

Ms Melissa Lee  
Chairperson  
Commerce Committee  
C/- Commerce Committee Secretariat  
Bowen House  
Parliament Buildings  
WELLINGTON

Friday, 1<sup>st</sup> May 2015

Dear Ms Lee,

**Petition 2011/49 of Sue O'Neill and 110 others**

**Petition 2011/120 of Steven Crighton and 88 others**

**Petition 2011/121 of Tim Gibson and 368 others**

## Introduction

1. InternetNZ appreciates being asked to provide a submission on these three petitions. We provide these comments as we are intensely interested in how New Zealanders are able to share in the benefits and uses of the Internet.
2. In today's world, the Internet is one of the most critical elements for achieving a digitally included society. InternetNZ's vision is for a better world through a better Internet. To achieve that, we promote the Internet's benefits and uses and protect its potential. The growing importance of the Internet in people's everyday lives means that the Internet is everywhere.
3. We have applauded the current Government's investments in building out better connectivity to New Zealanders through both the Ultra Fast Broadband Initiative (UFB) and the Rural Broadband Initiative (RBI). Both of these initiatives continue to be welcomed.
4. What these petitions show is that there clearly remains work to be done. InternetNZ agrees that while both the UFB and RBI are great leaps forward, we have consistently said that they are not the end of history either; that we need to continue to discuss what connectivity requirements we need as a nation to best derive the economic and social benefits of the Internet, and to share those benefits across New Zealand as a whole.

### Questions about the current RBI solution for Rural New Zealand

5. We note the submission to the Committee from the Minister for Communications, and note in that submission that the areas that these petitions concern are, or are to be, covered in part by different components of the RBI programme of work.
6. That these petitioners have been motivated to write a petition to this Committee indicates that either they are not satisfied with the outcomes that have already been delivered through the RBI; OR that they are unclear or unsatisfied with the timeframes through which these outcomes are being provided. Whichever of these is the correct answer, there is clearly expectations in these communities that are not yet being met.
7. We see the opportunity here for more to be done to communicate to these communities what they can expect, when from the providers that have committed to these RBI rollouts. It has been now over four years since the original commitments were made, and while the timings for delivery may be in accordance with the commitments made by the RBI parties, we can certainly see how patience may have worn out in these areas.
8. If, however, these petitioners are motivated not by a lack of clarity but by a lack of satisfaction, then we see a different requirement. This could call for a verification of the commitments made as part of the RBI delivery, to ensure that whichever provider responsible is delivering to the expectations that were set. Have the committed timeframes for the RBI rollouts been met? Is the minimum speed commitment of 5Mbps also being met?
9. For these petitioners, and indeed all rural New Zealanders, to receive such verification and assurance would be positive for all parties involved in the RBI.

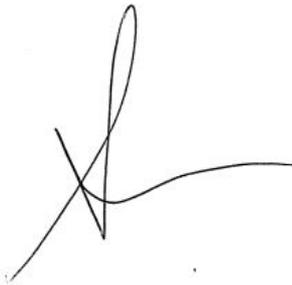
### There are alternatives

10. InternetNZ has also been active on producing advice on how communities can improve broadband themselves, and in surveying other options for connectivity.
11. We partnered with Digital Development Associates to produce a resource called “Hills Holes and Poles - Uncovering the Secrets of Better Rural Broadband”. This information is available at [www.hillsholesandpoles.nz](http://www.hillsholesandpoles.nz).
12. In this work, we have surveyed a number of community-led alternatives to Internet infrastructure provision - what has made these successful, how they are run and how other communities may be able to replicate their successes.

13. The key to this is finding a party that can provide the infrastructure expertise necessary to make this work. There are a range of smaller, wireless providers that may be able to work with communities like these petitioners' to provide better connectivity solutions than those which are being delivered through the RBI.
14. We would be happy to work with these communities and to help investigate what options may be available in this regard, if they so desired.

We are happy to appear before the Committee to speak to this submission if it would benefit your deliberations on this matter.

Sincerely,



Andrew Cushen  
**Work Programme Director**