



# Seeking a fair go on phones

There are more mobile phones than people in Australia and according to **Mark Whitaker** millions of consumers are being ripped off by dodgy deals and overpriced calls. He should know, as he was the first person to market telecommunications in Australia 15 years ago. Fed up with witnessing the rorts and consumer rip-offs he launched his own mobile phone carrier business, Savvytel in St Leonards last year.

**STORY:** Wendy Kay

**PICTURE:** Paul Melville

**QUESTION:** Why jump into a market already well established and catered for?

**ANSWER:** I saw a hole in the service aspect of the industry. People are being massively overcharged for their calls and I saw a way to reduce call costs and keep your credits.

I knew there was a better and fairer way for people to use a mobile service.

**Q:** What does Savvytel offer that other mobile phone companies don't?

**A:** We are the only company worldwide to offer call credits which never expire and the only company to sell mobile phones at wholesale prices. And from this week we are offering auto top ups to credit. As soon as credit runs low it will be topped up automatically and charged to your credit card. Just like an e-tag. Oh, and did I mention we are 100 per cent Australian owned?

**Q:** What's the most important role of a mobile phone?

**A:** Perception of security, convenience and saving money. Mobiles have changed from a nice to have to a necessity in most people's lives.

**Q:** Why can't we buy a phone that just makes or receives calls.

**A:** It's true that 95 per cent of all users use less than 5 per cent of the phone's functionality, but people are conned by advertising. The basic models ranging from \$80 to \$120 are never promoted, yet they do everything we need.

**Q:** What age do you think children should be given a mobile phone?

**A:** Children and mobiles are a sad situation. The number one youth debit is mobile phones. If a parent believes a child needs a mobile they should be on a prepaid.

Savvytel hears horror stories daily of kids as young as 10 running up bills in the hundreds of dollars.

I think 16 is a good age. And not what the phone companies tell you, mobiles do fry your brain so there's a health aspect as well.

**Q:** Could you live without your mobile phone?

**A:** I was Optus' 165th customer and have had the same mobile number for over 16 years. My mobile is part of my anatomy. No I could not live without my mobile ... maybe when I retire.

**Q:** What's the most common trap people fall into when they buy a mobile phone?

**A:** The biggest trap is falling for the free phone gimmick when you get the latest gadget, but boy do you pay for it down the track.

» For more information 1300 885 446



Mark Whitaker wants to give mobile phone owners a fair go through his St Leonards mobile phone carrier business Savvytel.

ZJK2397