



THE GOVERNMENT OF NORFOLK ISLAND

MEDIA RELEASE

Norfolk high speed broadband a step closer – SPIN signs submarine cable laying contract

Norfolk Island has moved a step closer to having high speed broadband, with the signing on 30th July in Noumea of the contract for the laying of the submarine fibre optic cables. At a ceremony attended by leaders from around the region, South Pacific Islands Network (SPIN SAS) entered into a turnkey contract with Alcatel-Lucent for the deployment of a new submarine cable network linking New Caledonia, French Polynesia, and New Zealand. The network will include links to other Pacific locations, including Norfolk Island.

Rémi Galasso, Chief Executive Officer of SPIN SAS said that the signing came at the end of a two year period of technical, financial and commercial studies in cooperation with most of Pacific Island countries and territories. “This new submarine network will span 8,200 km, providing some remote territories with direct access to the global network and offering the region greater capacity”, Mr Galasso said. “When we first presented the SPIN project in April 2007, some people were quite sceptical, some didn’t believe the project was financially feasible, and others said Pacific Islands will always remain connected with satellite. We used to answer: if this trans-Pacific cable project was easy to achieve, others would have made it before us”.

“In October 2007 in Tonga, Pacific Forum Leaders highlighted the need for submarine cable for the Pacific Island region, and they have officially announced their support to the SPIN project, as a solution to improve digital connectivity of our region. I do believe that broadband access is a priority of our Pacific Island region, and the SPIN submarine cable will allow high speed Internet with an almost unlimited bandwidth for the next 25 years. More than a simple cable, the SPIN project will definitely change our life in the Pacific Islands. It will allow each country to develop its own digital plan for health, education or tourist industry. It is really a unique opportunity to bring technology to our populations”.

The signing ceremony was attended by leaders of the countries already committed to SPIN and those still considering involvement. Those attending included government leaders from Samoa, Tonga, Vanuatu, American Samoa, Wallis and Futuna, French Polynesia, New Caledonia and Cook Islands together with the General Manager of

the Secretariat of the Pacific Community. Finance Minister Neville Christian and General Manager of Norfolk Telecom Kim Davies represented Norfolk Island.

At the signing ceremony, Mr Galasso made special mention of Norfolk Island's commitment to the SPIN project. "I would like to thank the Government of Norfolk Island, represented today by Mr Neville Christian, Minister of Finance, and by Mr Kim Davies from Norfolk Telecom for their trust," Mr Galasso said. "Norfolk Island is quite unique in terms of its digital plan. I have been very impressed by your strategy in this domain, and I am sure Neville that you will be ready to share your experience (or at least part of it) with your neighbours".

Mr Galasso thanked the French Government for its support and highlighted that the practical work of building the undersea network could now begin. "This day of 30th July 2009 is really the beginning of the SPIN project, the beginning of the construction of this digital highway," he said. "We have now a lot of work to do during the next two years with the Alcatel-Lucent team, and with each country operator team, in order to make SPIN cable reality, in order to offer each Pacific Islander a broadband link up to Sydney, Auckland or Hawaii".

Neville Christian
Minister for Finance

14 August 2009



Norfolk Island & Tongan government representatives at the signing ceremony



SPIN CEO Rémi Galasso announces the contract signing