



Chorus Limited
Level 10, 1 Willis Street
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New Zealand

Hon Nikki Kaye
MP for Auckland Central
Parliament Buildings
Wellington 6160

15 March, 2018

Dear Nikki

Thank you for raising and highlighting the concerns of the local community on Great Barrier Island regarding the reliability of their telecommunications services.

Chorus takes its responsibility to provide a reliable service for all its customers very seriously, whether they are within Auckland central or in more remote areas such as Great Barrier Island.

There has been a higher than usual number of faults on the island in January and February this year which has adversely impacted some customers and the timeframes for which we have been able to restore service. This has resulted in the commentary you have received from your constituents.

While Chorus has had a technician based on the island until just recently, the faults were not issues that having a technician locally could have resolved. We do however accept that the timeframes and impacts are not what Chorus would expect people to have to experience. We already have work under way to resolve the issues you raise and to ensure our network is more reliable in the future.

The issues we are working to resolve are:

- Our equipment at Okupu runs on solar power and suffers from shading of the solar panels. This has resulted in intermittent service on the island. As soon as the issue was identified we have been topping up the backup batteries on a weekly basis to ensure continuity of service. A temporary power supply has been agreed to with our Rural Broadband Initiative partner, Vodafone, which is planned to be implemented next week. A permanent power source to our site requires appropriate resource consents and permits which is being worked through at the moment.
- Trees are impacting a line of sight communications antenna at Tryphena. This has caused intermittent faults due to signal interference on the radio link. We have been liaising with the landowner to arrange to have the trees trimmed, and this work was completed yesterday.
- There has been a fault with one of the antennas that requires replacement. This required part is scheduled to arrive next week. There is diversity on this link with two antennas to avoid any loss of service.

In the longer term, to ensure the resilience of our network on the island, Chorus completed an audit of our network infrastructure on the island last year, as well as a structural engineers report for all of our main sites to ensure we are providing a robust network for the residents. This audit is in addition to the annual maintenance that Chorus does on the local network on the island.

This audit identified the works highlighted above as risks requiring attention. Unfortunately some of these risks have been realised while we were in the process of working to mitigate them. The audit has also identified the need for a technological upgrade for the phones on the island. This upgrade means the phone service will be provided by our existing fixed line copper network, rather than via radio links at Tryphena. This work will allow greater network diversity and reliability. This work is currently in the design phase, and will be implemented later this year.

Faults unfortunately can and do happen, irrespective of the measures that we put in place to mitigate network outages. While we do not have a technician permanently located on the island now, technicians are on the island for significant periods to ensure the network maintenance is done regularly.

We will also send technicians as and when required for any faults if there is not a technician on the island at that time. The transport infrastructure to the island is consistent enough for us to be able to maintain our network and respond to faults quickly enough without the requirement of a permanent presence.

I hope my assurances and the information about the work we are doing to improve telecommunications services on the island gives you the confidence that we will keep residents connected, particularly for those that may have a medical dependency or other essential requirements, and that we have a through on-going maintenance programme.

Regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kate McKenzie', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Kate McKenzie

Chief Executive

Chorus New Zealand Ltd