

PACIFIC ISLANDS REPORT

*Pacific Islands Development Program/East-West Center
With Support From Center for Pacific Islands Studies/University of Hawai'i*

SOLOMONS GOVERNMENT TO SEEK THIRD TELECOM

Open competition encouraged since end of monopoly

HONIARA, Solomon Islands (Solomon Times, Nov,1 2010) – The Solomon Island's National Telecommunications Commissioner, Nick Williams, has announced the government's intention to offer a third mobile license before the end of 2010.

In a speech given at the Australian Solomon Islands Business Forum in Brisbane, Mr. Williams said that the regulator intends to open the market up to a new operator to join Solomon Telekom which enjoyed a monopoly until the passing of the Telecommunications Act 2009.

In December 2009 Bemobile was awarded a second license, and went on to launch its commercial services last month.

During the forum in Brisbane, Williams said from 1 April 2011 there would be a full liberalization of the telecoms market.

He also highlighted the need for fully-fledged internet service provision in the country. Williams noted that there is a clear demand for internet connectivity, but thus far the supply has been poor, in terms of both availability and speed.

"This is a clear opportunity for investors, and we would welcome them," said Mr. Williams.

Williams also revealed that a project is underway to bring a fiber-optic submarine cable connection to the Solomon Islands.

Meanwhile a communications specialist, Adisa Banjanovic, says that any government that seeks to improve communication networks in its country will see general improvements in its overall economic performance.

"Mobile phones help to bridge regional divides between urban centers and rural peripheries, by providing consumers in remote areas with reliable access to information and vital services."

Mr. Banjanovic also stated that the spread of mobile telephony "greatly improves the business environment, especially in developing countries where fixed telephone infrastructure is inadequate."

"Efficient and reliable communication is key to improve access to market data, facilitate trade, lower the costs of doing business and save time."

[*Solomon Times*](#)

Copyright © 2010 Solomon Times. All Rights Reserved