



MEDIA RELEASE

Ruapehu District Council

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COMMUNITY HELP WANTED FOR BROADBAND INVESTMENT BID

Ruapehu mayor Don Cameron is urging people to help Council gain a share of the \$400 million dedicated to the next stage of the national broadband rollout programme.

The next phase of the government's broadband plan will focus on extending implementation of ultra-fast broadband, enhancing rural broadband and limiting mobile black spots.

Mayor Cameron said that Council urgently needed community support to help put the best possible argument forward as to why NZ would benefit from Ruapehu getting broadband infrastructure investment ahead of other districts.

"The lack of high speed broadband access and mobile black spots across many parts of Ruapehu has been identified as one of the significant constraints limiting the district's economic potential.

"We now need to be able to demonstrate that if Ruapehu was prioritised for broadband infrastructure investment that we would be able to capitalise on it and provide the best possible return for NZ Inc."

Mayor Cameron said that the government has asked local councils to be directly involved in this next investment stage decision by firstly indicating their interest via a Registration of Interest (ROI) and then developing a Digital Enablement Plan (DEP).

"The ROI is us putting our hand up that we want the broadband investment first and the DEP is how we would benefit Ruapehu and NZ from the investment," he said.

"To put together the best possible ROI and DEP that will give Ruapehu the best chance of being successful we require the support of Ruapehu communities."

"A key part of the information we need to provide is the inclusion of an overview on the state of Ruapehu's telecommunications infrastructure that needs to be supported by hard data."

"This is where we urgently need the help of the general public to take part in a simple test to measure the speed of their internet connection and provide feedback on their current internet service."

"To take part people just need to go to Council's website www.ruapehudc.govt.nz and follow the simple speed test instructions and fill out the short survey on their internet use and experiences"

Mayor Cameron noted that Ruapehu was competing against all other districts around NZ to be part of the next round of national broadband investment.

"The government will ultimately decide what districts will be part of this next \$400 million investment round."

"They (the government) will be very hard-nosed about this decision and will be asking themselves 'where and how will NZ Inc. get the best return'," he said.

"This would be a game changer for Ruapehu's economic and productive potential and I urge as many people and communities of interest as possible to take part in the process."

"Gaining access to this investment money will also put Ruapehu in a significantly better position to take advantage of the opportunities identified in the Manawatu-Whanganui Regional Growth Study that is due to be released."

"District wide, low cost, reliable, high speed broadband and mobile coverage is critical to enabling Ruapehu communities to fully participate and flourish in the modern world and take advantage of all the opportunities it offers."

"The ROI must be completed by early July so we are asking people to do the speed test and survey before Monday 22 June."

"If people want any more information or assistance they can call either Samantha Arthur-Curtis or Lauren Gram via their local Council office."

PETER TILL
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

PT : PRW