

Finally a reliable broadband connection

By Marguerite Groenwald

Without having consistent access to the internet and still being able to get by, it's understandable that you would think that you don't need to get online.

And if you've managed to get by so far, you might be right. But Peter Doone, a director at PwC, makes a serious argument:

"As of 2013 there are more digital natives in the world — people who grew up not knowing a world before the internet — than there are people who remember a time beforehand." It's no longer about getting by without; having access to the internet is about not being left behind in an increasingly connected world."

Yes, rural areas would conceivably never need the internet the same way people in larger cities would. However in some ways, we may become more dependant on the internet. Farmers can utilise the vast wealth of information available to make more informed decisions that may have a big financial impact and help them get ahead; for families, staying in touch becomes much simpler and so much better with video calling.

At the end of last year, Vodafone New Zealand announced that they have upgraded their Kawhia facility, ensuring that even the rural Taharoa areas will be able to get a high-speed connection to the internet. This solution; a Vodafone modem and Yagi antenna; is much more affordable and reliable than many other services we have used since moving to Taharoa in 2012, and it's already made a big impact to our lives here.

Instead of phone calls and texts, we use [FaceTime](#) video calling to catch up with family and friends. Internet banking and online services means that all of the important things are taken care of, including learning new things. I have just completed a four-week online course to get a Diploma in Photography. An example of what a wonderful educational platform the internet can be, offering users the chance to learn just about anything.

The next thing on my list is to start learning to play the guitar so I can entertain my future grandkids one day. Being so isolated from all of the big business centres is also no longer as big a problem as it used to be because there are a lot of online work opportunities to earn extra income.

To get set up with a broadband connection, get in touch with [Vodafone on 0800 777 042](#) and ask about their **rural wireless broadband** options. You may live in an area that can't be serviced just yet, so be patient but persistent. Availability of broadband services will increase as demand does.

Below is an excerpt from my correspondence with the Hon Amy Adams, the Minister of Communications, dated 22 September 2015: *"While I can appreciate your desire to have access to a fast broadband connection sooner, deploying the UFB and RBI initiatives across the country is a large-scale project and will therefore take time to complete. The cost of deployment in areas with difficult terrain and low population densities means it is not currently possible to provide fibre to all, and we need to prioritise. We have made connecting up schools, hospitals and businesses a top priority so that all New Zealanders*

can benefit from these upgrades. Please be assured this Government is actively seeking ways to improve broadband coverage across New Zealand, particularly in rural and more remote areas. To this end, the Government is extending both the UFB and RBI programmes, and establishing a new Mobile Black Spot Fund, with combined funding of up to \$360 million. It is intended that mobile and broadband coverage will be expanded to many communities across New Zealand under these programmes, rather than a select few towns or communities.”

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