

**Final for Immediate Release**



**AVAROA CABLE LTD AND VODAFONE  
OFFICIALLY OPEN WESTERN ROUTE**

**RAROTONGA, COOK ISLANDS, 22 NOVEMBER 2022 -**

After many months of work in liaison with the Samoa Submarine Cable Company, Hawaiki Cable, Ciena and Equinix – Avaroa Cable Ltd completed the commissioning of a new route on the Manatua-One Polynesia cable system to Sydney in late September 2022.

This month, a major milestone has been achieved with Vodafone Cook Islands switching their internet services for the Cook Islands from Tahiti over to the new 'western route' of the Manatua-One Polynesia cable system to Sydney.

This will further secure trans-Pacific connectivity into the future and deliver fast, reliable broadband to local operators in the Cook Islands. It also marks a key step in the development of the Cook Islands' digital economy, with important new e-services in critical sectors such as health and education now anticipated.

**Honourable Mark Brown, Prime Minister of the Cook Islands, said:**

“The opening up of the western route on the Manatua cable system to Sydney is another significant milestone of the government’s effort in this sector. It follows on from the establishment of the Manatua Consortium, landing of the cables and the formation of Avaroa Cable Limited, the deregulation of the telecommunications sector and the establishment of the Competition Regulatory Authority.”

“This western link is a critical step towards both our country’s post-pandemic recovery and Government achieving the goals and visions of the NSDA 2020+ and the Economic Development Strategy 2030, where every Cook Islander has equal access to basic services and economic opportunities”.

**Vodafone Cook Islands CEO, Phillip Henderson said:**

“The Western Route has been in the pipeline for some time and we are pleased that Avaroa Cable has been able to secure this preferred route which enables Vodafone to procure increased capacity and connect to content and services more relevant to our customer community.

We will now be able to access improved content on our Moana TV service and offer a broader range of connectivity options for our business customers.

In conjunction with the opening of the western route, Vodafone has also increased and extended its wholesale supply agreement with Avaroa Cable. This is a significant development in improving our international connectivity with Avaroa Cable Limited.”

**ACL Board of Directors Chair, Tatiana Burn said:**

“ACL is committed to ensure service and engineering excellence for the benefit of our customers, stakeholders and the people of the Cook Islands.

We are looking forward to help grow the demand for connectivity and play a critical role in economic growth.

Special mention and appreciation goes to the CIIC Group and the Board of CIIC for their continued support.”

**Hawaiki Cable CEO, Remi Galasso said:**

“The agreement with Avaroa Cable Ltd is an important milestone for boosting international connectivity, not just in the Cook Islands, but the wider South Pacific region as well.

Submarine cable assets are increasingly seen as critical to bridging the digital divide in the Pacific Islands and provide further development opportunities to businesses and communities in remote areas.

We look forward to collaborating with Avaroa Cable Ltd to bring this vision to life, and building further on their great work transforming communications throughout the Cook Islands via the deployment of future-proof and open-access subsea connectivity.”

**Avaroa Cable Ltd CEO, Mike Schwarz said:**

“ACL is excited to have successfully achieved this key milestone and to be able to offer in partnership with Vodafone Cook Islands an important step in transforming telecommunications for the Cook Islands.

Vodafone Cook Islands have signed a 5 year service agreement with ACL which is a major commitment by Vodafone and shows their pledge to improve services to all Cook Island customers via the Manatua-One Polynesia cable.”

**ENDS**

**Further information**

Enquiries about this news release should be made to Amanda Tuatai on +682 55408 or by email to [amanda.tuatai@avaroacable.com](mailto:amanda.tuatai@avaroacable.com)

**About Vodafone Cook Islands**

Vodafone Cook Islands is a telecommunications services provider offering mobile, fixed line, broadband and a range of other telecommunications technology-based services. Controlling ownership of the business is held by Amalgamated Telecom Holdings Limited, a publicly listed company on the Fiji stock exchange. The business is 55% locally owned.

**About Avaroa Cable Ltd**

ACL is an international fibre operator providing wholesale connectivity services in the Cook Islands. ACL is a state-owned enterprise (SOE) and manages the Cooks 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 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 Manatua – One Polynesia Cable**

The Manatua cable is a 3600km long submarine telecommunications cable connecting Samoa, Niue, Rarotonga, Aitutaki, Tahiti and Bora. The cable is capable of operating at up to 10 Terabits 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 Cooks 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.