

**Media Release**

12 February, 2016

**Vodafone boosts rural coverage for Aria**

Vodafone switched on a newly built cell site at Aria at the end of 2015, vastly improving mobile coverage and high-speed rural wireless broadband in the area.

The Aria cell site is one of two new towers for the Waitomo District to be built under the Rural Broadband Initiative – which Vodafone delivers in partnership with the Government and Chorus – to bring faster, more reliable wireless broadband and mobile coverage to Kiwis living in rural New Zealand.

The site will radically transform the area's access to communication services, with over 100 addresses benefiting from greater connectivity over Vodafone's 4G network.

Vodafone's Technology Director, Tony Baird, says connectivity and access to high-speed broadband has become a critical tool for Kiwis in rural areas.

"We're continually investing so our rural customers gain access to the same benefits as those living in urban areas, and have done so since the Rural Broadband Initiative began. Our focus is to ensure rural Kiwis can stay reliably connected."

Aria residents can now enjoy optimised broadband speeds just like Chris Lewis, President of Waikato Federated Farmers, who had Rural Broadband installed last year and connected his farm to fast and reliable broadband.

"Ensuring the milk shed is connected means information is getting off the farm in real time. The cell phone coverage upgrade also means I'm pretty much connected all over the farm."

The Aria site will ensure residents and businesses have access to reliable information and communications, can connect to their community and can engage online in the same way as their urban counterparts.

Baird adds, "Being connected to regional, national and international partners is critical in ensuring rural businesses remain competitive and keep innovating."

In addition to the new cell site, the Waitomo area has received two RBI upgrades, providing high speed wireless broadband to over 650 addresses (approx.) in Te Kuiti and Piopio.

Anyone can use Vodafone's address checker online to see what broadband services are available: <http://www.vodafone.co.nz/network/rural>

**Key statistics:**

- Almost 75 per cent of Kiwis living rurally now have access to wireless broadband connections capable of delivering speeds on par with – or faster than – those experienced in urban centres.
- By the end of 2016, Vodafone's nationwide broadband and mobile network will cover more than 98 per cent of places where kiwis live, work and play
- Rural New Zealand has seen significant RBI and mobile data growth, with a 270 per cent increase from 2013 to 2015.

**-ENDS-**

**Notes to Editor:**

Wireless Broadband can be installed by a Vodafone arranged technician. Installation fees apply.

Vodafone is well on track to deliver the Rural Broadband Initiative by the end of 2016, bringing the total number of new RBI cell sites to 154, and upgraded cell sites to 387

*For enquiries please contact:*

**Vodafone New Zealand Media Relations**

0800 VF MEDIA

[Vodafone.media@vodafone.com](mailto:Vodafone.media@vodafone.com)