

Decisions made in regards to the development of telecommunication infrastructure in an area are determined by economic feasibility for the service provider. Incentives for providers to upgrade existing copper lines or to build new internet networks in the area my family and I live (Glen Massey) have are poor due to area's low population density combined with the increasing allure of the lucrative urban based market.

I live with my family about in a rural area 15 minutes west of Ngaruawahia in an geographical area called Glen Massey. The most reliable form of communication available to us is our landline phone that uses the area's aging copper line. Due to this reliability, it is our preferred way to contact emergency services. Up until its discontinuation in 2017 we relied on Spark's dial up internet service which was slow because of the limitations of the old copper line which often was exposed to moisture and needed frequent repairs. The Chorus website reports that ADSL broadband **may be available** in our area but past enquiries have shown that all Internet Service Providers (ISPs) are reluctant to provide us with a basic ADSL broadband service due to our distance from the nearest exchange cabinet. Fibre internet is available our nearest school (Glen Massey primary school) but our house is too far from the cabinet to benefit from the service.

Mobile coverage remains patchy despite efforts of telecommunications providers to increase coverage in our area (new cell phone towers). This can be attributed to the hilly terrain we live amongst. While we can receive traces of a mobile signal in our house that we can use for basic internet activity (while using the tethering feature of our smartphones capable of receiving a signal) signal quality is highly variable. It is really by chance that we are able to utilise the mobile service provided by one provider (Spark and its subsidiary; Skinny) at all. Enquires into accessing wireless using the mobile networks found that no ISP was willing to allow us to purchase an internet plan as they could not guarantee a consistent service using this medium. Because of the limited mobile coverage in our area we cannot rely on our cell phones when we are at home for voice calls. We always recommend people who wish to contact us at home to call our landline. Our power company, (Genesis) elected to use Vodafone to create a network for its smart readers. Vodafone's coverage is extremely limited in our area and our reader still has to be manually read by a meter reader as it cannot be accessed remotely.

Landline is also the most reliable way for us to call emergency services as it provides better voice service quality and is less likely to drop calls. The withdrawal of the copper based landline service in our area would mean we are left relying on on a variable and unreliable wireless/mobile options. Service providers and telecommunication infrastructure appear poised to retreat from their role as enablers of communication for our country's population and instead become vendors of data to the urban masses who can access telecommunication infrastructure that is becoming increasingly sophisticated. While it is economically justifiable, it will come at a cost to many members of the NZ's rural population. Who are they going to call when the download circle is left to spin ad infinitum?