

## 2023 Report – Lightwire’s Rural Capacity Upgrade



*Tapp Road tower, Lightwire, Rural Capacity Upgrade Programme*

Following major upgrades to Lightwire’s Tapp Road wireless broadband site, 1,122 rural properties west of Hunty now have access to significantly improved broadband, funded through the Rural Capacity Upgrade Programme.

Through the challenging winter months of 2023, Lightwire’s Hamilton-based site team, in partnership with local company Industrial Site Services Ltd, poured 20 tonnes of concrete and erected a new 10-meter-tall steel “lattice tower” structure at the Tapp Road high site. This will serve as the foundation for delivering high-speed wireless broadband services to rural households and businesses in the area for years to come. The new lattice tower design also makes for a safer working environment for their technicians as they can now climb within the lattice structure itself when working on equipment mounted at height.

The Tapp Road site upgrade is just one of 84 Lightwire sites being upgraded as part of the Rural Capacity Upgrade Programme over two years.

Other upgrades to the site included the provision of a dedicated mains power feed to the site which replaces the existing solar array that was powering the remote site until recently. This provides significantly higher power budget for

the site allowing Lightwire to continue upgrading power-hungry radio equipment into the future as demand increases.

State of the art lithium battery storage and monitoring has been installed on site to provide reliable power into the future, protecting against mains power outages – such as those suffered by many communication sites across New Zealand during Cyclone Gabrielle – ensuring critical communication resilience to rural communities. Lightwire has seen more than 150 households already connected to this upgraded site, who are enjoying the benefits of upgraded broadband capacity, reliability, and futureproofing that this upgrade programme set out to deliver.

The towers upgraded as part of the Rural Capacity Upgrades programme will see improved broadband capacity made available to 15,294 rural households and businesses across the Waikato and Bay of Plenty regions by the end of June 2024.