

20 October 2009

## **Public libraries winning awards for hooking up Kiwis with free broadband**

The Aotearoa People's Network Kaharoa (APNK) has picked up two nation-wide awards for its part in offering free broadband access at public libraries and helping the blind and vision impaired access the internet.

APNK is a collaborative effort between the National Library and public libraries of New Zealand. Free internet access through APNK is available at Buller libraries in Westport and Reefton.

APNK won the LIANZA (Library and Information Association of New Zealand Aotearoa) 3M Award for Innovation in Libraries. The award recognises libraries taking an innovative and entrepreneurial approach. LIANZA conference members from across New Zealand voted for the winner.

APNK has also won the Extra Touch Award, presented by the Association of Blind Citizen's of New Zealand. The award recognises an outstanding contribution towards an improvement in access or service to blind and vision-impaired people and recognised APNK adding 'Magnifying Glass' and NVDA (Non Visual Desktop Access) to the computer software.

APNK aims to make broadband free and easily available in every public library across New Zealand. The APNK manages a network of over 500 computers in 119 public libraries, involving 39 local authorities.

“The benefits of the APNK are becoming clear for the community. Lots of different people are coming into the libraries to access the service, and as a result are becoming more confident computer and library users” says Margaret Garland, Manager APNK”.

“It is good to see library use increase by a wider demographic of people because of these services in both Westport and Reefton” comments Mayor Pat McManus.

Buller district libraries at Westport and Reefton in cooperation with Grey and Westland libraries were part of the first libraries nation-wider offering this service for their communities.

“Searching the web for information, connecting with friends and families, learning and creating digital content has become an integral part of library services in the digital age” says Buller District Librarian Michaela Bodesheim. “We feel extremely lucky to have APNK in our libraries. It has added so much more value to our knowledge economy.”

Find out more [www.aotearoapeoplesnetwork.org](http://www.aotearoapeoplesnetwork.org)

**ENDS**



---

**Further information; Michaela Bodesheim: District Librarian  
Buller District Council (03) 788 8030**