

**COMMUNITY REGIONAL OUTREACH PILOT PROGRAM (CROPP)
APRALO at the Pacific Islands Chapter of the Internet Society (PICISOC)
Annual Conference, PacINET 22 – 25 SEPTEMBER 2014**

APRALO REPRESENTATIVES

Holly Raiche, Internet Society of Australia and member of the Leadership Team, ALAC; Ali Al Meshal., Bahrain Internet Society and Vice Chair APRALO. *(Holly and Ali arrived in the Cook Islands in time to attend the second day of the two day Conference workshops, and attend both days of the two day Conference)*

THE EVENTS

On 23 September, both Holly and Ali participated in a workshop on ICANN. Holly gave a presentation, followed by discussion, on the background and development of ICANN, up to and including the NTIA. Save Vocea Vice President for Stakeholder Engagement for Australasia and the Pacific Islands talked about the existing ICANN structure and the ALAC structure within ICANN. Ali then presented and led the discussion on ALAC, how it works, its structure, role and responsibilities, and policy issues currently being discussed.



The conference was officially opened on Wednesday, 24 September by the Minister of Telecommunications Mark Brown. The opening was preceded by a traditional call of welcome by a young warrior as the guests were ushered into the meeting house where the conference was to be held.



The presentation team with the Minister of Telecommunications



Holly gave a key note address that critiqued the draft Telecommunications Act for the Cook Islands from a user perspective. The two most critical aspects of the Act will be the effectiveness of the proposed competition regime and the extent to which the users will be consulted in its development and implementation, and the effectiveness of the universal service regime in providing affordable broadband throughout the islands. Copies of her

presentation and slides will be provided to the Crown Law Office for their consideration.

Ali's presentation and discussion about the Bahrain Internet Society looked at its projects and activities and how the Society is engaging with its members and the larger community through its outreach and capacity building activities.

ACHIEVEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

- **Leaders Obtain First Hand Knowledge of the Internet Environment of a Developing Country**
- **Meet with Officials and Discuss Issues of Concern**

The attendance varied from session to session, but overall the attendance included 31 government officials, 18 NGO/private sector participants, and 15 overseas presenters as well as many members of the local communities (the population on Rarotonga is 9000).

The conference provided many opportunities including conference sessions, session breaks and conference events for dialogue with government officials, NGO and private sector representatives and community members.

One of the very important issues facing the Internet community in the Cook Islands is the lack of reliable, affordable broadband. Everyone, including Holly and Ali, experienced first hand about the difficulties of communications for a conference, particularly remote participation in a conference without reliable broadband. The issue was also addressed in two presentations during the conference on the provision of broadband through satellite technology (proposals by O3b and Kacific) and the discussions that followed, as well as the more informal discussions with members of the community.

Conference participants also shared ideas and suggestions with the community on possibilities of e-Government and meeting the communications needs of people with disabilities as well as those in outer island communities.

- Provide the PICISOC Community with an awareness of ICANN and APRALO
- Increase Participation of the Cook Island Community within ICANN Activities



Clearly, the conference participants and community became aware of ICANN and APRALO both through Holly and Ali's presentations, but also through the more informal discussions held throughout the Conference.

Brochures covering ICANN and APRALO were also available, and distributed during the Conference.

Because of internet connectivity issues (common throughout the Pacific), the Conference was taped and relevant sections can be used by the community to ensure the Conference messages are available for those who were not able to

participate. Details of the conference were highlighted through the local press and on national TV (videoed items are available if required)

localNEWS niuri riro foto i te IPUKAREA

Internet role in development discussed

AN AROUND conference is underway this week in Koroheke which hopes to increase the role the internet plays in the development of the nation's economy.

Hosted by the government of the Cook Islands, the I-NET conference (the I-NET 2014) is co-organised by the Cook Islands Internet Action Group (I-AG) and the Pacific Islands Chapter of the Internet Society (PICISOC).

Over 100 local stakeholders and a number of overseas officials gathered at the Palapaka Hotel for the second day of the conference, which focused a session on improving internet accessibility.

"The internet is everywhere," said Chair Hassan Hilgard of the Pacific Islands Chapter of the Internet Society (PICISOC) Board, who's based in Koroheke and works for the Ministry of Internal Affairs. "What we're doing today is developing an IT policy that's far-reaching."

Throughout the week, a number of workshops will be held that hope to improve understanding here the internet works, its importance to our economy and how come in equipping the internet could be reduced.

Travelling from the Middle East and its attendance was Ali Almoskhal, who represents Asia and the Pacific region for ICANN - a global internet multi-stakeholder organisation.

Almoskhal - who also works as the Director of the Digital Services Unit - made a presentation on his organisation and its role in advocating the interests of individual internet users.

Looking ahead, he said there is room for greater participation amongst the public, academia, and government entities in the Pacific to advance the technology needs of the region.

Talia, a member of Koroheke residents from America will be making a session.

Later this week, workshops will be held on the role of the internet in health and education sectors, as well as looking at the development of the internet in the Pacific region. Regional updates, country showcases, and a panel discussion are also scheduled.

The conference concludes this Friday.

Web conference discusses accessibility

CONSIDERING the internet is accessible for all members of society was part of the focus yesterday at a working conference organised yesterday in Koroheke.

Cheryl Lohrbach, Director of the Board at the Internet Society of America, was on hand at the I-NET conference (Pacific Islands Chapter of the Internet Society) which focused a session on improving internet accessibility.

At yesterday's session, Lohrbach said a number of tools are available to help people with disabilities access the internet, including video captioning software, tablet devices, responsive hardware such as a large screen, and "voice text" - which works for the visually impaired.

Cheryl Lohrbach said it was vital for training programmes to be available both in English and in Maori.

Additionally, policymakers must consider physical accessibility.

People with disabilities, as well as an awareness of existing facilities.

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to work together towards common goals.

"Local and online have already working coming from this workshop," she said.

The I-NET conference continues today at the Palapaka Hotel.

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McLeod Pearls of Manihiki
Grand Opening TODAY
Wednesday 24 Sept 2014
Monday to Friday
9am to 4:30pm
Sited in Manurewa
In front of Cook Is News Building
Come and check us out