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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Avaroa, BW Digital, Ciena, and Vodafone Cook Islands
Team Up to Provide Internet Connectivity in Schools**

RAROTONGA, Cook Islands – 21 September 2023 – Avaroa Cable Limited ([ACL](#)), [Ciena](#) (NYSE: CIEN), [BW Digital](#), and Vodafone Cook Islands ([Vodafone](#)) are working together to improve connectivity for students in the Cook Islands’ 30 schools for the next three years (2023-2026).

The initiative is in collaboration with the Ministry of Education Cook Islands (MoE) and leverages existing Hawaiki (now owned by BW Digital) and Manatua submarine [cables](#). Ciena’s support includes the installation of Ciena [5160](#) Service Aggregation Switches in the Cook Islands and Sydney to accelerate delivery of connectivity services. Ciena will also cover all costs for ongoing maintenance and support services for the duration of the project.

With some Cook Islands’ schools previously solely reliant upon satellite services for internet connectivity, significantly those in the Pa Enuu (outer islands), they could not meet the service demands required for today’s learning needs. Connectivity was often slow or unreliable due to high usage, especially during school hours. This makes it difficult for students and teaching staff to access online resources and communication platforms that require high bandwidth capacity. The switch to submarine cable-based broadband connectivity for Rarotonga and Aitutaki from satellite services will enable a better and more stable user experience across all education premises, supporting the Cook Islands’ educational institutions as they embrace digital learning.

“Having improved and strengthened connectivity for our schools will revolutionize the teaching and learning experience for each of our education sectors. We are seeing more and more of our teaching and assessment opportunities being digitized or delivered online and having a dedicated and sustainable platform for our schools including our tertiary and vocational providers will mean we can confidently continue to deliver a quality education system. The MoE looks forward to working more closely with our ACL, BW Digital, Ciena and Vodafone Cook Island colleagues to ensure all



considerations have been successfully applied to allow for a seamless transition when ready,” said Danielle Tungane Cochrane, Head of Ministry, Ministry of Education Cook Islands.

“ACL is proud to work with our partners on this initiative which supports the Cook Islands Government’s policy for ICT in education to assist in creating a skilled workforce and facilitate social mobility. Effectively, this CSR project will strengthen ICT integration in education, which can yield multiple benefits; enhancing student learning through online platforms and digital devices; providing opportunities for students and learners living in isolated communities, improving the capacity of teachers to utilize ICT in the classroom, and improving the efficiency in which schools deliver education services. E-learning programs will enable students and teachers living in the Cook Islands most isolated communities to gain quick, easy access to education that would otherwise not be so economical,” said Mike Schwarz, Chief Executive Officer, ACL.

“Connecting the Pacific Islands via submarine cables is no easy task. This collaboration is an important step forward to help improve digital connectivity for the next generation of Cook Islanders and is testament to the tenacity and mutual goodwill of all the teams involved in this important project,” said Ivan Polizzi, Regional Managing Director, Ciena Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific.

Ludovic Hutier, chief executive officer of BW Digital said: “Pacific Islands’ connectivity has been at the heart of Hawaiki cable since its inception. We are proud to participate in this initiative, which will further bridge the digital divide in the South Pacific and empower Cook Islands students to learn and grow in a mature digital environment.”

Hutier added that submarine cables have become a fundamental enabler of socio-economic progress across the Pacific, citing the groundbreaking [HoloCampus 3D telepresence learning platform](#) launched four years ago in American Samoa. “The Cook Islands’ project is a perfect example of what we can accomplish when technological leaders join forces to better serve our community.”

“Vodafone Cook Islands has been a long-standing strategic partner with the Ministry of Education and has keen investment interest in the future of education in the Cook Islands. With the increasing shift towards ed-tech and online learning, it has been a pleasure to work closely with the MOE, Avaroa Cable and Hawaiki Cable to bring this initiative of delivering improved internet capacity to the MOE and all the schools in the Cook Islands,” said Phillip Henderson, Chief Executive Officer, Vodafone Cook Islands.



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About Avaroa

Avaroa Cable Limited (ACL) provides wholesale international and domestic inter-island connectivity in the Cook Islands on an open-access and non-discriminatory basis. ACL is a licensed operator under the Cook Islands Telecommunications Act 2019 and is regulated under the Competition Regulatory Act 2019. The company is wholly owned by the Government of the Cook Islands and is overseen by an independent board appointed by the Cook Islands Investment Corporation.

About BW Digital

BW Digital develops, funds and operates digital infrastructures in the Asia-Pacific region. It is the owner of the 15,000km Hawaiki submarine cable network, connecting Australia, New Zealand, American Samoa, Hawaii and Oregon, on the US west coast since 2018. For more information, visit www.bw-digital.com.

About Ciena

Ciena (NYSE: CIEN) is a global leader in networking systems, services, and software. We build the most adaptive networks in the industry, enabling customers to anticipate and meet ever-increasing digital demands. For three-plus decades, Ciena has brought our humanity to our relentless pursuit of innovation. Prioritizing collaborative relationships with our customers, partners, and communities, we create flexible, open, and sustainable networks that better serve all users—today and into the future. For updates on Ciena, follow us on [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), the [Ciena Insights blog](#), or visit www.ciena.com.

About Vodafone Cook Islands

Vodafone Cook Islands is the leading telecommunications services provider in the Cook Islands offering mobile, broadband, fixed line and a range of other telecommunications technology based services across all inhabited islands. The Company also provides these community services on behalf of the Government - Pa Enea services, broadcasting support services, marine radio services and postal services.

Note to Ciena Investors

You are encouraged to review the [Investors section](#) of our website, where we routinely post press releases, SEC filings, recent news, financial results, and other announcements. From time to time we exclusively post material information to this website along with other disclosure channels that we use. This press release contains certain forward-looking statements that are based on our current expectations, forecasts, information, and assumptions. These statements involve inherent risks and uncertainties. Actual results or outcomes may differ materially from those stated or implied, because of risks and uncertainties, including those detailed in our most recent annual and quarterly reports filed with the SEC. Forward-looking statements include statements regarding our expectations, beliefs, intentions or strategies and can be identified by words such as "anticipate," "believe," "could," "estimate," "expect," "intend," "may," "should," "will," and "would" or similar words. Ciena assumes no obligation to update the information included in this press release, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise.