

Telecommunication Carriers' Forum Local Government Project Scope

Date Submitted:
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Issue Identification

The Telecommunications industry has identified a need to develop a mutually beneficial relationship with Local Government. The primary drivers of this need are:

- To improve the investment and deployment climate for all carriers by addressing issues with:
 - the Resource Management Act;
 - access to roading corridors;
 - access to council assets; and
 - rating policies.
- To provide guidance to Local Authorities on how they can meet their aspirations for improving broadband coverage and performance.
- To seek a consistent response for permitted activities.
- To increase the range of permitted activities which are compliant with district plans.

Examples of engagement opportunities that could be of benefit to TCF members include:

- The preparation of a Broadband Friendly Protocol by Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ) that outlines principles and procedures for expediting deployment of broadband services by existing and new entrant Telecommunications operators;
- Development of National Environmental Standards by the Ministry of Environment;
- Broadband Investment Funding rounds; and
- District Plan reviews.

Background

The relationship between the Telecommunications industry and the Local Government sector has, in recent years, often been a stressed one.

Territorial Local Authorities (TLA) are perceived as hindering the deployment of networks through un-co-ordinated and cumbersome regulatory processes (primarily RMA and roading consents), and Telecommunications companies are perceived as being insensitive to the TLA's position and community concerns. Communities call for improved Telecommunications infrastructure, but they do not always appreciate what it takes for that to be delivered.

Historically councils have only been consumers of Telecommunication services. They have had little involvement in the development and maintenance of Telecommunications infrastructure. This picture is rapidly changing. Over the last five years there has been a significant increase in participation by Local Councils in the provision of urban fibre networks such as NEAL (on the North Shore), Smartlinx 3 (Porirua and Hutt cities) and Christchurch City Networks. A number of other TLAs are considering similar initiatives, encouraged by the Broadband Investment Fund.

At a Local Government level broadband is now being promoted as being core infrastructure. The sector recently adopted the following remit at the sectors Annual General Meeting held at the Annual Local Government New Zealand Conference in July 2008.

“That Local Government New Zealand actively promotes a policy position that requires government to:

- classify broadband services as key national infrastructure;*
- develop the philosophy of equity of access; and*
- provide funding for broadband deployment and promote public private partnerships.”¹*

The relationship between the Telecommunications and Local Government sectors is therefore more complex and more critical than ever before.

The establishment of a TCF working party is intended to help both TCF members and TLAs develop a more collaborative approach.

Project Scope

The working party will provide a forum through which:

- TCF members can discuss Local Government issues, prepare submissions and develop joint approaches (where joint action is mutually beneficial);
- Local Government can consult with TCF members on matters such as broadband infrastructure, resource management and access to roading;

¹ Local Govt BBFP Strategic Intent Document Draft Aug 08

- Central Government can consult with TCF members on Local Government issues; and
- The industry can engage with regional, city and district councils, including through Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ), on projects of common interest.

Matters relating to specific broadband investment proposals or commercial relationships between individuals carriers and councils are outside the scope of this project.

Deliverables

The deliverables from this project are to establish a Local Government Working Party (LGWP) to facilitate better communication and collaboration with councils around:

- The development of a Broadband Friendly Protocol with Local Government New Zealand;
- Monitoring and reporting on progress with Central Government initiatives including National Environmental Standards, access to transport corridors etc;
- Developing TCF submissions on these matters as required; and
- Development and implementation of other projects, tasks and codes to improve the overall Local Government environment as agreed by the Working Party and TCF Board.
- Establishing consistency with the way in which the Telecommunications industry engages with Local Govt in matters such as district plans, the Resource Management Act, consenting processes and other areas that relate to the Telecommunications industry.

Working Party Membership

	Name	Organisation	Email
Project Leader:	Allan Mordecai	Kordia	allan.mordecai@kordia.co.nz
Working Party Members:	Ralph Chivers	CEO, TCF	ralph.chivers@tcf.org.nz
	Kathy Wiltshire	Chorus	kathy.wiltshire@chorus.co.nz
	Allan Mordecai	Kordia	allan.mordecai@kordia.co.nz
	Mike Brady	Kordia	mike.brady@kordia.co.nz
	Andrew Cushen	Vodafone	andrew.cushen@vodafone.com
	Gerome Garthwaite	Woosh	ggarthwaite@woosh.com
	Helen Knox	Forum Administrator	helen.knox@tcf.org.nz

Resource Requirements

At present the TCF budget includes an allowance of an average of 1 day of Forum Administrator resource per month. This requirement may be reviewed after 6 months if it is established additional Forum Administrator resource is required.

Proposed Project Timeline

Once the Project Scope is approved the LGWP intends writing to Local Government to advise them of the establishment of the working group and to instigate dialogue with Local Government representatives on issues which can be addressed through the LGWP.

A. Recommendation

That the TCF Board:

- 1) **Approve** this project scope.