

# **AVAROA CABLE LIMITED PRESS RELEASE**

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## **COOK ISLANDS INTERNATIONAL SUBMARMINE CABLE CONNECTION ARRIVES IN RARTONGA**

*Cable comes ashore at second attempt in complex engineering operation following  
Tropical Cyclone Sarai*

*Manatua One Polynesia fibreoptic cable will connect Rarotonga to Samoa, Tahiti and  
Aitutaki*

*The 3600km cable will be Ready for Service May 2020*

**RAROTONGA, COOK ISLANDS, 9 JANUARY 2020** - Avaroa Cable Ltd has confirmed that the Manatua One Polynesia submarine cable system has successfully been brought ashore in Rutaki village, Rarotonga, Cook Islands.

The cable will provide world class international connectivity to Rarotonga and Aitutaki when it goes live in May 2020 with a capacity of up to 10Tbps

(10,000,000Mbps). It will connect Apia in Samoa, Tahiti and Bora Bora in French Polynesia, Niue and, Rarotonga and Aitutaki in the Cook Islands. Manatua will be the first submarine cable to connect the Cook Islands and also the first in Niue. The last two remaining Manatua landings will be undertaken in Tahiti and Bora Bora in French Polynesia and will be completed in January 2020. The cable was landed on Aitutaki on 14 December 2019.

The landing followed Tropical Cyclone Sarai which had created immensely difficult sea conditions over the last week requiring deep sea cable laying operations to be temporarily suspended. The meticulously planned landing operation combined over 100 engineers and support staff from SubCom, Optic Marine Group and Avaroa Cable Ltd. Despite this, the initial attempt to land the cable the previous day was aborted due to dangerous surf and sea swells. Improved conditions on the second day allowed the team to negotiate the notorious currents of the Rutaki reef passage with the assistance of divers and cable specialists, placing the cable exactly in accordance with engineering plans. Cook Islands National Environmental Service were on hand to monitor the operation.

The cable will now be connected through to the Rarotonga International Cable Landing Station being constructed by Avaroa Cable Ltd at Aroa.

Separately, cable laying vessel SubCom Reliance will continue to deploy the Manatua cable, stored in her vast onboard tanks, back to join up with the main cable, which is currently waiting around 50km off Rarotonga, and onwards to French Polynesia.

The Cook Islands Deputy Prime Minister Mark Brown led celebrations to mark the event and paid particular tribute to the support of the New Zealand Government and the Asian Development Bank, the Aronga Mana and Landowners.

**Cooks Islands Deputy Prime Minister Mark Brown** said: *“This is a truly exiting day. We stand at the dawn of a new era of telecommunications for the Cook Islands. This cable is critical to so many aspects of our future plans, from education to innovation, health to prosperity, and things not yet even invented for the benefit of our people. The list is unending. I am so proud of the work that has been led by Avaroa Cable Ltd and very much look forward to the cable going live later this year. And I also pay tribute to the unwavering support of ADB and the New Zealand government, the Aronga Mana and Landowners.”*

**Dr Ranulf Scarbrough, ACL CEO and Vice Chair of the Manatua Cable**

**Consortium** said: *“Today’s engineering operation has been one of the most demanding we have seen. Extreme sea conditions following last week’s Tropical Cyclone Sarai, along with the surf and strong currents of Rutaki passage, have combined to make this probably the most technically complex of the Manatua landings so far. The teams have worked incredibly well together and the outcome has been excellent. There is more work to do but we now have one of the most challenging aspects safely behind us.”*

**ENDS**

Photo 1 of 8:



**Details:**

Cable laying vessel, SubCom Reliance, in position off Rutaki passage, Rarotonga, Cook Islands commencing shore landing.

Photo 2 of 8:



**Details:**

Shore end team preparing for commencement of works at dawn break, Rutaki, Rarotonga, Cook Islands.



Photo 3 of 8:



**Details:**

Shore end team finalising beach cable positioning Rutaki, Rarotonga, Cook Islands.



Photo 4 of 8:



**Details:** The first cable buoy reaching land in Rutaki, Rarotonga, Cook Islands.



Photo 5 of 8:



**Left to right:**

Cook Islands Deputy Prime Minister Honourable Mark Brown; Dr Ranulf Scarbrough, Chief Executive Officer, Avaroa Cable Ltd; Mr Richard Williams, Director, Avaroa Cable Ltd;



Photo 6 of 8:



**Left to right:**

Dr Ranulf Scarbrough, Chief Executive Officer, Avaroa Cable Ltd; Ms Tatiana Burn, Chair of the Board, Avaroa Cable Ltd; Cook Islands Deputy Prime Minister Honourable Mark Brown; Landowner representatives Ms Louisa Papehia Wichman & Mr Nia Heather; Tioketai Mataipo Glassie Matata, Rutaki Aronga Mana; Acting New Zealand High Commissioner Ms Rachel Bennett.

Photo 7 of 8:



**Details:**

Te Akirata – Cook Islands Cultural group members



Photo 8 of 8:



**Details:**

Cable laying vessel, SubCom Reliance, during cable laying at Rutaki passage Rarotonga, Cook Islands.

**Further information**

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**About Avaroa Cable Ltd**

ACL is the Pacific's newest international fibre operator providing wholesale connectivity services in the Cook Islands. ACL is a state-owned enterprise (SOE) and manages the Cook Islands involvement in the Manatua Cable project and its commercialisation as an international and domestic wholesale operator. ACL has been established, and the independent board which oversees it is appointed by, the Cook Islands Investment Corporation, which is the government body responsible for SOEs. ACL's board is chaired by local business woman Tatiana Burn. Funding has been provided by the Cook Islands Government, the New Zealand Aid Programme and the Asian Development Bank. ([www.avaroacable.com](http://www.avaroacable.com))

**About the Cook Islands**

The Cook Islands is an independent democracy comprising 15 islands in the south Pacific of c.17,500 people operating in free association with New Zealand.

**About the Manatua – One Polynesia Cable**

The Manatua cable will be 3600km long connecting Samoa, Niue, Rarotonga, Aitutaki, Tahiti and Bora. The cable will be capable of operating at up to 10 tera bits per second (= 10,000,000 megabits per second) using state-of-the-art fibre optic technology, enough speed to download 300 high definition movies every single second.

**About the Manatua Cable Consortium**

The ground-breaking Manatua cable consortium was formed following the signing of an International Treaty in November 2018 between the governments of the Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa and French Polynesia. The purpose of the consortium is to build and operate the Manatua cable. The consortium comprises Avaroa Cable Ltd (for the Cook Islands), Niue Telecom, the Samoa Submarine Cable Company and Office de Poste et Telecommunications (for French Polynesia). It is the first consortium of its type anywhere in the Pacific.

**About the New Zealand Aid Programme**

The Cook Islands involvement in the Manatua Cable project has been part funded with NZ\$15m of grant funding from the New Zealand Aid Programme. ([www.mfat.govt.nz/en/aid-and-development](http://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/aid-and-development))

**About the Asian Development Bank**

The Cook Islands involvement in the Manatua Cable project has been part funded with US\$15m of loan funding from the Asian Development Bank. ([www.adb.org](http://www.adb.org))