



AARnet provides the technology backbone to support Asia Pacific Pandemic initiative

APAC Health organisations prepare for global epidemic

AARNet, Australia's Academic and Research Network, today announced it is providing the high bandwidth technology backbone for the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Emerging Infections network (EINet) initiative. The aim of the initiative is to bring together countries across the region to build a network of people and resources to manage quickly and effectively the outbreak of a health epidemic, much like the SARS outbreak of 2003. Chris Hancock, CEO of AARNet said, "Medical scientists believe we are overdue for a global flu epidemic, so the aim of the APEC EINet initiative is for APAC members to be ready as a region to handle any large-scale health crisis that occurs.

"AARNet will provide a 10 gigabit broadband Internet connection to facilitate the online community required to manage and disseminate the information needed to coordinate a rapid response following an outbreak and support the protection of populations the region in the event of an epidemic."

During a health crisis, countries will often quarantine themselves to contain the spread of an infectious outbreak. As health professionals and researchers from neighbouring countries cannot access the area of confinement, it has restricted the level of support they could provide in the past. The APEC initiative will use the AARNet network to ensure that quarantined countries can still receive the expert help they require as diagnosis and support is supplied over the Internet in real time.

"The Internet has opened communication channels in all aspects of modern society with healthcare one of the greatest beneficiaries. The APEC initiative is a prime example of how broadband Internet is being used to bring communities together.

"By connecting infectious disease healthcare specialists online throughout the region, knowledge can be easily shared, databases accessed and medical images distributed, providing the assistance needed without putting additional health workers and countries at risk," said Chris Hancock.

About AARNet

AARNet Pty Ltd (APL) is the company that operates Australia's Academic and Research Network (AARNet). It is a not-for-profit company limited by shares. The shareholders are 37 Australian universities and the CSIRO.

AARNet provides high-capacity leading edge Internet services for the tertiary education and research sector communities and their research partners. AARNet serves more than one million end users who access the network through local area networks at member institutions.