Submission on 2026 Review of the Measuring Broadband New Zealand programme – Minimum scope

18 August 2026

CHORUS

Introduction

1. Chorus welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Commerce Commission's consultation paper, *2026 Review of the Measuring Broadband New Zealand programme: Minimum scope* (the **Consultation Paper**).[1]

2. The Measuring Broadband New Zealand programme (**MBNZ**) is an important part of the Commission's retail service quality (**RSQ**) framework. It provides independent information about broadband performance across technologies, plans and providers, supports consumer choice, and is used to substantiate broadband performance claims in the market. The aim of MBNZ is to help consumers choose the best broadband for their household and encourage providers to compete on performance, not just price.

3. We support the continuation of an independent MBNZ programme and broadly support the Commission's proposal to streamline the programme around core testing and reporting requirements. Overall, a streamlined programme should be more useful for consumers. The key opportunity is to improve how MBNZ results are analysed, presented, and explained, so consumers can better understand what they are likely to receive from broadband services.

4. MBNZ should make it easier for consumers to compare how reliably broadband services perform and how much that performance may vary. Over-reliance on average headline download speeds and other average-based metrics obscures important differences in real-world performance and may mislead consumers about what they can reasonably expect from a service.

Executive summary

5. We support a focused and proportionate MBNZ programme based on the Commission's proposed core metrics of download speed, upload speed, latency and reliability, particularly during peak periods.

6. The core metrics should be presented in a way that helps consumers understand meaningful differences between broadband technologies and choose the service that best meets their household needs.

7. Our main recommendation is that MBNZ should show whether broadband services perform consistently, not just what they achieve on average. Where performance is materially variable, average-based reporting can obscure the spread of outcomes and overstate what consumers can reasonably expect from a service. Average performance should not be the primary consumer-facing summary measure where results are materially variable. MBNZ should therefore give greater prominence to distribution-based measures, including lower-quartile outcomes, where variability is material.

8. We recommend that the Commission use the next phase of MBNZ to improve outcomes in four key areas:

    8.1. **Clearer consumer comparisons between technologies.** MBNZ should build on its core metrics to better explain the practical differences between broadband technologies, including download and upload performance, latency, reliability, and consistency of service delivery.

    8.2. **Better visibility of consistency and variability.** MBNZ should build on its existing distribution reporting by making variability easier to compare across technologies and plans. This should include simple tools such as box-and-whisker charts and greater prominence for lower-quartile outcomes where performance is materially variable.

    8.3. **Reporting needed to identify material performance issues.** MBNZ should preserve performance reporting that identifies meaningful changes or issues over time, including

[1] Commerce Commission, *2026 Review of the Measuring Broadband New Zealand Programme: Minimum Scope*, 3 July 2026.

peak degradation, material location-based differences, provider-level issues, and service disconnection rates. Service disconnection rate reporting should be measured and presented consistently across technologies, including FWA, as the primary consumer-relevant reliability measure.

8.4. **A focused, proportionate and current programme.** MBNZ should remain focused on the broadband technologies and services consumers are actively offered, and on core performance metrics. This means reporting on all 5G FWA services consumers are actively offered, removing copper reporting, and avoiding unnecessary application proxies.

9. We can support six-monthly reporting if the Commission uses the reduced cadence to improve the quality of analysis and retains flexibility to publish targeted updates where performance materially changes.

10. These improvements do not require a broader MBNZ programme. They require better use of the Commission's proposed core metrics, improved presentation of existing MBNZ data, and targeted changes where needed to ensure consumers receive clear and comparable information about the broadband services available to them.

11. We respond directly to consultation questions in the **Appendix**.

Submission

MBNZ should help consumers understand what they are likely to receive from broadband services

12. The Commission is reviewing MBNZ at an important time. Broadband technologies are evolving, consumer expectations are increasing, and consumers are evaluating services that may appear comparable on average headline download speeds, but differ materially in how consistently they perform.

13. The Commission's proposed minimum scope is a sensible starting point. The focus should now be on presenting the proposed core metrics in a way that helps consumers understand meaningful differences between broadband technologies, both now and as their digital needs evolve. That includes whether services deliver performance consistently, how performance changes at peak times, whether upload performance and latency are suitable for interactive uses, and whether reliability issues are likely to affect everyday tasks.

14. MBNZ should not promote one technology over another. Its role is to provide clear and independent information about the performance characteristics of each technology. That will better support informed consumer choice and accurate, substantiated broadband marketing claims.

15. Download speed remains important, but average download speed alone is not a sufficient guide to consumer experience, particularly where performance is materially variable. Other attributes, including consistency of service delivery, upload performance, latency, reliability and variability, increasingly determine whether a service meets household needs.[2]

16. We recommend that MBNZ adopt a more technology-first reporting structure, with provider comparisons included where material. This would help consumers first understand the performance characteristics of each technology, and then compare providers where provider-level differences are relevant.

MBNZ should make consistency and variability central to consumer comparison

17. MBNZ already includes useful distribution reporting, including distribution charts for Fibre Max, Fibre 500, 4G FWA, WISP, Spark 5G FWA, and LEO Satellite. The next phase of MBNZ should build on that foundation by making distribution and variability easier to compare across technologies and plans.

18. Average performance should not be the primary summary measure where performance is materially variable. Consumers should be able to understand what they are likely to get from a broadband service before they buy it. Where results are tightly clustered, the reported average may be a reasonable guide to consumer experience. Where results are widely distributed, average-based reporting can obscure the spread of outcomes and overstate the performance consumers can reasonably expect from the service.

19. Variability also matters because it affects predictability. The average result alone does not provide a complete picture where performance is materially variable. Consumers need to know whether performance is likely to be delivered consistently, or whether the service may be materially affected by changing network loading, signal conditions or other factors outside their control.

20. MBNZ's existing distribution reporting already demonstrates why this matters. For Fibre 500, the reported peak-time average download speed is 506 Mbps.[3] The distribution of download speed results is tightly clustered, with 86% of peak-hour tests above 500 Mbps. This means consumers

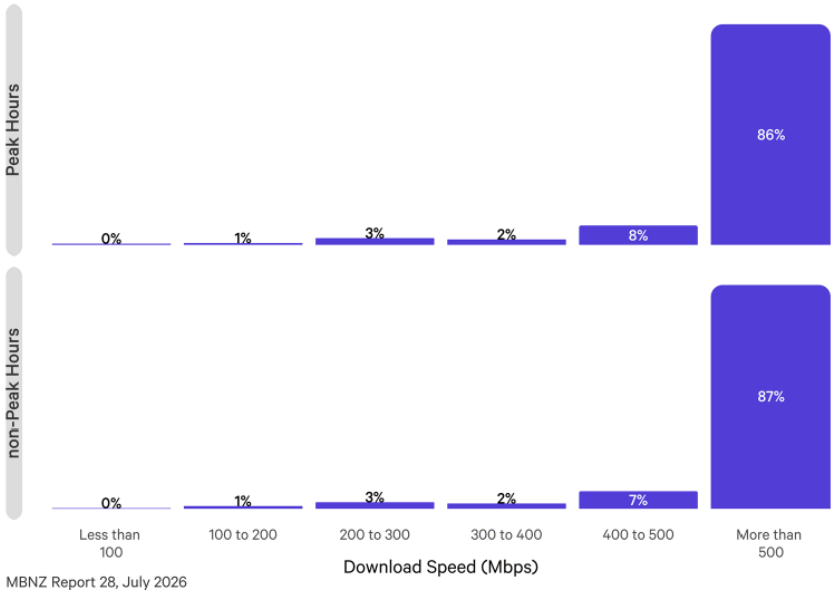
[2] For example, see Nokia, *Global network traffic report – Understanding the growing impact of advancing technologies on future networks*, 2025, at page 8.
[3] Commerce Commission, *Measuring Broadband New Zealand – Report 28*, July 2026, at Figure 1.

can have a high degree of confidence that Fibre 500 performance is consistently close to the reported peak-time average:[4]

Figure 7: Download Speeds on Fibre 500 Plans

Distribution of test results across 292 Fibre 500 households

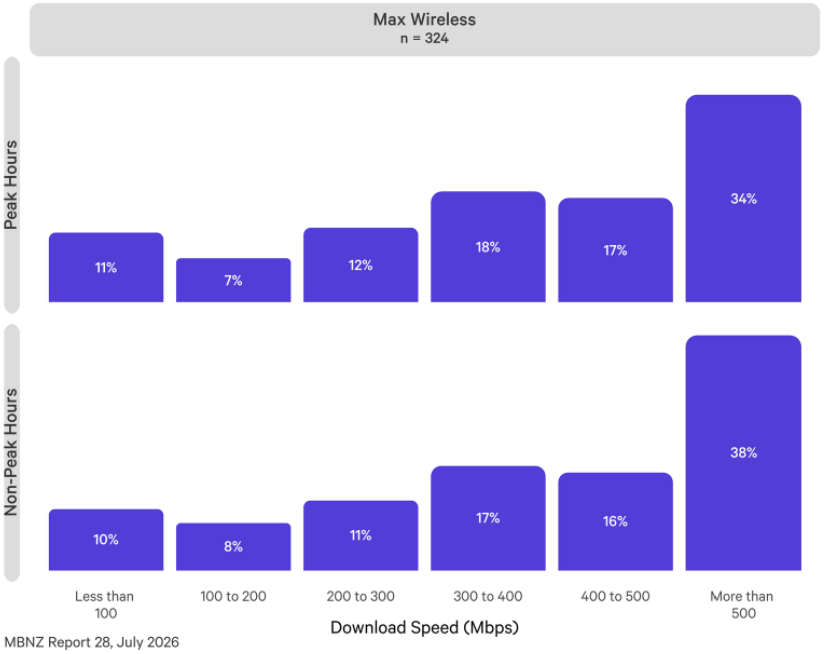
Average (24/7) download speeds for Fibre 500 plans is 508 Mbps; this varies by RSP and over time.



21. By contrast, the reported peak-time average download speed for the 5G FWA Max Wireless service is 395 Mbps, but the distribution is much wider.[5] During peak hours, 34% of tests were above 500 Mbps, while 30% were below 300 Mbps. In this example, a material proportion of results sit well below the reported average, meaning average-based reporting can overstate the performance consumers can reasonably expect from the service:[6]

Figure 11: Download Speeds on Spark Embedded 5G Fixed Wireless Plan

Distribution of download test results.



[4] As above, at Figure 7.
[5] As above, at Figure 5.
[6] As above, at Figure 11.

22. These figures illustrate why MBNZ should make variability more central to the consumer comparison. They also show why lower-quartile outcomes should be given prominence where performance is materially variable. Based on the bands shown, Fibre 500's lower-quartile performance sits above 500 Mbps, while the 5G FWA Max Wireless lower quartile sits in the 200 to 300 Mbps range. That is a material difference for consumers that is obscured where average-based measures are used as the primary summary of performance.

23. We recommend that MBNZ use simple, consumer-useful tools to make variability easier to compare across technologies and plans. These should include:

    23.1. box-and-whisker charts for key performance metrics

    23.2. lower-quartile, median, and upper-quartile reporting

    23.3. distribution diagrams where variability is material, and

    23.4. lower-percentile outcomes where this would help consumers understand typical and lower-end performance.

24. Box-and-whisker charts would be particularly useful because they can show the lower quartile, median, upper quartile, spread and potential outliers in one view. Where performance is materially variable, MBNZ should give greater prominence to lower-quartile outcomes rather than relying on averages as the primary summary measure. A lower-quartile measure would show the performance level that approximately 75% of observations meet or exceed, giving consumers a more useful and realistic indication of likely performance than an average that may sit materially above the experience of a significant proportion of users.

25. MBNZ results are also used to support broadband performance claims in the market. Where performance is materially variable, average-based reporting is a poor basis for consumer-facing speed claims because it obscures the spread of outcomes and can overstate what consumers can reasonably expect. Improved MBNZ reporting on distribution and lower-quartile outcomes would provide a stronger evidence base for future consideration of how broadband speeds should be represented to consumers.

26. This fits well within the Commission's proposed core metrics. It does not require the Commission to expand the minimum testing framework. It would make better use of the data MBNZ already collects and present that data in a way that is more meaningful for consumers.

27. Improved charts should be supported by clearer commentary. MBNZ should explain whether differences are meaningful, what they mean in practice, and how they may affect common uses such as video calls, working from home, gaming, streaming, cloud storage, content creation and multi-user households. This should help consumers understand which performance characteristics matter for their intended uses, including where variability, latency or reliability may materially affect their experience.

The proposed core metrics should be presented as an integrated consumer-facing performance picture

28. We support the Commission's proposed focus on download speed, upload speed, latency, and reliability as the core MBNZ metrics. These are the right metrics. The key issue is whether they are presented in a way that helps consumers understand what different technologies are likely to mean for their household.

29. MBNZ should avoid presenting download speed as the primary consumer comparison, with upload, latency, and reliability treated as secondary or disconnected measures. Upload performance, latency, and reliability can materially affect whether a service is suitable for common household uses such as video calling, working from home, gaming, cloud storage, file sharing, content creation and multi-user households. This is becoming more important as consumer traffic changes.[7]

[7] For example, see Nokia report above, at page 13.

30. Future MBNZ reporting should therefore integrate upload speed, latency, and reliability into the same consumer-facing comparison as download speed, particularly where differences between technologies are material. Where variability is material, MBNZ should present download, upload and latency performance using distribution-based reporting, including lower-quartile measures, rather than relying on averages. Reliability should be presented through consumer-relevant measures such as service disconnection and dropout rates, as discussed below.

MBNZ should retain reporting needed to identify material performance issues

Service disconnection reporting should be reinstated across technologies

31. Reliability should be presented in consumer-relevant terms. Packet loss may be a useful technical indicator, but we do not consider packet loss, by itself, to be an adequate consumer-facing reliability metric for MBNZ. It is not clear how packet loss will be implemented or explained in a way that is meaningful to consumers.

32. Consumers are more likely to experience reliability through whether a service drops, disconnects, or becomes unstable. Service disconnection rate reporting should therefore be the starting point for consumer-facing reliability information. The value of that reporting depends on the Commission explaining what the disconnection rate means in practice.

33. For example, the latest MBNZ report shows the LEO 100 plan had median disconnections of 0.6 per day lasting longer than 30 seconds, compared with around 0.05 disconnections per day for Fibre 100.[8] A more consumer-friendly observation would be that this is roughly equivalent to a LEO 100 household experiencing a noticeable 30 second or longer disconnection about once every two days, around 12 times more frequently than Fibre 100.

34. That type of explanation would help consumers understand what reliability differences are likely to mean in practice, particularly for uses such as video calls, online gaming, remote work, streaming and other applications where interruptions are most noticeable.

35. This is particularly important because current service disconnection rate reporting does not cover all technologies. Disconnection results for FWA are no longer included because those plans are not running the continuous latency measurement. That is an important gap, given FWA performance can vary materially by provider, network, location, signal conditions, network loading and time of day.

36. We therefore recommend that the Commission reinstate service disconnection rate reporting across all technologies, including FWA, measured and presented on a consistent basis. Disconnections lasting longer than 30 seconds are more directly meaningful to consumers than packet loss because they indicate an interruption consumers are likely to notice.

37. Concerns about the impact of continuous latency-based testing on wireless networks should not result in FWA being excluded from service disconnection rate reporting without a clearly evidenced, transparent basis and a suitable alternative. Where those concerns are evidenced, the Commission should work with providers to identify technically appropriate mitigations, such as staggered testing windows, lower-frequency sampling, or another consistent service continuity measure.

Peak degradation should remain visible

38. We support peak-period testing as the primary consumer-facing measure. Peak-period performance is the most relevant benchmark because it reflects when consumers are most likely to be using their broadband services and when networks are under greatest demand. Consumers need to understand how services perform at the times they are most likely to rely on them.

[8] Commerce Commission, *Measuring Broadband New Zealand – Report 28*, July 2026, at Figure 22.

39. However, we do not support removing all off-peak or all-hours comparison from MBNZ reporting. Peak performance is more meaningful when consumers can also understand whether, and by how much, performance changes under load.

40. Peak-to-off-peak comparison helps consumers understand whether a technology or plan is affected by congestion, whether performance issues are likely to be time-of-day dependent, and whether non-urgent uses such as large downloads, cloud backups or software updates may perform materially better outside peak times.

41. We recommend that future MBNZ reports retain some measure of peak degradation compared with off-peak or all-hours performance. This could be presented simply, for example as the difference between all-hours and peak-period outcomes, for technologies or plans with material peak-to-off-peak differences.

Geographic reporting should remain available where material

42. The Commission proposes national-level reporting as the minimum and treats rural/urban breakdowns as not necessary. We accept that national reporting may be appropriate as the minimum where sample sizes do not support robust geographic splits.

43. However, the Commission should retain geographic reporting where material and statistically robust. Rural/urban or other geographic analysis remains important for monitoring the digital divide, understanding location-based performance differences, assessing FWA, WISP and satellite performance, and informing future policy and investment decisions.

44. Further, consumers in rural, regional or non-fibre areas face different technology choices from consumers in urban areas. Where performance differs materially by geography, consumers should not have to rely on a national average that may not reflect the likely performance of the services available to them.

45. If geographic reporting is too detailed for the main consumer report, we recommend including it in an appendix or targeted supplementary report.

Fibre reporting should retain sufficient provider-level transparency

46. The Commission proposes reporting fibre by speed tier, and removing RSP-specific reporting. We agree fibre performance is generally consistent, and speed-tier reporting may be proportionate where there are no material provider-level differences.

47. However, the future programme should retain enough provider-level visibility to identify material RSP-specific issues where they arise. Fibre performance experienced by consumers can be affected by RSP-specific factors, including retail network provisioning and network configuration.

48. There is precedent for MBNZ identifying provider-level performance issues. In 2022, the Commission noted that MyRepublic's Fibre Max peak-hour speeds had increased by 27% since the previous report, describing this as an example of how MBNZ can incentivise providers to improve performance.[9]

49. We support simplifying the main consumer presentation where there are no material provider-level differences. However, the Commission should retain provider-level fibre analysis in the background, and report provider-level results where material differences or performance issues are identified. This transparency helps maintain incentives for RSPs to address provider-specific performance issues where they arise.

[9] Commerce Commission, *Latest MBNZ results highlight choices for gamers and bandwidth hogs*, 18 August 2022.

MBNZ should remain focused on current consumer choices

FWA reporting should reflect the services consumers are actively being offered

50. We support the Commission's proposal to continue reporting 4G and 5G FWA services by RSP. FWA performance can vary materially by provider, network, location, signal conditions, network loading and time of day.

51. The future MBNZ programme should ensure FWA reporting reflects the services consumers are actively being offered, including 5G FWA services offered by mobile network operators. It is not acceptable for MBNZ to report on only one 5G FWA service where other 5G FWA services are being actively marketed to consumers.[10] The Commission should treat this as a priority because consumers need independent, comparable evidence of how these services perform before they can make informed choices.

52. Sample size should be addressed through clear caveats, improved recruitment and, where appropriate, alternative information-gathering approaches, rather than resulting in no visibility for services that are material to consumer choice. Where samples are emerging or limited, MBNZ could report results on a clearly caveated basis while continuing to encourage greater Whitebox uptake. The Commission could also consider seeking relevant performance information directly from providers, subject to an approved methodology and appropriate safeguards.

Copper should be removed from reporting

53. We recommend copper should be removed from MBNZ testing and reporting.

54. Copper is a legacy broadband technology that is in the process of being retired. Continued inclusion in routine consumer-facing reports risks signalling that copper remains a mainstream long-term option, when MBNZ should focus on technologies that are relevant to current and future consumer choice.

55. Removing copper from reporting may also free up MBNZ scope to strengthen reporting on current technologies, including 5G FWA services consumers are actively offered.

Testing should be to the router

56. We strongly support the Commission's proposal to continue testing to the home/router rather than to consumer devices.

57. MBNZ should measure the broadband connection to the home in a way that is comparable across technologies. Device-level testing risks conflating access-network performance with in-home factors such as Wi-Fi quality, router placement, building materials, device capability, device age, mesh configuration and household setup.

58. In-home performance is important, but it is a separate consumer issue. Given the number of household-specific variables involved, it is difficult to see how MBNZ could test in-home performance in a way that produces consistent, comparable, and useful information for consumers. These issues are better addressed through separate consumer education, rather than being incorporated into the core MBNZ technology comparison.

Application proxies should not be part of the minimum programme

59. We support the Commission's proposal not to include application proxies as minimum requirements.

60. Application proxies can appear consumer-friendly, but they add complexity and risk confusing consumers without careful interpretation. They may be affected by factors outside the

[10] Noting Commerce Commission, *Measuring Broadband New Zealand – Report 28*, July 2026, at page 7: "*…The 5G Fixed Wireless results presented in this report are specific to Spark. As each RSP has different fixed wireless infrastructure, these results should not be directly compared between RSPs.*"

broadband access service, and can become outdated as applications and consumer behaviour change.

61. That is not to say application-specific information is never useful. However, where the Commission is defining a minimum programme, the focus should remain on robust underlying performance metrics that are comparable across technologies and useful across a range of current and future applications.

62. We recognise that streaming may become more important as consumer reliance on internet-delivered television and video content increases. If the Commission considers streaming or other application performance requires further attention, we recommend targeted thematic studies rather than including application proxies as minimum MBNZ metrics.

Reporting frequency

63. The Commission proposes moving from quarterly to six-monthly reporting. We can support six-monthly reporting as a minimum if the Commission uses the reduced cadence to improve the quality of MBNZ analysis, presentation and commentary.

64. Six-monthly reporting may reduce administrative burden and may be proportionate where performance is relatively stable. However, the Commission should retain flexibility to publish targeted updates where:

    64.1. performance materially changes

    64.2. a new technology or provider becomes significant

    64.3. FWA sample coverage materially improves

    64.4. a material provider-specific issue is identified, or

    64.5. consumer information would otherwise become stale.

65. If reporting is less frequent, it should be more insightful.

Appendix: Responses to consultation questions

Commission question	Chorus response
Q1. Do you agree that peak-period results should be a requirement?	Yes. We support peak-period testing as the primary consumer-facing measure because it reflects when networks are under greatest demand and when consumers are most likely to experience performance degradation. However, MBNZ should retain some comparison with off-peak or all-hours performance so consumers can understand whether, and by how much, performance changes under load. That comparison helps identify whether performance issues are likely to be congestion-related or time-of-day dependent.
Q2. What level of geographic granularity should be the minimum for the programme?	National reporting may be appropriate as the minimum where sample sizes do not support robust geographic splits. However, the Commission should retain geographic or location-based reporting where differences are material and statistically robust. This could include rural/urban analysis where relevant to consumer choice, monitoring the digital divide, and informing future policy and investment decisions.
Q3. Do you agree with the proposed approach to incorporating different technologies into testing as a minimum?	We broadly support technology-based reporting and provider-level FWA reporting. MBNZ should focus on the broadband technologies and services consumers are actively being offered. In particular, MBNZ should improve visibility of 5G FWA services offered by mobile network operators, rather than reporting on only one 5G FWA service where others are actively marketed to consumers. Fibre may be reported by speed tier in the main consumer report, provided the Commission retains enough provider-level visibility to identify material RSP-specific issues. Copper should be removed from reporting.
Q4. Is it sufficient for the programme to continue testing "to the router," or are there alternative approaches we should consider as a minimum requirement?	Yes. We strongly support testing to the home/router as the MBNZ minimum. MBNZ should measure the broadband connection to the home in a way that is comparable across technologies. Testing to consumer devices would risk conflating access-network performance with in-home factors such as Wi-Fi quality, router placement, building materials, device capability, device age, mesh configuration and household setup. In-home performance is important, but it is better addressed through separate consumer education rather than incorporated into the core MBNZ technology comparison.
Q5. What core performance metrics should be included in the programme?	We support the proposed core metrics of download speed, upload speed, latency and reliability. However, those metrics should be presented together in a consumer-facing comparison of technology performance, rather than allowing average download speed to dominate the narrative. Where variability is material, MBNZ should present download, upload and latency using distribution-based reporting, including lower-quartile measures, rather than relying on averages. Reliability should be presented through consumer-relevant measures, in particular service disconnection rate reporting. Service disconnection rate reporting should be measured and presented consistently across technologies, including FWA, rather than relying on packet loss alone.

Q6. How frequently should results be reported as a minimum?	We can support six-monthly reporting as the minimum, provided the Commission uses the reduced cadence to improve the quality of MBNZ analysis, presentation and commentary. The Commission should also retain flexibility to publish targeted updates where performance materially changes, a new technology or provider becomes significant, sample coverage materially improves, a material provider-specific issue is identified, or consumer information would otherwise become stale. If reporting is less frequent, it should be more insightful.
Q7. Are there any additional measures, reporting, or insights that you would like to see included as part of the minimum requirements?	Yes. MBNZ should build on existing distribution reporting so consumers can better understand what they are likely to receive from a broadband service, how consistently performance is delivered, and how much performance may vary. Where performance is materially variable, average-based reporting can obscure the spread of outcomes and overstate what consumers can reasonably expect from a service. MBNZ should therefore use box-and-whisker charts, lower-quartile reporting, percentile-based reporting and distribution diagrams where variability is material. MBNZ should also: • reinstate service disconnection rate reporting across technologies, including FWA • retain peak/off-peak or all-hours degradation reporting • improve visibility of 5G FWA services consumers are actively offered • preserve provider-level transparency where needed to identify material issues, and • avoid application proxies as minimum requirements unless there is clear evidence those measures are useful to consumers and justified.