

17 October 2022

Mark Callander  
Chief Executive  
2degrees

Jolie Hodson  
Chief Executive  
Spark New Zealand

Jason Paris  
Chief Executive  
Vodafone New Zealand

***Via email:***

Dear Mark, Jolie and Jason

**Fixing Mobile Phone Service in Auckland Council Region**

For the most part, your companies deliver an outstanding service to Aucklanders. I would first like to thank you for that and for your very significant ongoing investments to improve your mobile networks.

However, during the recent mayoral campaign, for which I attended over 300 public meetings and other events, a constant source of complaint was mobile-coverage blackspots and the consequent rate of dropped calls, including in the Auckland CBD, along parts of the State Highway network and elsewhere in the wider Auckland region. Mobile coverage is vital for road safety, emergency services, civil defence, and the wider functioning of commerce in our region.

Aucklanders are right to be frustrated when mobile coverage in the city is substandard and limited. It is time to fix the remaining blackspots in Auckland's mobile network.

While not as prominent as other concerns about transport or the cost of living, concerns about network coverage were very high on the list of those raised with me. As incoming Mayor, it is my duty to raise these concerns with you and to put public pressure on you and others to improve deficiencies in your networks. It is my statutory role to provide leadership towards a vision of Auckland, which for me starts with fixing things about Auckland that unnecessarily make life harder and hold us back.

It may be that the concerns that have so often been expressed to me do not reflect the full situation across Auckland. Nevertheless, I would be grateful and so would the people of Auckland were you able to supply my office with information on what is being done to identify and address mobile-coverage blackspots (including spots with only limited coverage), and the consequent rate of dropped calls throughout the region. This would help inform me – and through me the public – of the extent of the problem and what is being done about it.

I know the government's industry-funded Mobile Black Spot Fund programme has recently enabled some upgrades in Auckland, including at Bethells Beach and Anawhata and for 10 kms of State Highway. I am also aware the Commerce Commission has powers to improve retail service quality, including in relation to service performance and availability.

But this is not enough. I am interested to know what additional support is available, and whether central government is giving you the regulatory and other support you require to address the service coverage issues in Auckland. Because Crown Infrastructure Partners have been involved in delivering the black-spot programme, I have copied this letter to them to see if there is anything they could add or contribute.

I am also very interested if any Auckland Council bylaws, policies or operations are, in your view, contributing to the problem, and your advice on what the Council or I can do as Mayor to improve matters.

I would be most grateful were you able to supply me with this information by the end of October so that we can begin to fix any significant problems before the start of the next business year. Your support will be welcomed by all Aucklanders.

I campaigned to fix Auckland – together. I welcome positive collaboration with you and would be pleased to see what we can do to make Auckland an even better place to live.

Your sincerely



Wayne Brown  
**MAYOR OF AUCKLAND**

Copy to: Graham Mitchell, Chief Executive, Crown Infrastructure Partners