

Newcrest partners with Telstra to deliver O3b high-speed broadband for remote Lihir gold mine

Newcrest has partnered with telecommunications and technology company, Telstra, to become the first gold miner in the southern hemisphere to deliver O3b's high-speed broadband through its new 100 megabits per second (Mbps) satellite link to the Lihir gold mine in New Ireland Province, Papua New Guinea.

The new medium-earth-orbit (MEO) satellite link, which has increased bandwidth to Lihir by over 600 per cent, is the result of a partnership between Newcrest, Telstra and satellite service provider O3b Networks.

"Newcrest is proud to make use of this innovative new service to significantly improve the network experience at Lihir", said Chief Information Officer, Gavin Wood. "As well as enabling better IT and digital solutions for our operation, the new link will help to make Lihir a better place to work and live for our workforce," he said.

The Lihir operation was previously subscribed to 6Mbps and 10Mbps geostationary satellite links 36,000 kilometres above the earth's surface, which didn't provide the high speed and lower latency Newcrest was looking for at this large site. Previous attempts to address the problem through microwave links and submarine fibre optic cable proved unviable, given Lihir is about 200km from the provincial capital, Kavieng.

"This new satellite link utilises medium-earth-orbit technology, approximately 8,000 kilometres above the earth's surface and delivers fibre-like bandwidth and speed to remote locations. The speed is similar to that experienced in major centres like Port Moresby," said Mr Wood.

"Any mining company claiming it wants to be a leader in the application of digital technologies cannot be serious about that without first delivering quality network connections to their sites," said Mr Wood.

Executive General Manager Cadia and Lihir, Craig Jetson, said that the Lihir workforce and community members were already benefitting from the improved technology.

"This new satellite service has provided us with the opportunity to access technologies that are reliant on high bandwidth platforms. This further streamlines our operations, making us more efficient and cost effective," said Mr Jetson.

"Under the agreement, Newcrest's Wide Area Network service will be extended by Telstra via a constellation of MEO satellites. This new satellite service is an exciting addition to Telstra's world-class network and will see enhanced connectivity delivered to more remote locations around the world," said Jim Clarke, Telstra's Director of Global Connectivity and Networks.

"Providing reliable connectivity for remote work sites like mines or oil rigs is no longer a nice to have – it's operationally essential," said Steve Collar, CEO of O3b Networks.

More information on how this new satellite service is supporting Newcrest's digital transformation activities and keeping their employees better connected can be found on the Telstra Exchange: <http://tel.st/Newcrest>.

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Photos and captions

Photo 1: Newcrest's Lihir gold mine in New Ireland Province, Papua New Guinea

Photo 2: Members of the team who worked on the O3b project to improve network performance at Newcrest's Lihir gold mine, with the new satellite terminal equipment in the background.

Source of photos: Newcrest

For further information please contact

Newcrest, Australia

Anna Freeman
Senior Adviser – Media
+61 3 9522 5548
+61 417 033 752

anna.freeman@newcrest.com.au

Telstra

Michael Zappone
Group Manager, Corporate Media Relations
+61 438 004 959

Michael.Zappone@team.telstra.com

Newcrest, Papua New Guinea

Peter Aitsi
PNG Country Manager
+675 321 7711
+675 321 7735

peter.aitsi@newcrest.com.au

O3b Networks

Jason Wauer
pr@o3bnetworks.com