

Agenda

**Notice is hereby given of
an Open Workshop**

Tuesday 21 April 2026

(to follow the Ordinary Council Meeting)

Council Chamber
Waimate District Council
125 Queen Street
Waimate

www.waimatedc.govt.nz

Order Of Business

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Open workshops are an informal forum for staff to bring information items or presentations to Council which, if undertaken at a Council meeting, could take a significant amount of time, and therefore restrict other business from being transacted.

No decisions or resolutions will be made.

Brief agendas will be prepared and will be available on Council's website:

<https://www.waimatedc.govt.nz/council/meetings/agendas-and-minutes> and brief notes will be taken.

There are no legal requirements relating to a quorum.

Standing Orders do not apply.

Members of the public are welcome to attend but do not have speaking rights.

REPORTS

1 GENERAL BUSINESS

1.1 PRESENTATION: CHORUS - 12.00PM

Author: Aleisha Macpherson, Corporate Services Assistant

Authoriser: Tina Stevenson, Corporate Services Group Manager

Attachments: 1. Waimate District Chorus' Plans to 2030 and Beyond [↓](#) 

PURPOSE

1. For Council to receive a presentation on Chorus' plans to 2030 and beyond, including transition from the copper network, resilience and getting fibre further. by Chorus' Jo Seddon, Community Lead.

BACKGROUND

2. Chorus presented to a Council workshop in October 2024.
3. This presentation was on the retirement of their copper network and transition for customers to new phone and broadband services, within the Waimate District.
4. Chorus held an annual stakeholder event in Wellington in November 2025, aligning with the Rural & Provincial meeting, to provide an update to Mayors. As our Mayor returned from Wellington on the same day and was unable to attend the Chorus event, it was suggested Chorus present to our Council when convenient.
5. Council will have an opportunity to ask about any related matters that are top of mind for the Waimate District.

OUTCOME

6. That Council receives Chorus' presentation and consider any impact on the Waimate District and its residents.

Local Government update

Chorus' plans to 2030 and beyond

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About Chorus

- Chorus is New Zealand's largest fixed-line communications infrastructure business
- Established in December 2011 following demerger from Telecom NZ
- Listed on the NZX and ASX
- A copper and congestion-free, fibre network
- Fibre became available to 87% of population by the end of 2022
- About 1.2 million copper and fibre connections





CHORUS

Copper

Copper

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The copper network served New Zealanders well for many decades but like many countries overseas, is now being retired.

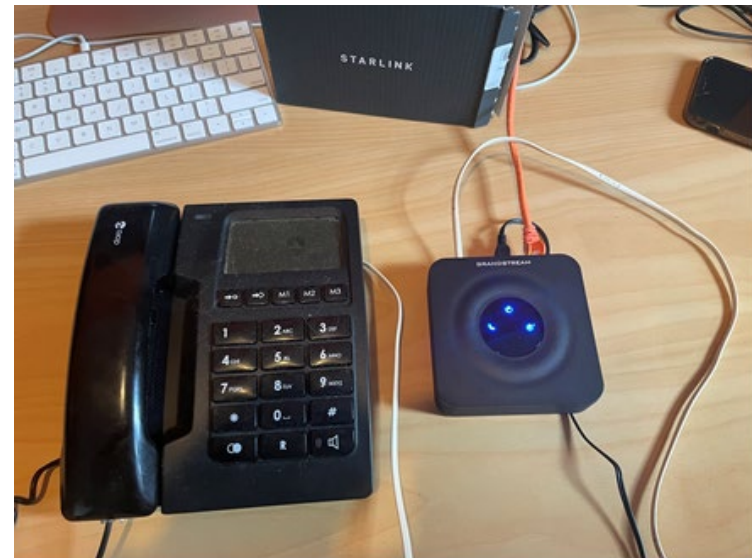
- Copper is end of life technology, prone to faults and not sustainable or suitable to meet the growing connectivity needs of Kiwi consumers.
- Modern technologies like fibre, cellular wireless, non-cellular wireless, and satellite ensure better reliability and service quality.
- According to recent Commerce Commission reporting:
 - ~100% of households without fibre have access to at least 1 alternative network technology
 - 97% have access to 2 or more alternatives.
- In areas where fibre is available, copper service transition started in 2021 and Chorus plans to transition all copper services in these areas by late 2026.
- No large-scale transition planned for 2026. We have announced our intention to retire the copper network by 2030. Ahead of that, rural properties on copper will be encouraged to consider upgrading, especially if their service is impacted by network faults.
- Separate from Chorus copper transition, PSTN withdrawal (Spark-led project) is also happening, impacting a small number of phone services.

Does not mark the end of the landline

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Copper isn't the only underlying technology that provides a landline service, New Zealanders can still have one over wireless (WISP and mobile) or satellite services.

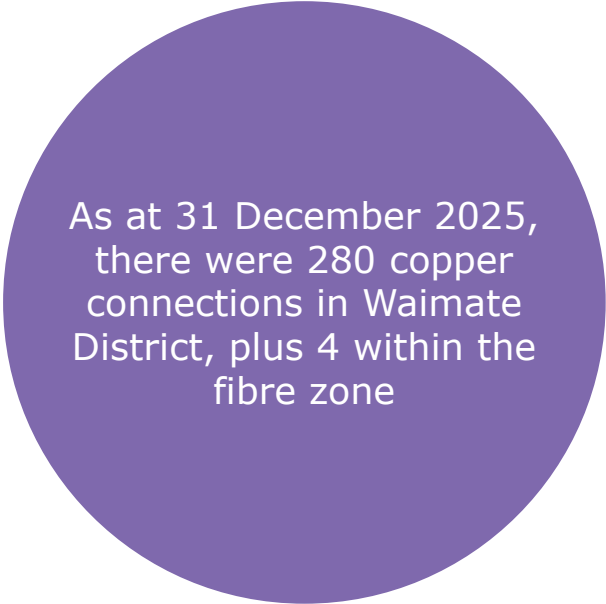
- Customers can keep their landline number and use their wireless handsets as usual.
- According to 2025 Federated Farmers Connectivity survey, 40% of respondents still have a landline, down from 64% in 2022
- Almost 1 in 3 respondents still with a landline receive their landline service through their internet connection.
- Voice over internet protocol – or VOIP - services aren't new. Voice emulation has been used since mid-2000s and naked broadband.
- Still get dial tone when you pick up the handset.



Rural Copper Transition – customer impact

Building on a proven approach from both urban and remote rural transition programmes

- **Sufficient notice of copper transition:** A consistent and transparent process for notifying retailers and consumers of copper transition, and appropriate time to move to an alternative service.
- **Clear information:** Notices provided to customers will include details on rural copper transition and information about available alternative technologies.
- **Rural Customer Support:** NZ-based personnel available to talk customers through the process; as well as key information and guidance available on Chorus' website.
- **Community outreach:** Visits by Chorus to rural communities and holding information sessions to support transition.



As at 31 December 2025, there were 280 copper connections in Waimate District, plus 4 within the fibre zone

Telecommunications Service Obligations (TSO)

- The Telecommunications Service Obligation only covers a small number of residential addresses without fibre access that had a voice (landline phone) service as at 20 December 2001
- This Obligation applies to the property, not the person with the service, so if they move the Obligation remains at the property
- Chorus needs to ensure these addresses continue to have access to a basic voice service but there is no obligation for this to be over the copper network.
- TSO currently under review by the Ministry for Regulation as part of its wider review of regulation in the telecommunications sector.

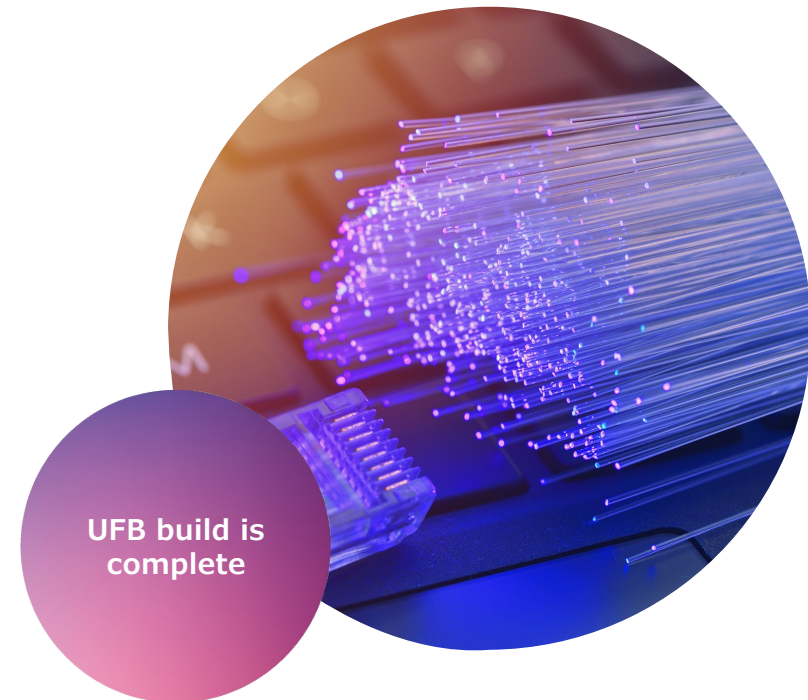


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Fibre

Fibre

- Chorus' 11-year programme of fibre broadband build ended in 2022
 - Public Private Partnership (PPP) with the Government
 - \$5bn investment
- On completion, UFB saw 87% of Kiwis having access to fibre
 - Fibre uptake across the country on Chorus' network is about 72%
- Outside the UFB footprint:
 - Fibre is reticulated for greenfield new property developments
 - Chorus can work with local communities to build self-funded fibre upgrades



Chorus-funded fibre extensions

- We know that fast fibre connections best suit the needs of the vast majority of New Zealanders and have spoken about our aspirations of getting much further than the 87% fibre coverage that we have at present.
- We want to reduce the digital divide and bring fast, reliable internet to more of Aotearoa
- UFB was successful, with 70% uptake and 1.4 million homes now connected from the decade-long Government-supported programme
- We can fill easy-to-fill gaps. With the UFB footprint agreed to over a decade ago, some areas on the fringe weren't reached but now population growth in that time justifies it
- Around 10,000 premises across 59 communities nationwide, from Kerikeri in north to Winton in the south

Infrastructure Priorities Programme (IPP)

Great connectivity is vital

- The future of connectivity in New Zealand is critical to our economic and social success. New Zealand's reliance on outdated, legacy technology like copper means our communications infrastructure is not fit for purpose to deliver a product consumers expect.
- Alongside this, the digital divide in New Zealand is only getting worse. Urban customers have significantly better connectivity options than their rural counterparts, which means rural users are at a disadvantage economically and socially.
- We think there is a case to build fibre out to 95% of the country. Our estimates are that doing so will cost ~\$2.5B to \$3B to unlock \$10B to \$15B+ of economic value (supported by both NZIER and Deloitte economic reports) for the country over the next decade.
- Benefits include: improving productivity, empowering the regions, improving infrastructure quality, accelerating technology use, enablement of economic transformation, improving social service delivery, freeing up transport corridors and connectivity sovereignty.



Great connectivity
is vital for
communities to
thrive

Fibre further

The role of fibre in rural connectivity is not just where it enables fibre to the home, but that it also supports higher speeds and capacity on other rural technologies like wireless and mobile connectivity.

- We believe fibre can go further, and that New Zealand's long-term aspiration should be for as many households and businesses as possible to be able to access fibre.
- Last year a paper from NZIER estimated a \$16.5b benefit in closing the rural digital divide over the next decade.
- With the right policy and regulatory settings we think we could reach at least 90% coverage (an additional 65,000 premises, or over 150,000 more New Zealanders).
- We are currently looking at how we can do this and may want to talk to you about working together to make this a reality.



Not all fibre can be used for residential connections

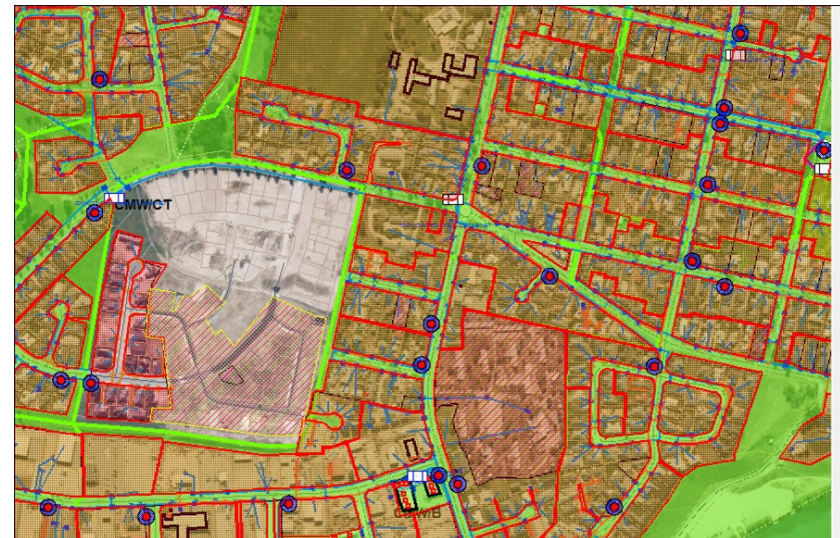
- Not all fibre is the same, some is what we call transport fibre (which is a dedicated fibre connection that carries the main bulk of data between major centres) and some is fixed fibre.
- Breaking into a fixed fibre line is not easy and even if a single fibre can be used, we still need to put in the equipment that would house that fibre and then light it up.
- So while technically fibre does pass some properties, this does not automatically mean it can be used for residential or business connections.

Telecommunications as a utility

- Telecommunications are an essential service and should be installed alongside other services at the time of subdivision
- Failure to install fibre at the time of subdivision can result in unnecessary and disruptive effects and increased costs to the end user and/or an inferior service
- The type of telecommunication service required at new subdivisions is a matter of Control or Discretion in the District Plan – Council has power to determine what is appropriate through subdivision consent process
- Chorus believes connections to an open-access fibre network should be provided wherever practicable – Developer should demonstrate reasoning if open-access fibre not provided
- Fibre is clearly the preferred technology choice with uptake over 70% nationally and increasing every day
- Chorus frequently receives connection requests from disgruntled customers where open-access fibre not provided at time of subdivision

Waimate District Plan Subdivision Standards – rural residential, settlement

- The District Plan does require telecommunications connections to be provided to new subdivisions but does not specify open-access fibre. This needs to be updated at the next District Plan review
- Chorus believes connections to an open-access fibre network should be provided wherever practicable – Developer should demonstrate reasoning if open-access fibre not provided
- Council should utilise the discretion provided under the District Plan to require connection to an open-access fibre network as a condition of subdivision consents
- Fibre is clearly the preferred technology choice with uptake over 70% nationally and increasing every day
- Chorus frequently receives connection requests from disgruntled customers who expected fibre to be available



Community Co-fund

- Extending fibre into rural areas comes with a larger, more complex scope of work and greater costs.
- Our experience shows these costs are too great to be met by individual addresses alone.
- One way to make it more affordable, is by communities sharing the costs of extending fibre together. This way, each property can enjoy the benefits of fibre broadband without one person bearing the full cost.
- We want to help too, so for every community co-funded fibre build, Chorus can contribute up to \$3,500 towards the cost of the build work for each existing premise intending to connect to a fibre broadband service.





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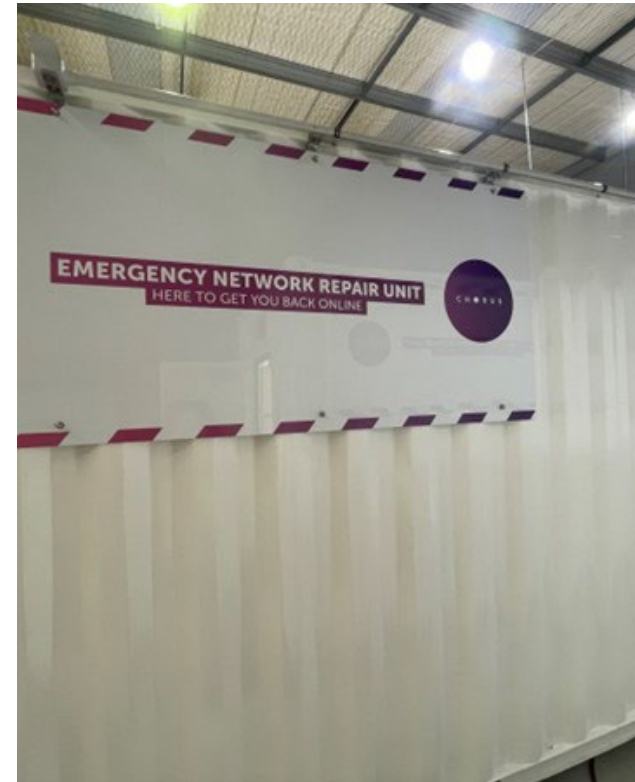
Resilience

Resilience

- The Commerce Commission has approved our plans to invest around \$100 million over the next four years to increase the resilience of our services.
- This will include providing dual paths for our connections to more communities, and by improving earthquake strengthening for our buildings.
- Fibre is more resilient than copper, which relies on powered street cabinets that are subject to flooding.
- We are committed to working with the Government and industry to identify ways to improve network resilience.
- We also note that given challenging economics, the right balance between resilience investment and improved restoration needs to be struck.

MEOW – mobile exchange on wheels

- The MEOW is a 20ft high-cube ISO Container designed to house equipment that replicates the function of a Chorus exchange.
- The standard container footprint allows the container to be deployed on site quickly and efficiently using a manual levelling system without the need for any assembly or disassembly.
- The MEOW is kept in operational readiness and deployed when an exchange is impacted by a disaster event that takes the exchange out of normal operations for a long period of time.



Personal resilience

- We recommend having mobile phones fully charged in case of emergencies. If there is limited mobile coverage, but within the coverage of another provider, 111 emergency services can still be contacted. Satellite coverage is also improving.
- A generator or battery back-up device is a good solution during a power cut.
- There are now a large range of back-up power options available, from Uninterruptible Power Supplies (UPS) to generators and small solar systems.
- If outages happen frequently, a generator could be the best bet as it will ensure self-sufficiency for a longer period of time.



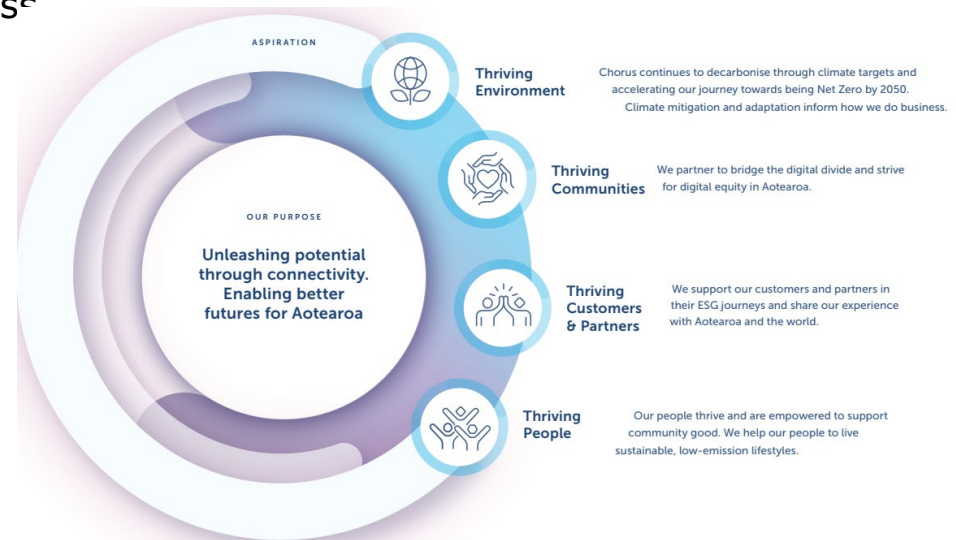


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Sustainability and Digital Equity

Sustainability at Chorus

- ✓ Sustainability is a key part of our Chorus strategy and front and centre in our business strategy
- ✓ Four key pillars and areas of focus:
 1. Thriving environment
 2. Thriving communities
 3. Thriving customers and partners
 4. Thriving people
- ✓ Incredibly proud of the social and environmental benefits of fibre



Climate action



- ✓ Fibre is an energy efficient technology – check out chorus.co.nz blog for more
- ✓ Chorus network is powered by Toitu carbonzero certified electricity with Ecotricity
- ✓ Verified science based target initiative (SBTi) to reduce scope 1 & 2 emissions by 62% by FY30 against FY20 base year
- ✓ Scope 3 engagement, verified SBTi to have 70% of our suppliers, by spend, to have a SBTi by FY29
- ✓ In early 2025, Chorus established its first documented Transition Plan

Transition plan on a page

Chorus' transition plan on a page

NZ CS 1, 16(b)

The diagram below reflects the material aspects of Chorus' Transition Plan as at the end of FY25. Our Transition Plan is designed to address the material climate related risks and opportunities set out in Table 2, below.



Chorus' verified science-based emissions reduction targets

Chorus has a broad ambition to reach Net Zero emissions by 2050. The following verified science-based emissions reduction targets are designed to help us reach this ambition:

- SCOPE 1 & 2**
Reduce absolute scope 1&2 emissions 62% by FY30 against a FY20 base year.
- SCOPE 3**
Engagement goal with 70% of our suppliers by spend to have a science-based target by FY29*.

	TODAY	HORIZON 2			HORIZON 3
Decarbonise through our Emissions Reduction Plan	FY25 PROGRESS Scope 1 & 2: 25% reduction of emissions against FY20 Scope 3: 43% of our top suppliers have verified science-based targets in place Electricity: 11.1% reduction against FY20 100% climate-positive Toitū-certified electricity used to power our network since FY23 Fleet: 56% of our vehicles are EV or hybrid	FY26 Continue initiatives that reduce electricity consumption (such as copper withdrawal)	FY27 Continued monitoring of technological advances, and reduction of generator fuel use	FY28 100% EV or hybrid fleet	FY30 Aim to reduce electricity use by 25% against FY20 Consider formalising a Net Zero target for Chorus with supporting plan and roadmap defined
Renewable and resilient electricity generation	FY25 PROGRESS Solar PV on exchange trials (six sites)	FY26 Expand solar trial to additional sites	FY27/FY28 Consider setting renewable generation target following trial completion, and expand battery storage opportunity		
Minimise climate impact through transition to an 'all-fibre business'	FY25 PROGRESS Climate mitigation and adaptation assessments in development for portfolio asset management plans Interim Internal Emission Price (IEP) adopted	FY26/FY27 Updated climate hazards and vulnerability assessment completed. Mitigations developed. Anticipated financial costs of climate impacts identified in line with CRD requirements Internal Emissions Price tested on initiatives to market Climate lens applied to property optimisation programme			FY30 Planned withdrawal of copper network and fibre extension to ~9,000 premises complete An all-fibre network future, with climate vulnerability assessed regularly

Whiria Te Aka Matihiko – Digital Equity

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Our commitment to digital equity comes to life through Whiria Te Aka Matihiko. This programme weaves together the people, partnerships, and resources needed to close the digital divide.

Together, these strands create stronger, more connected communities across Aotearoa.



The Product

Equity Fibre - is low-cost fibre plan available from 16 Feb with selected broadband providers.



The Fund

We back community-led initiatives with small grants to support digital inclusion.



Partnership & sponsorship

We work alongside trusted organisations like Digital Seniors, Recycle A Device, DECA, Katoa Connect and Netsafe to grow skills, confidence, and online safety.



Volunteering

We empower our people to give back, with paid volunteer leave supporting digital equity causes.

Whiria Te Aka Matihiko Fund

- Our dedicated community fund that supports local organisations working to improve digital confidence, access, and participation.
- Provides small grants (up to \$10k) to groups who are closest to their communities and know what works.
- Helps build sustainable, locally led solutions.
- <https://www.chorus.co.nz/whiria-te-aka-matihiko-fund-application>



Our first fund recipient: Keziah Smith of Piki Kouras in Whangamarino - Storytelling through robots/coding



CHORUS

Community engagement

Communicating with our communities



We are committed **to ensuring our communities know of our plans** well before we get under way



Over the years, we have **hosted events from Kaitaia in the North to Bluff in the South**, all aimed at informing people of our fibre build, how to connect, trouble-shoot issues and allay concerns



We continue to do this through our **Community Outreach initiative**, which sees us having stands at local A&P shows and field days



We also host **community-based meetings** where there is a need or a request for more information

As we progress our copper transition, we plan to do more of these, so please let us know what you think will work for your community



CHORUS

Key take outs

Key take outs

- Chorus intends to be a fibre-only business by 2030
- We are open and up front about our intentions and communicate directly with our communities
- Fibre is more reliable than copper – we are working towards getting fibre further and we need your help
- There are much better options available other than copper, including fibre, WISPs, fixed wireless and satellite
- All communications systems need power
- Consider telecommunications to be a utility, just like water, power and sewerage
- Open-access fixed-line connections are best installed alongside other utilities – it is expensive to do it retrospectively
- Without open access, communities have no real choices over providers or plans
- Chorus is committed to being sustainable and playing our part in digital equity and inclusion

Thank you

For more information contact:

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