

Zara Lynch

Subject: Submission to the Digital Strategy 2.0

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From: comments@digitalstrategy.govt.nz [mailto:comments@digitalstrategy.govt.nz]

Sent: Tuesday, 6 May 2008 5:09 p.m.

To: Submission@DigitalStrategy.govt.nz

Subject: Submission to the Digital Strategy 2.0

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connection1: RWNZ feels that the strategy could be braver in serving rural needs. The area of greatest need is the rural community because of limitations and cost to accessing services through other means. Rural communities are unable to take responsive action to reduce their carbon footprint when there is no alternative access to connections.

We commend and encourage broadband friendly councils as long as there is a priority protocol established for rural areas. We feel that true rural communities and remote rural areas where there are under 500 people are still being excluded.

connection2: Fast broadband access to the remotest communities no matter how small those communities may be at a cost that is equitable with urban communities within similar timeframes as remote rural in particular have a greater need.

connection3: RWNZ believes that the challenges and actions are well intentioned and succeeding for most New Zealanders. However for most rural New Zealanders where the alternative is satellite and more expensive it is inequitable.

connection4: More connectivity between agencies to develop and deliver a high speed broadband service to all communities no matter where they may be located.

confidence1: RWNZ believes the new confidence is a little Utopian in its vision when rural New Zealanders are still trying to make cell phone calls. Many rural New Zealanders can not depend on the digital environment for their safety.

confidence2: Guarantees of a digital environment in all of rural New Zealand where people can feel safe and secure.

confidence3: Confidence in rural New Zealand is diminished when many families and businesses either only have access or can only afford a dial up service which is increasingly unreliable.

confidence4: Rural businesses are less productive when they cannot compete with urban businesses with fast broadband. The added cost of satellite for a small business is an added financial burden that may mean the difference to it being sustainable or not.

content1: The goal is fine but there must be a stronger focus on specific rural related content for example telemedicine options and the related workforce

content2: Investment in peer learning opportunities

collaboration1: Very important if you are going to achieve the best possible outcome

collaboration2: Geographically isolated communities, See above

collaboration3: Understanding the uniqueness and challenges of living and/or running a business in rural environment,as above

collaboration4: Rural must be involved and must be consulted at all stages of planning development and implementation. Too often RWNZ feels that rural is an afterthought ,Local bodies and Telcos need to recognise that remote rural is an asset and that community corporate partnerships would be a win-win situation for all

potential1: RWNZ is active in contributing to the higher education of children through bursaries and actively promotes the benefits of broadband to rural families/businesses

comments: Rural Women New Zealand is the only organisation that represents rural families and communities. We support all efforts to ensure a level playing field for all New Zealanders.