



Media release

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South Westland to receive faster broadband

Four communities in South Westland are to receive faster broadband under a new agreement negotiated by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment with broadband supplier Araneo.

The new agreement is expected to deliver significantly better telecommunications services for local businesses, residents and tourists as well as for local schools.

Customers in Haast township, Hannahs Clearing and Neils Beach will gain access to faster copper-based broadband, at speeds that are currently being delivered to urban users in other parts of the country.

Customers in Jackson Bay will gain access to faster wireless broadband, which will also become an option in the other three communities. With maximum download / upload speeds of 10 / 2 megabits per second (Mbps) respectively, the wireless broadband will also be faster and more reliable than the current satellite service.

This project is an extension of earlier plans under the government's Remote Schools Broadband Initiative to provide faster wireless broadband for the local primary schools, including Haast School which is situated several kilometres away from Haast township.

The government has now agreed to invest an additional \$150,000, which will be at least matched by Araneo, to support the construction of a microwave link between the local communities and the rest of the network. This additional funding has become available following the closure of several small and remote schools in the Westland region that had been scheduled to receive faster broadband under the Remote Schools Broadband Initiative.

Rapid, reliable internet access will deliver significant economic, educational, health and social benefits for local communities, as well as being used by the hundreds of tourists who visit the area each year.

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Background

The copper-based services will be delivered by ADSL2+ equipment that will be installed alongside the existing Chorus cabinets and at the Haast exchange. The wireless broadband services will be delivered from new WiFi coverage sites that will be located in each of the communities.

It is expected that installation of the new equipment will be completed by the end of March 2014. This timing will be weather dependent, as a number of new microwave links must be installed between Haast and Hokitika.

At present the broadband service in the Westland region is provided via a satellite connection.

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