

Palau has high speed broadband internet connection

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With the Belau National Museum providing a backdrop for a historical moment, Palau has joined the world of telecommunications connected by a fiber optic cable in a “switch on” ceremony attended by the Palau national leadership including the traditional leaders. The fiber optic connectivity to the outside world is a first for Palau after 20 years connected to a system of earth orbiting satellites.



President Tommy E. Remengesau Jr presses down the switch on button to mark Palau's fiber optic cable system connectivity.

“This is indeed a historical milestone for the republic of Palau. Tonight all of us is taking a giant leap forward, really to keep up with the advancement and the development of telecommunications with the rest of the world,” President Tommy E. Remengesau said.

“Obviously we have to work hard on every infrastructure needs of the Republic, but when it comes to telecommunications this was indeed a infrastructure that was very much needed and is very important for the development and continuing development of Palau into the future,” said President Remengesau who pressed a symbolic red button to officially connect Palau to the fiber optic cable system.

The high speed broadband connection linking Palau to the internet cable hub in Guam was supported with two ADB loans totaling \$25 million is finally live, after the loan agreement was executed in March 2016.

It was reported at the launching event that the fiber optic cable was delivered ahead of schedule and under budget.

“This is a formal project milestone that defines the date from which commercial services are available on the BSCC submarine cable network,” BSCC said in a statement issued earlier.

A noticeable increase in internet speed has been experienced the past few days before the ceremony.

“The higher speed and super low latency now possible is demonstrated in this mobile speed test from Airai using a 4G connection yesterday. This is world class mobile broadband right here in Palau, right now,” BSCC CEO Robin Russell said in his blog on Nov. 24.

After years of slow and intermittent connection with the satellites connection, the connection will no longer drop out because of rain fade.

“Before BSCCnet came into the picture, routers ultimately delivered the data traffic from my phone line (both voice and internet) to satellite earth stations, where they were beamed up to an orbiting (closer) or geostationary (further, but better in the rain) satellite, and then back to an earth station where the data joins the global IP (Internet Protocol) network,” Russell further said.

According to BSCC, Palau can now see evidence of the switch from satellite to submarine fibre optic, with speeds of 72 Megabits per second (Mbps) downloading on 4G mobile. DSL connections have also started to hum along, with download speeds of up to 2 Mbps and very significant latency reductions. Latency is the time taken for data to travel from the user’s device to a target server and back. Less latency means a better quality connection, less need for caching and improved network efficiency. Before BSCC, satellite enabled DSL connections were recording latency of around 300 milliseconds. Latency has now dropped to 44 milliseconds on a DSL service in Airai.

“The arrival of high speed broadband is the latest milestone of the North Pacific Regional Connectivity Investment Project which will boost Palau’s international connectivity, linking the North Pacific to larger markets all over the world,” said James Lynch, Deputy Director General of ADB’s Pacific Department.

Mr. Lynch added that the new submarine cable system will deliver affordable, accessible, and faster internet allowing for improved delivery of government, health, and education services.”

BSCC CEO Russell in his blog added that local users can access cloud based applications or stream videos or movies.

“There will be no more loss of service when it rains. As Palau’s Retail Service Providers adjust their products to utilize the high speed bandwidth now available we can expect to see further service improvements,” he further added.

A presentation of the first buoy commemorating the June cable landing and different types of cable utilized for BSCC net and maps showing where the different types of cable used were handed to Belau National Museum for keep.

Source: <https://www.pacificnote.com/single-post/2017/12/07/Palau-has-fiber-optic-connectivity>