

AVAROA CABLE LIMITED PRESS RELEASE

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FIRST EVER SUBMARINE CABLE LANDS IN THE COOK ISLANDS

Manatua One Polynesia fibreoptic cable lands in Aitutaki, Cook Islands

Cable will link Aitutaki to Rarotonga and transform connectivity on Aitutaki

The next Manatua landing will be in Rarotonga providing the Cook Islands with a new international internet gateway

Cable to be ready for service in mid-2020

AITUTAKI, COOK ISLANDS, 16 DECEMBER 2019 - Avaroa Cable Ltd has confirmed that the Manatua One Polynesia cable system has been successfully landed in Aitutaki, Cook Islands. It is the first ever submarine cable in the Cook Islands.

Engineers brought the cable ashore in a complex and skilled operation. Aitutaki is the third landing of the Manatua One Polynesia cable system and follows recent landings in Samoa, and Niue. The next landing will see the cable come ashore in Rarotonga, Cook Islands, followed by Bora Bora and Tahiti in French Polynesia in early 2020, which will complete the system.

The event is the culmination of lengthy preparations by the Manatua Cable Consortium partners in Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue and French Polynesia.

The cable will link Aitutaki to Rarotonga at up to 10Tbps (=10,000,000Mbps), from where the Manatua cable will connect to the global internet via Apia, Samoa and Tahiti, French Polynesia.

The Cook Islands Prime Minister Henry Puna and Deputy Prime Minister and Telecommunications Minister Mark Brown, lead celebrations to mark the event, which coincided with Aitutaki day.

The Manatua cable will be ready for service in Mid-2020.

Cooks Islands Prime Minister Henry Puna said: *“This is a historic moment. The Manatua cable will underpin a transformation in the connectivity of our nation, starting right here in Aitutaki. Together with the new Telecommunications Act and Competition Act, we have laid the foundations for a new era of affordable, reliable, resilient and fast connections. These will supercharge the way Cook Islanders, and our visitors, live, work and learn. This is a very complex project and I am very proud*

to see the professionalism with which it is being executed with Cook Islanders at the very heart of the work.”

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

Consortium said: *“I pay tribute to the engineers, operators, technicians and technologists that have worked with ACL to bring this fibre optic connectivity to Aitutaki. It was a challenging operation and one executed with the utmost skill. This landing in Aitutaki mark’s the half way point in the construction of the Manatua One Polynesia Cable and so far it is going incredibly well. We are confident that we will deliver a fantastic system that will transform Polynesian connectivity for many years to come.”*

ENDS



(photo1)

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; Cook Islands Prime Minister Honourable Dr Henry Puna; Aitutaki Mayor Tekura Bishop



(photo2)

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; Cook Islands Prime Minister Honourable Dr Henry Puna; Aitutaki Mayor Tekura Bishop



(photo3)

Left to right:

Dr Ranulf Scarbrough, Chief Executive Officer, Avaroa Cable Ltd; Ms Tatiana Burn, Chair of the Board, Avaroa Cable Ltd; Caren Rangi, Director, Cook Islands Investment Corporation; Malcolm Sword, Director, Cook Islands Investment Corporation; Cook Islands Deputy Prime Minister Honourable Mark Brown; Cook Islands Prime Minister Honourable Dr Henry Puna; Aitutaki Mayor Tekura Bishop; Mr Michael Henry, Chair of the Board, Cook Islands Investment Corporation

Further information

Enquiries about this news release should be made to Rebecca Tavioni on +682-56621 or by email to rebecca.tavioni@cookislands.gov.ck

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)

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)

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)