



**WAIMAKARIRI COUNCIL SERVICES**

**TRANSFORMED**

**BY EXCELLENT MOBILE COVERAGE**

**"Spark's mobile network performs exceptionally well, even in the remote rural areas where traditionally network availability had proved problematic for our field staff."**

David Ayers, Mayor, Waimakariri District Council

Behind the Business

# BETTER SERVING

## THE PEOPLE OF WAIMAKARIRI

### Waimakariri is the third highest growth area in the country

Based only 40 kilometres north of Christchurch, it has experienced an influx of residents and businesses since the devastating earthquakes hit the region in 2011.

Mayor David Ayers says, Waimakariri is seen by many as the most liveable district in the country with many people, including those affected by the earthquakes, choosing to relocate to the area - its rural/urban charm, large areas of flat and fertile land and its close proximity to Christchurch make it a popular choice.

"We are seeing a lot of demand for new lifestyle builds which is bringing a number of new business start-ups to the district, while others are expanding to meet the increasing demand," he said.

"As a Council we realise the role we play in supporting this rapid growth and ensuring our services contribute to making Waimakariri a great place to live, work and play.

"We are always looking for ways to work smarter and deliver our services better and digital technology helps us to do this."

### About Waimakariri District Council

- 1 of 78 Territorial Local Authorities
- Based in North Canterbury
- Occupies 225,000 hectares
- Serves a population of 56,000
- Employs 200+ full-time staff
- Has 200 mobile device users

**"TaaS with Spark lets us adopt digital technologies with speed and as the solutions are fully managed, we don't have to worry about ongoing investments or maintenance."**

David Sewell, ICT Team Leader, Waimakariri District Council

### Enabling better communications

Keen to improve efficiency for its people working in the field, the Council saw significant benefit in switching its mobile network service to Spark.

ICT Team Leader David Sewell says that under the All-of-Government (AoG) initiative, the Council was able to select a new provider from an approved, industry-best list, removing the need for lengthy RFPs.

"It was a unanimous decision to go with Spark after testing their mobile coverage for two months and finding it performed exceptionally well, even in some of the more remote rural areas where traditionally network availability had proved problematic.

"The decision was also influenced by Spark's willingness to work with us," adds Mr. Sewell.

"Our Client Manager and the extended team of mobility experts we dealt with were extremely proactive and committed to bringing connectivity and data solutions to the table that would meet our needs today and tomorrow.

"Such as the option for our people to share a pool of data and the commitment to bringing their 4G network to the district to enable an even faster work experience."



## Connected workers, happy customers

Driving back to a nearby town to get a signal is no longer required with a network that provides ongoing connectivity in most places council staff work.

"Our water services team, whose officers were particularly inhibited while monitoring water supplies in the back hills and valleys of the district, is reporting a big improvement," says Mr. Sewell.

"So too are our rural fire and Civil Defence staff and building inspectors who are often based outside the districts towns.

"All of our field staff can now make and take calls without worrying about black spots, and can send and receive emails and access the internet from almost anywhere. It's an upgrade that is helping us to work more efficiently and respond better to our customer needs."

**Choosing TaaS from Spark means choosing a people-centred solution that is connected, flexible and secure - allowing you to efficiently and effectively deliver public services to New Zealand citizens and businesses.**

## Seamless transition

Mr. Sewell describes the switchover of its 200 mobile connections to the new network as 'seamless'.

"It's been just over six months since we moved to Spark's mobile plans and mobile network and there has been a noticeable absence of complaints from staff and customers about poor coverage.

"There's also been less need for me or my team to liaise with our mobile provider about where and when the coverage drop-outs were happening - the lights are now on and are shining very brightly."

Mr. Sewell also says that he is finding immense value in the support that the Council is receiving from its Spark Client Manager.

"He keeps an eye on usage and alerts us if we are getting close to our shared pool of data limit and if we need to buy more or adjust the plan to a higher tier to avoid any overage charges."

The Council is also now using Spark for any new mobile devices, SIMs and accessories. Mr. Sewell says it only takes a few minutes to purchase online via My Spark Digital and the order will turn up the next day. "It doesn't take IT staff out of the office or away from customers to go mobile device retail shopping," he adds.

"I have to say, TaaS from Spark is giving me and my team of three at least eight hours back in time to get on with projects that will bring even better services to the people we serve."

## The future is bright

The Council is currently focused on a mobility project that will enable its environmental health officers to securely submit key data into the Council's system in real-time via new Spark mobile tablets.

This will cut down data entry and travel time by automating the process of assessing health and safety in shops and eateries and issuing licenses on the spot.

Combined with Spark's powerful mobile network, this will offer an improved service to cafés and restaurants and higher eatery standards for those that visit.

Mr. Sewell says that the Council has plans to roll this mobile solution out to its other field teams over the next 12 months; namely its water, green spaces and roading teams so they can do things like complete health and safety forms and do asset audits, contract inspections and vehicle crossing permits on the go.

Under the AoG initiative, district councils get to see what TaaS providers and services each other are choosing, and as a result Waimakariri District Council has its eye on a number of other Spark TaaS services such as voice IP telephony and video conferencing.

Mr. Sewell finishes by saying these are fully managed solutions that can be deployed quickly and will help the Council to enable its workers and better its services to the expanding population of Waimakariri.

**If you're ready to create better connections for your customers speak to your Client Manager or call us on:**



**0800 694 364**