

Norfolk Island Regional Council

MEDIA RELEASE

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HAWAIKI SUBMARINE CABLE PROPOSAL FOR NORFOLK ISLAND

Council at its meeting on Wednesday passed the following motion:

‘That in acknowledgement of the economic benefits to Norfolk Island of having access to fibre optic broadband internet connectivity, Council requests the General Manager as a matter of urgency –

- 1) To provide the Federal Minister Senator the Hon. Fiona Nash with detail of the benefits of fibre optic broadband internet connectivity versus satellite; and of the benefits that can flow to Norfolk from the cable connection that would not also be provided by the NBN Co satellite already available on Norfolk Island;
- 2) To request the Commonwealth Government to take a leading role in creating a commercial partnership between itself and the Norfolk Island Regional Council to connect to the Hawaiki submarine cable; and
- (3) To explore and present options at the next extraordinary council meeting for the Norfolk Island Regional Council to secure funding for a branching unit to be attached to the Hawaiki cable to allow Norfolk Island to be connected in the near future.’

The next extraordinary council meeting is on Wednesday 28 September 2016.

‘The Hawaiki fibre optic broadband proposal was discussed with Senator Nash when Council met with her last Friday’, Mayor Adams said, ‘and by letter to me on Wednesday the Senator has requested Council provide her with further detail on the proposal including a business case setting out the parameters of the project, the implementation arrangements and risks, and the expected benefits to the Regional Council and the Norfolk Island community. Senator Nash has now been provided with a copy of the Hawaiki “Proposed Scope and Offer” from Hawaiki detailing the contractual model – including finance, build and operation – proposed by Hawaiki to Norfolk Island; a draft Supply and Installation Agreement; and a paper detailing the ‘Advantages of Cable over Satellite’ requested by the Senator at our meeting.’

There are three options for connectivity on the table for consideration and discussion with the Commonwealth –

- Option 1: A Branching Unit
- Option 2: Branching Unit + marine survey for the Spur
- Option 3: Spur

Option 1 - The minimum requirement to allow for connectivity to Hawaiki is to install a Branching Unit (BU) onto the Hawaiki cable system during its implementation. Once the Hawaiki cable is completed, it will not be possible to install a BU, as this would require cutting the cable.

Option 2 – The vessel performing the marine survey will be in Norfolk Island waters by early November 2016. This would require Norfolk to obtain the survey in time from the Australian Authority ACMA.

Option 3 – The spur to Norfolk Island could be built at the same time and in the same implementation program as the Hawaiki cable which is planned to be Ready For Service (RFS) in June 2018.

‘Council has formally sought from the Commonwealth leadership and financial security, preferably for option 3, but if this is not possible, option 2,’ the Mayor said.

Benefits to Norfolk Island

In writing to Senator Nash, the Mayor has pointed out the following:

‘The commercial opportunity that Hawaiki offers in terms of facilitating the creation of a new clean & green, but vibrant industry is indeed very rare.

In terms of opportunity to gain the leading-edge for Norfolk Island in the receipt, transference, and storage of data (not to speak of the myriad of other commercial opportunities that are possible from this level of technology at “our fingertips”) is exactly what Norfolk Island has so desperately needed - a means by which our tourism industry can deal with its inevitable and seemingly cyclical fickleness, whilst another less fickle but more opportunistic and dynamic industry ensures the Island's economic sustainability into the future.

Furthermore, not only is this the very kind of “clean & green” industry that is most desirable in this pristine environment, it is also the kind of industry development with its almost endless commercial possibilities that is the perfect fit to encourage the many, many academically-enhanced locals to return - lots of high-end jobs emerging as the industry expands.’

Robin Adams
Mayor

23 September 2016