

6.30pm
Thursday 31 August 2006



Rt Hon Helen Clark
Prime Minister

Address at launch of REANNZ
Research and Education Advanced Network
New Zealand

Human Sciences Building
University of Auckland

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Today's launch of the Advanced Network is a red letter day for New Zealand's research community, and for New Zealand's economic transformation which must be driven by innovation.

Last year our Government launched the New Zealand Digital Strategy.

The strategy aims to establish New Zealand as a world leader in using information and communications technologies to lift productivity and reach our economic, environmental, social, and cultural goals.

The Government's \$43 million investment in the Advanced Network (now known as KAREN, or the Kiwi Advanced Research and Education Network) is an important part of both the Digital Strategy and our overall strategy to transform New Zealand's economy and society.

Access to state of the art information and communication technologies is crucial for world leading research and innovation emanating from New Zealand.

New Zealand is known as a nation which produces not only high-quality primary products, but also world leading products and services across communications, software, biotechnology, niche manufacturing, and tourism, and the creative industries.

We established our reputation for innovation and quality over many years of commitment to science and research and development.

But we can't stand still. A commitment to innovation across the economic sectors fuelled by knowledge and technology will give us the competitive edge we need in the 21st century.

And this, of course, is where the Advanced Network comes in.

This super-high-speed link will, in time, help us improve our research capability and our capacity to collaborate over distance with other innovators.

It will help multidisciplinary research to thrive and make new research fields viable.

The speed and power of this new network towers over what is available commercially. This network gives connections at speeds

up to 40,000 times the speed of conventional broadband between main centres.

The international connections this network enables match the connectivity of other advanced networks around the world.

Put simply this Advanced Network is a huge leap forward for New Zealand science and research. Without it, I do not believe we could keep the international edge we have, even in our areas of greatest strength. That's what has justified this very large investment of public money.

It enables us to catch up with the forty plus other countries which already have an advanced network of this kind.

As of yesterday afternoon, nine of the eighteen foundation members of the network had signed formal contracts.

More are eagerly anticipated. The reality is that our universities and Crown Research Institutes cannot do without it.

The National Library is eligible for membership, and many other institutions will be able to use it as associates or through partnerships.

It now gives me very great pleasure to formally launch the Advanced Network, and acknowledge the contribution it will make to science, research, and innovation in New Zealand.