

BAYCITY WARNS NEXT EARTHQUAKE MAY RESULT IN A COMMUNICATIONS BLACKOUT

Media release, 24 December 2007, BayCity Communications, Christchurch, New Zealand:

BayCity Communications, NZ's IPSTAR satellite broadband service operator, says that the recent earthquake in Gisborne demonstrates that satellite communications will be a vital component in re-establishing communication links in areas isolated by natural disaster such as earthquake, flooding or tsunami.

Imagine if a similar high magnitude earthquake to the one that affected Gisborne on Thursday severed a community's telecommunications links. How long might you or your business be inconvenienced – especially with the holiday season upon us? Days, weeks? How do you think you would manage without telecommunications access?

Imagine then if the one fibre optic cable that connects us to the world wide web, the Southern Cross cable, was severed by the 6.8 magnitude earthquake. How would you cope then?

Last December a slightly stronger 7.1 earthquake off the coast of Taiwan severed six of Asia's undersea fibre-optic cables and severely disrupted millions of Asians throughout China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia and Hong Kong. Telecommunications companies were forced to divert services through satellite and unaffected lines. Many businesses suffered an internet blackout that lasted up to several weeks, while the lucky few suffered severely congested internet and phone services caused by the 'technological aftershock' that reduced communications capacity to as low as 2 percent.

Without satellite communications as a dominant or back up service, if an earthquake severed our telecommunications links here, lives could be at risk without access to emergency crews.

Satellite broadband does not require any form of physical connection to deliver phone, internet or video conferencing links and can be powered from a small generator or vehicle.

According to BayCity Communications general manager Duncan Boennic, satellite broadband offers New Zealand's emergency organisations and other business or home users a virtually disaster proof alternative form of telecommunications.

"Satellite communications are less vulnerable to natural disasters than communication systems that involve landlines which can be severed by downed lines and falling trees or radio towers (cellular and wireless) that may be downed or lose their power supplies.

"Traditional communications are only as strong as the weakest link in the chain – if one line goes down, it affects everyone on that line. If one tower goes, it affects everyone with line of sight to that tower, and the link to the next tower.

"If organisations have a viable alternative to terrestrial communications in place, then it is less likely that all systems will be affected at the same time by one event," Boennic said.

The value of satellite was demonstrated this week in Gisborne where BayCity Communications largest reseller Farmside reported that satellite broadband services continued to operate as usual. Nick Cater, Sales and Marketing Director for Farmside said, "As long as the power supply to users was unaffected, they

would have had no problem connecting to the internet or email – a great way to update concerned family and friends while land and cellphone services could have been overloaded.”

“The mounts used to attach the IPSTAR satellite dish to a building carry a structural design rating of 1525 Pa, meaning the dishes are designed to withstand a factored wind speed of approx 180km per hour. This means that the equipment will generally be able to withstand most earthquakes where the epicentre is not in the immediate vicinity.”

About BayCity Communications: www.baycity.co.nz

BayCity Communications is the National Service Operator for a range of satellite based communication products throughout New Zealand, including broadband internet, Voice over IP and satellite TV. BayCity Communications has exclusive access to the IPSTAR telecommunications satellite in New Zealand and is contracted to provide New Zealand service providers with a range of wholesale bandwidth. The IPSTAR satellite was launched in 2006 and is the largest two-way communications satellite of its kind.

About Farmside: www.farmside.co.nz

New Zealand's leading rural communications provider, Farmside provides rural and provincial Kiwis with access to the telecommunications services they need to improve productivity, save time and enjoy a better lifestyle. The Farmside rural broadband network covers all of New Zealand, offering broadband access regardless of distance from an urban centre, isolated location or challenging topography. Farmside is New Zealand's primary IPSTAR satellite service provider, with several thousand farmers and other rural dwellers connected to its rural broadband service. With over seven years experience in rural telecommunications including satellite, wireless, landline and mobile solutions, Farmside has a Head Office in Timaru and a network of staff and contractors throughout the country.

Farmside Ltd and BayCity Communications Ltd are both part of the BayCity Group, www.baycity.co.nz

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