

Affordable Broadband debuts in the Chatham Islands

Locals welcome the arrival of Wireless Nation

Press release, 25 October 2012, Wireless Nation, Auckland, New Zealand: Internet service provider Wireless Nation has announced the launch of their wireless broadband service in the Chatham Islands. The network currently covers 25% of dwellings and businesses on the remote islands, which lie 680 kilometres east of Christchurch and have a population of 650.

For a \$199+GST setup fee and monthly subscriptions starting from \$45+GST, customers can access reliable broadband service. Previously, residents' only options for internet access were an extremely slow dial-up connection or a private satellite service that comes with installation and setup costs in the thousands of dollars – putting it out of reach for the majority of islanders.

“It is the ethos of our company to deliver high speed broadband solutions anywhere in New Zealand,” said Tom Linn, Technical Director and Founder of Wireless Nation. “For our urban customers that might mean fibre over cable, fibre over wireless, ADSL, or a ‘hotspot’ connection at a local café. If rural customers are out of range, we offer economical, high speed satellite service via iPstar Thaicom. With the launch of this network in the Chatham Islands, we are thrilled to bring choice and competition to one of the most isolated parts of the country.”



Wireless Nation's modern 'point-to-multi-point' network infrastructure on the islands consists of four strategically placed Wireless Access Points and a satellite 'backhaul' link to Auckland and represents an investment of at least \$50,000. Subscribers receive a small in-building wireless unit which is easier to install and configure than a satellite dish, and less prone to problems in adverse weather conditions. The localised network will also make it viable to introduce mobile phone service (via 'femtocell' technology) and locally switched Voice over IP calling technology for the first time.

Communications and Information Technology Minister Amy Adams and Chatham Islands Mayor Alfred Preece recently announced a grant under the Rural Broadband Initiative (RBI) to help secure better connections and modern communications technology for the islands' three schools and the wider community. Wireless Nation responded to a Request for Information (RFI) on improving connectivity in the region and outlined how extending the existing Wireless Nation network to the schools could be easily achieved.

“Enabling remote communities to benefit with broadband access is a good feeling; we're proud to have supported the Ministry's efforts in finding innovative technical solutions to ensure the Chatham Islands didn't get left behind in the RBI roll-out,” continued Linn. “We have employed the latest wireless technology available to deliver affordable and reliable broadband connections despite a very remote location.”

“For me, satellite was just too expensive,” said Waitangi township resident and Wireless Nation customer John Griffiths. “If I wanted to do simple tasks like browser searching or sending emails, I would have to suffer with hopelessly slow dial-up or go to the office. Now with Wireless Nation I can do things like placing grocery orders online and they get packed and shipped immediately – no more faxing to Timaru. It's good value for money.”

Local technician Ross Morrison is doing all of the in-home installations for Wireless Nation in the Chathams. "The world is online. This is our opportunity to 'leap frog' straight to wireless technology and leave hard-wired and dial-up systems behind," said Morrison. "Plus, Wireless Nation has been very professional to deal with, from Tom to the phone support team. I believe the service will be a huge hit in this community."

The initial trial has indeed proven so popular with residents that the company is planning a second stage roll-out to link dwellings in Kaingaroa and Owhenga that are not currently covered, which would bring connectivity to 50% of Chatham Islanders.

About Wireless Nation

Established in 2005, Wireless Nation is a telecommunications service provider offering broadband internet services to every New Zealander. The company provides a variety of connectivity options including Kordia's extend wireless network, ADSL/copper cables, fibre over wireless, fibre over cable, or satellite, as well as in-building and "hotspot" systems.

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