

# FACT SHEET

## ***Rural Broadband Initiative phase two (RBI2) and the Mobile Black Spot Fund (MBSF) expansion***

In combination with the RBI2/MBSF contracts first entered into in 2017, by the end of the expansion programme in 2023 there will be enhanced broadband available to approximately 99.8% of the population, improved mobile coverage to ~1,400 kilometres of State Highways and ~168 tourism sites. There will also be increased broadband availability to 271 marae nationally.

### ***What is the RBI2/MBSF programme?***

- RBI2 involves rolling out enhanced broadband connectivity infrastructure progressively into rural New Zealand, with the aim of increasing the availability of enhanced broadband access throughout rural New Zealand.
- The first contracts for the RBI2/MBSF programme were announced in August 2017 (see earlier fact sheet at <https://www.crowninfrastructure.govt.nz/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/UFB-and-RBI-programmes-fact-sheet-7-March-2018.pdf>). These first contracts provided for approximately 74,000 rural households and businesses to receive broadband coverage between 2017 and the programme's substantial completion in 2021.
- The Mobile Black Spot Fund (**MBSF**) involves rolling out new cellular mobile coverage to State Highways with 'black spots' (i.e. no mobile coverage from any operator), and to key tourist areas, supporting safety on State Highways and enhancing visitor experiences at key tourist destinations.
- The first contracts for MBSF involves rolling out new mobile coverage for over 1,000 kilometres of State Highway black spots and more than 100 tourist areas, to be substantially completed by 2021.

### ***What is the RBI2/MBSF expansion?***

- The RBI2 expansion builds on the original contracts entered into in 2017 by a mixture of extending/amending existing contracts between CIP and 9 existing partners, and CIP entering into new contracts with 8 more partners. In total, CIP now has 18 partners across the country rolling out RBI2 connectivity infrastructure.
- **RBI2 expansion:** CIP has contracted to provide enhanced broadband for another **10,000 households and businesses** by 2024. This includes approximately **5,300 rural households and businesses in the surge regions<sup>(1)</sup> and off-shore islands** (Great Barrier, Chathams, and Stewart Island), and **54 marae**.
- **MBSF expansion:** CIP has also contracted with the Rural Connectivity Group to extend mobile coverage for over **365 kilometres of new mobile coverage on State Highways** (adding to the 1,041 kilometres already contracted for), and **mobile coverage for a further 59 tourist sites** (in addition to the 108 already contracted for) around the country. While December 2023 is the end date for the expansion programme, the network will be rolled out progressively and made operational and so many areas will receive it before 2023.

<sup>1</sup> The highest priority regions for investment in regional development from the Provincial Growth Fund are Northland/Tai Tokerau, Bay of Plenty, Tairāwhiti/East Coast (Gisborne), Hawke's Bay, Manawatū -Whanganui and West Coast.

## ***Who are CIP's partners for the RBI2/MBSF expansion?***

CIP has entered into partnerships with several new companies to deliver the RBI2/MBSF expansion:

1. **Evolution Wireless Limited** to provide broadband in Opotiki and Whakatane districts;
2. **Kiwi WiFi Limited** to provide broadband in the Tasman and Nelson regions;
3. **Lightwire Limited** to provide broadband in Waikato and Bay of Plenty regions;
4. **Strata Networks Limited** to provide broadband in the Auckland and Northland/Tai Tokerau regions;
5. **Thepacific.Net Limited** to provide broadband in the Marlborough and Tasman regions;
6. **VelocityNet Limited** to provide broadband in Southland;
7. **Zelan Limited** to provide broadband in the West Coast; and
8. **WiFi Connect** to provide broadband to the West Coast and Bay of Plenty.

These are in addition to CIP's existing partners to deliver the RBI2/MBSF programme and its expansion:

9. **Rural Connectivity Group (RCG)** – a joint venture of the three mobile network operators 2degrees, Spark and Vodafone (providing both rural broadband and mobile cellular coverage in all regions of the country);
10. **Gisborne.net** to provide broadband in Tairāwhiti and North Hawke's Bay;
11. **Wiz Wireless** to provide broadband in Wairarapa, Wellington;
12. **Inspire.net** to provide broadband in Manawatū and Whanganui region;
13. **AmuriNet** to provide broadband in North Canterbury;
14. **AoNet** to provide broadband in King Country, Manawatū and Whanganui region;
15. **Ultimate Broadband** to provide broadband in Central/South Canterbury;
16. **Primo Wireless** to provide broadband in Taranaki;
17. **Unifone** to provide broadband in Otago; and
18. **NZ Tech** to provide broadband in Central Hawke's Bay.

## ***Where will the expansion coverage be going to, and by when?***

CIP's website contains maps of the existing RBI2/MBSF and expansion coverage (see [www.crowninfrastructure.govt.nz](http://www.crowninfrastructure.govt.nz)).

Information on the new coverage coming from the RBI2/MBSF expansion will also be available on the National Broadband Map ([www.broadbandmap.nz](http://www.broadbandmap.nz)).

This coverage information as well as schedule information will be progressively loaded onto the National Broadband Map during 2019.

### ***What are the contract values?***

The total value of contracts entered into by CIP for the RBI2/MBSF expansion is approximately \$132.5 million.

In total, the WISP partners have contracted for \$17.5 million of funding to provide enhanced broadband to approximately 8,400 rural households and businesses.

CIP has contracted with RCG for approximately \$115 million for predominantly MBSF coverage and also some rural broadband coverage.