mrs Willoughby contacted the office of Corio MP Richard Marles to voice her frustration with Telstra’s performance.

Mr Marles said mobile phone service around St Leonards was noticeably patchy despite being targeted by a Federal Government black spot program.

“There are real concerns about black spots in St Leonards,” the Labor MP said.

“Norma herself has experienced connectivity problems around her residence. I think the St Leonards Yacht Club has also experienced problems around communications black spots.

“Round two of the black spot program closes this month so this is a real opportunity for people who have black spot concerns to contact my office and we can assist with applications for funding under this program.”

Telstra area general manager Duane Dalton said St Leonards “was among several locations in the to have benefited” from federal black spot funding this year.

“A number of factors influence in building coverage, including local topography, obstructions such as trees and other structures and building materials,” he said.

“We will continue to talk with Mrs Willoughby about ways that we can assist her with her concerns.”