

ABC Rural Report

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By Matthew Brann,

Improved broadband for the Kimberley

Towns and remote communities in the Kimberley will soon have access to an improved broadband service under a new \$6million project.

The upgrade is a State Government initiative with the development to be headed by communications firm NewSat Limited.

Vice president of sales, Michael Kenneally admits the service is targeted at businesses rather than individual consumers.

"The early adopters of the service, some of them will have their infrastructure paid for in the towns, but the satellite dishes and the satellite modem that you link in with after the first round of people in the towns, will have to purchase those and then buy bandwidth".

The good news for pastoralists is that for a reasonable price, they too can tap into the service.

Shane Bailey from Luluigui Station says his children are very reliant on the internet for school of the air, and will definitely be looking to upgrade,

"They (the kids) do courses on there everyday, and they use downloads, videos and they take a lot of pictures and things like that, so I think so (we'll get an upgrade). Our kids have learnt a great deal in the last few years since the internet has come on board" he said.

Nigo Botha runs Beefwood Park Station and says he uses the internet to research markets.

"The internet that we have now is slow but efficient, so I'm happy".

Jane Bosward is in charge of the bookings and reservations for Home Valley Station where tourism is the main source of income.

"The internet plays a big role, we have a lot of contact with people from overseas, Europe mainly, that want to book with us. Sixty per cent of our bookings would be over the internet" she said.

"I have to say that I do appreciate the fact that we've got this communication with the rest of the world, although with the age of our technology I do find that some days it's just not fast enough".

The development is expected to be finished by 2008.