Shire of Cocos (Keeling) Islands

MEDIA STATEMENT
$2.8M UPGRADE TO TRANSFORM TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACROSS THE COCOS (KEELING) ISLANDS

The Shire of Cocos (Keeling) Islands has welcomed the Australian Government's announcement of almost $2.5 million in funding to deliver a major $2.8 million upgrade to the Islands' telecommunications infrastructure, improving mobile communications and strengthening the community's resilience during emergencies.

The funding, provided through Round 4 of the Australian Government's Disaster Ready Fund, will support a project valued at approximately $2.8 million, including a contribution of almost $300,000 from the Shire.

The project represents a significant investment in the future of telecommunications across the Islands and will build upon the Shire's existing 4G data network to provide mobile voice, text messaging and improved data services.

The upgrade will include improvements to existing communications towers on Home Island and West Island, a new emergency communications tower on Direction Island, two purpose-built communications huts, upgraded telecommunications equipment and backup power generation at key sites.

Once completed, the upgraded network is expected to provide communications coverage across more than 95 per cent of the Cocos (Keeling) Islands, significantly improving connectivity for residents, visitors, businesses and emergency services.

Shire President Cr Isa Minkom welcomed the announcement, describing it as an important milestone for the community.

"This is fantastic news for the Cocos (Keeling) Islands and represents a significant step forward in improving telecommunications services for our community."

"Reliable communications are something many Australians take for granted, but for a remote community such as ours, they are particularly important, especially during emergencies."

"This project will not only strengthen our ability to prepare for and respond to natural disasters but will also provide broader benefits for residents, local businesses and visitors through improved mobile communications."

"On behalf of the Council and our community, I would like to sincerely thank the Australian Government, particularly the Minister for Emergency Management, the Hon Kristy McBain MP, for recognising the importance of this project and supporting the Shire's efforts to improve telecommunications across the Islands."

"I would also like to acknowledge our Federal Member for Lingiari, Marion Scrymgour MP, for her ongoing advocacy and support for improved telecommunications and emergency preparedness across the Cocos (Keeling) Islands."

Shire Chief Executive Officer Matthew Scott said the funding would allow the Shire to progress a substantial upgrade to its existing telecommunications infrastructure.

"The Shire has invested considerable resources in establishing and maintaining our existing 4G data network. While this network has provided an important service to the community, the ability to deliver reliable voice and text messaging services has remained a key objective."

"This funding provides an opportunity to build upon our existing infrastructure, rather than continuing to invest in ageing equipment, while significantly improving the network's capability, coverage and resilience."

"Importantly, the upgraded network will incorporate additional infrastructure and backup power systems designed to improve its reliability during severe weather events and other emergencies."

"There is still considerable work ahead in progressing the detailed design, procurement and delivery of the project, but this announcement is a very positive step forward."

The Shire also acknowledges and appreciates the support and assistance provided by the Administrator of the Indian Ocean Territories, Farzian Zainal, the National Emergency Management Agency, the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts, and the Department of Fire and Emergency Services throughout the application process.

The Shire looks forward to working with the Australian Government and relevant stakeholders to progress the project and will provide further updates to the community as planning and implementation proceed.

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