

Report 10.213  
Date 29 April 2010  
File WRS/09/01/01

Committee Wellington Regional Strategy Committee  
Author Melanie Thornton Project Leader

## Broadband Update

### 1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update on the current work of the Broadband Operational Group (BOG).

### 2. Background

Workstreams are continuing as previously outlined. Key results so far include finalising the report on aerial deployment rules around the region. An important meeting was held with Ministry of Economic Development (MED) to discover any additional information that may inform our workstreams. And finally a meeting with one of the potential Local Fibre Companies (LFC) which provided indications of the size of the fibre build for parts of the region.

### 3. Meeting with Ministry of Economic Development

BOG members met with MED officials responsible for the broadband work at the Ministry. We outlined the various workstreams underway through BOG and sought clarity on the Ministry's views on legislation being contemplated to support the Ultra Fast Broadband Initiative (UFBI) and the Rural Broadband Initiative (RBI). MED supported the approach BOG is taking on this work as it aligns directly with its relevant issues.

The key point from this meeting is around the Infrastructure Bill being the overall umbrella for most of the key projects being undertaken. These projects are outlined below as separate points. The Infrastructure Bill's implementation instrument is the National Code (<http://www.nzuag.org.nz/national-code/>) and in the final form it may have the status of a regulation. Select Committee process is currently underway on the Infrastructure Bill.

## **4. BOG Workstreams**

### **4.1 Project brief 3.1 Region-wide rules for new trenching technologies**

A spreadsheet collating the different policies and rules around the region has been completed and a further spreadsheet showing recommended depths for broadband duct installation has been sent to all nominated council engineers for consideration. A workshop was held on the 18<sup>th</sup> of March to discuss and agree the use of particular technologies for setting reasonable regional conditions. A final report on this project is due shortly.

Auckland City is taking the lead in developing a proposal that will: develop standards on shallow trenching/micro trenching; do a trial (with few real sites); and finalise the standard. The BOG will be providing a submission on this when the proposal is released.

### **4.2 Project brief 3.2 Region-wide rules for aerial deployment**

A stocktake of the various councils' district plan rules for aerial deployment has been undertaken and is complete. A report of the findings and recommendations was tabled to the Chief Executives meeting on 16 April. At this stage councils in the region are not keen to consider any changes to their regulations covering aerial deployment.

### **4.3 Project brief 3.3 Coordination of road openings**

This workstream is focussed on determining how road openings could be better coordinated around the region. This will reduce the compliance costs for the operators and enable greater cooperation between the councils in the region. The project aims to provide councils with an outline of the implications for them of a significant increase in the number of road openings as a result of a potentially dramatic increase in laying fibre. It will also provide an analysis of what is needed across the region to provide better road opening coordination.

### **4.4 Project brief 3.4 Regional agreed policy for access to local government assets**

Submissions to MED by Wellington region Local Fibre Company (LFC) candidates have been analysed to determine their stated views on access to council assets.

A letter was sent to Wellington region LFC candidates seeking discussions with each individually to understand their requirements, if any, for access to council assets in the region. At this stage only one LFC candidate has been consulted and according to their plans there is not a great need for access to council assets.

### **4.5 Project brief 3.5 Rural deployment**

The final Rural Broadband Initiative was released on 17 March 2010. Funding for this initiative is set at \$300m. There will be a call for expressions of interest to provide services in May, then a call for final proposals in August.

Based on our meeting with MED, indications are that the Minister wants urgent progress on rural. He is not prepared to wait for the UFBI. The Minister wants continued focus on infrastructure to address community access and not just schools and hospitals.

BOG will be involved in a meeting of schools, TAs and the Wairarapa District Health Board in late April to discuss the rural broadband initiative and what this might mean for Wairarapa.

## 5. **Significance of the decision**

The matters for decision in this report **do not** trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

## 6. **Communication**

Projects and other activities will continue to be communicated as the opportunity arises.

## 7. **Recommendations**

*That the Committee:*

1. *Receives the report.*
2. *Notes the content of the report.*

Report prepared by:

Report approved by:

Melanie Thornton  
Project Leader

Jane Davis,  
General Manager, Strategy  
and Community Engagement