















are made to continuing technology to ensure it is working correctly. While new, emerging or alternative technologies may be being sought and developed, until adequate, equal or better alternatives or upcoming replacement technology become widely available, current services need to be maintained.

Where there is a mobile service there needs to be an improved system for the monitoring of the battery back-up capability. While there is a replacement program it is based on the age of the battery. This is not really an accurate benchmark, and sometimes it is only when there is a disaster that it becomes apparent the battery back-up has failed.

A reliable, affordable, resilient mobile network service will go a long way to providing an alternative means of voice communication (meeting the requirement of two independent forms of delivery) if you are also on voice satellite. However, ICPA (Aust) notes, both services still require power to operate.

### ***(j) any other related matters***

#### **Protections**

Where the adoption of new technologies requires a change to a customer's hardware, for example, the Next G Wireless Link (NGWL) Service using 3G technology that will be migrated to a 4G solution, customer protections are imperative. Processes need to be identified that offer security and integrity to customers during changeover periods to prevent customers falling prey to scammers.

While ICPA has welcomed the opportunity to work with Telstra to disseminate information to our members regarding the 3G/4G switch, the impacts on what that meant to our members could have been explained in more detail earlier, as it has emerged that not just mobile phone devices are impacted, but other devices also, including the NGWL landlines. The flow of information to the wider community has not been consistent and this is evident with a significant number of people not understanding the closure of the 3G footprint and what this means

The communication methods adopted by Telstra have left consumers confused as to whether the contact may be scam. Clearer and more transparent methods need to be employed.

#### **Availability of hardware**

Telstra are acutely aware of how many customers have a NWGL service so would know how much hardware they would require migrating customers to 4GFW. The 3G shutdown was extended to 31st August to give customers time to prepare. Telstra have had five years, yet just recently customers have placed orders to be migrated, only to be informed the equipment is out of stock and on back order. Some have chosen not to transition to 4GFW and have cancelled their landline, so one would think there should be plenty of stock.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The 3G shutdown has caused an enormous amount of anxiety for rural and remote families. It is appreciated that there have been upgrades and transitions to technology previously: CDMA to 2G to 3G. However, the reliance and accepted use of mobile technology in today's society now makes it an essential service for everyday living. The unique challenges and issues faced by rural and remote families in accessing telecommunications still continue and need to be acknowledged and addressed by telecommunication providers.