



SATELLITE BROADBAND BREAKS PRICING BARRIER FOR RURAL CUSTOMERS

Media release, 10 June 2008, Christchurch, New Zealand: New Zealand-wide satellite broadband wholesaler BayCity Communications has announced the launch of a new nationwide broadband service under the Rocket Broadband brand. Rocket Broadband is available to consumers for the first time at the National Fieldays in Hamilton, where it will be promoted by partners and resellers of the company.

BayCity's group managing director, Tony Baird, describes Rocket Broadband as a complete product offering designed to make broadband services accessible and affordable for every resident in New Zealand regardless of where they live. He says the company has a strong alignment with rural communities and is very excited to be able to reduce the cost of rural broadband at a time when so many other products and services are increasing in price.

While rural New Zealand is a key market for Rocket Broadband it is also positioned to appeal to other sectors such as lifestyle block owners and others not satisfied with the performance they receive from traditional broadband.

"For the first time, we are now able to offer people outside of traditional broadband coverage a complete solution from \$49.95 month.

"Until now, there has been some resistance in the rural community to the pricing of satellite, which of necessity had to include the cost of the satellite equipment for each install. This has been a substantial capital cost for either the reseller or end user to bear.

"Thanks to the positive results of negotiations with Thaicom, who own the IPSTAR satellite and supply us with the required satellite equipment, we are now able to offer an affordable entry-level price package for customers converting from dial-up, along with a heavily reduced installation cost. We believe this is a tremendous opportunity for rural New Zealanders to make the most of the opportunities the internet can provide."

Baird also commented that the current level of political interest in provision of high-speed internet to as many New Zealanders as possible has still failed to fully address the 7% of people who live beyond the reach and viability of any other networks – be they landline, fibre or wireless systems.

"Those people out of the reach of other technologies can get satellite broadband immediately, and now the price barrier has been removed, remote customers have an opportunity to access the services and information online that urban internet users have benefited from for years."

The three new Rocket Broadband pricing packages start from an RRP of \$49.95 per month, with a \$149 standard installation cost. A number of extra additional features can be 'added on' if customers want them. The previous entry-level plan pricing including the lease of the required satellite equipment was \$89.50 through Farmside Ltd, BayCity's largest satellite broadband reseller. A standard installation cost was previously around \$400.

BayCity Communications is also taking this opportunity to showcase a phone service called Voice Link with digital telephone handset that will be made available to consumers as one of the add-ons to their Rocket plan.

"Providing a phone service in conjunction with satellite broadband will open up a whole new world of options for rural New Zealand. Customers who are building new homes on lifestyle properties, on farms or in tourist locations can have satellite installed and not have the high cost of running cable etc for a land-based telephone line," Baird says.

BayCity will be making Rocket Broadband available through existing reseller channels from the beginning of National Fielddays 2008, June 11.

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