

**IN THE MATTER** of the Resource Management Act  
1991 (Act)

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER** of the Proposed Natural Resources  
Plan for the Wellington Region

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**STATEMENT OF MARY BARTON  
ON BEHALF OF  
CHORUS NEW ZEALAND LIMITED**

**IN RELATION TO THE  
PROPOSED NATURAL RESOURCE PLAN  
HEARING STREAM 1**

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**May 2017**

## Introduction

### Qualifications and Experience

1. My name is Mary Louise Barton. I am the Environmental Planning Manager at Chorus New Zealand Limited. I have held this position since February 2015, previously holding the role of Senior Environmental Planner. I have worked for Chorus since September 2012. I hold the qualification of Bachelor of Resource and Environmental Planning from Massey University. I have 17 years of resource management experience, comprising roles in local government and private consultancy.
2. My role at Chorus involves a range of functions including:
  - Managing and coordinating input to statutory documents, including district and regional plans;
  - Attending workshops, hearings and informal council meetings;
  - Providing resource management advice and support with respect to the rollout of ultra-fast broadband (UFB) and the rural broadband initiative (RBI);
  - developing and managing resource management initiatives to support the UFB and RBI projects and ensure compliance with the relevant regional and district plan provisions;
  - Coordinating and project managing large scale resource consents and archaeological authorities.
3. I am on the Technical Advisory Group for the Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Telecommunication Facilities) Regulations (NESTF) that came into effect on 1 January 2017. As part of the Telecommunications Forum Local Government Group I have been involved in reviewing and preparing submissions on the Resource Legislation Amendment Act 2017, proposed amendments to the National Environmental Standard for Assessing and Managing Contaminants in Soil to Protect Human Health and The Productivity Commissioner "Better Urban Planning" Discussion Document.
4. I confirm that I have read the Hearing Commissioners minute and direction on Procedures for the Hearing of Submissions and the Expert Witness Code of Conduct set out in the Environment Court's Practice Note 2014. I am not, however, presenting evidence as an independent expert. Chorus and Spark

have engaged Tom Anderson to provide expert resource management evidence at this hearing. I confirm that my evidence should be read in conjunction with the evidence of Graeme McCarrison of Spark.

### **Scope of Evidence**

5. In my evidence I will cover:

- An overview of Chorus Operations, including Chorus infrastructure in Wellington Region;
- and
- The Chorus network and the definition of Regionally Significant Infrastructure

### **Chorus New Zealand Limited**

6. Chorus is New Zealand's largest telecommunications infrastructure company. We maintain and build a network predominantly made up of local telephone exchanges, cabinets and copper and fibre cables. Approximately 1.8 million lines are connected to homes and businesses throughout the country.
7. Chorus was formed 1 December 2011 when it demerged from Telecom (now Spark). Structural separation of Telecom's retail business from the business that owns and operates the Fibre-To-The-Premise (FTTP) network was a prerequisite for participation in the Government's Ultra-Fast Broadband scheme (UFB).
8. Chorus has committed to a significant ongoing infrastructure investment, building a world-class fibre network across New Zealand in order to help bring economic and social benefits that come with access to high-speed, reliable broadband infrastructure. An Alcatel-Lucent study estimated the economic benefits to New Zealand end-users of high speed broadband applications will amount to \$32.8 billion over twenty years.
9. Chorus' vision is to support the Government's policy of better broadband through ongoing infrastructure investment that continues to close geographic gaps and to do this efficiently to help drive affordable prices.
10. Chorus is the Government's largest UFB partner and is contracted to deliver UFB to over 830,000 properties in the first phase of the initiative -

approximately 70% of the entire UFB deployment. In January 2017 Chorus announced that it had reached an agreement with Crown Fibre Holdings to extend its ultra-fast broadband (UFB) rollout to a further 169 areas. This will make fibre available to an additional 200,000-plus homes and businesses beyond the 1.1 million customers in Chorus' existing UFB rollout areas.

11. As part of the UFB initiative Chorus is undertaking a once-in-a-generation upgrade of New Zealand's telecommunications infrastructure by laying thousands of kilometres of fibre optic cable and ducting, the first stage of which will take until the end of 2019 to complete. The second phase has recently commenced and is anticipated to and finish by December in 2024.

12. Chorus has been, or is currently, deploying fibre as part of Phase 1 of the UFB rollout in a number of towns and cities throughout the Wellington Region, these include:

- Wellington City
- Porirua City
- Upper Hutt City
- Lower Hutt City
- Kapiti Coast (Paraparaumu, Paekakareki, Waikanae)
- Masterton

13. The UFB footprint within the Wellington Region is set to increase under Phase 2, as fibre broadband is extended to reach the communities of:

- Otaki
- South Wairarapa (Featherston, Martinborough, Greytown)
- Carterton
- Upper Hutt Fringe
- Kapiti Fringe

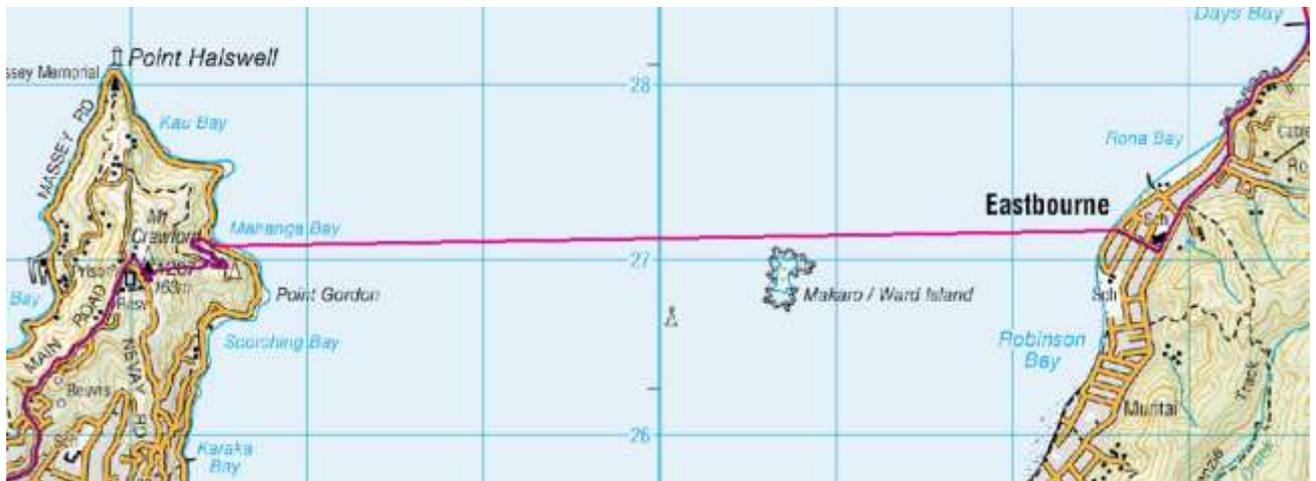
14. The importance of fast, reliable broadband to the Wellington Region is highlighted in the Wellington Regional Strategy 2012, which identifies that the Region has the highest concentration of web and digital based companies per capita in New Zealand. It is further listed as a key area of focus in order to achieve the objective of building a diverse, resilient economy, with the strategy stating "*Regional economic prosperity is heavily dependent on the region's level of connectedness and resilience at*

*local, national and international levels. This is in turn dependent on the quality of our foundation infrastructure and transport systems”<sup>1</sup>.*

15. The economic benefits of UFB to the Wellington Region were also examined in a report commissioned by the GWRC and Grow Wellington<sup>2</sup>. These were estimated to be between \$400 to \$650 million.

### **Chorus infrastructure in Wellington Region**

16. As identified within Mr. McCarrison’s evidence Chorus owns a fibre cable under the Wellington Harbour between Mahanga Bay and Eastbourne (pictured below). Spark also leases fibres within this cable.



**Figure 1:** C2T2 Fibre Cable between Mahanga Bay and Eastbourne

17. This cable is an essential component of the network and carries diverse national links from Wellington to Auckland, picking up traffic on route. It also carries diverse links within the greater Wellington area. Diversity is critical to ensuring resilience in the network by providing a secure, alternative route for traffic in the event the other cable that traverses the North Island is damaged. As a lifeline utility Chorus is obligated to ensure resilience in its network.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Wellington Regional Strategy 2012 — growing a sustainable economy (pages 7 & 8)  
<http://www.gw.govt.nz/assets/About-GW-the-region/Wellington-Regional-Strategy-2012.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> BERL Economics: The Economic Benefits of Wearly UFB Roll-Out in Wellington (October 2010)  
<http://www.gw.govt.nz/assets/Plans--Publications/Wellington-Regional-Strategy/BERLreport.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.civildefence.govt.nz/cdem-sector/lifeline-utilities/duties-of-lifeline-utilities/>

18. The Mahanga/ Eastbourne cable is approximately 25 years old. This means that it will need to be replaced within the next 10 years, being within the lifetime of the proposed Natural Resources Plan. Having certainty in the regulatory provisions and a policy framework that recognises the significant contribution the telecommunication network makes to the economic growth and social well-being of the Region is therefore of high importance to Chorus.
19. As with Spark, Chorus also leases fibres from the Transpower cable that links the North and South Island.

### **Government recognition of the importance of telecommunications**

20. There are a number of recent Government initiatives that provide a clear indication of the importance being placed on access to telecommunications. These have been detailed in the evidence of Mr. McCarrison.
21. In addition to the broadband and mobile coverage extension and the introduction of the National Environmental Standards for Telecommunication Facilities (2016). The Telecommunications (Property Access and Other Matters) Bill received Royal Assent on 8 April 2017. This primary purpose of this Bill is the introduction of simpler consenting rules to help speed up the installation of UFB to properties where the consent of more than one party is required (for example right of ways and apartment buildings).
22. These initiatives and legislative changes provide a clear indication of the degree of importance being placed on access to telecommunications and recognises the contribution that this makes to the productivity, and therefore economic development, of the Country as a whole.
23. To this end I concur with the evidence of Mr. McCarrison and Mr. Anderson with respect to recognition of the telecommunications network as Regionally Significant Infrastructure.

### **Conclusion**

24. Telecommunications services are an essential component of modern life. Consumers expect fast, ubiquitous access to telecommunication networks, with the associated social and economic benefits now well documented. Further, a reliable and diverse telecommunications network is critical when planning for a resilient city. Investment in existing and new telecommunications infrastructure

will continue to be required in order to support the future requirements and demands of users. This has been recognised by the Government, as evidenced in recent initiatives that remove many of the regulatory barriers to the provision of telecommunications.

25. Greater Wellington Regional Council has also recognised the importance of telecommunications to the continued growth of the Region through the Wellington Regional Strategy. The Chorus (and Spark) submissions to the Proposed Natural Resources Plan are consistent with this Strategy. The submissions would enable a policy framework that is suitably flexible to provide certainty to telecommunication providers as they continue to invest in the maintenance and upgrading of the existing network, and build new world class networks, as a result enhancing New Zealand's economic and social prosperity.



Mary Barton

**Environmental Planning Manager**

**Chorus New Zealand Limited**

**24 May 2017**