

Media release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dignitaries show support for Far North families at Computers in Homes graduation

However 100,000 Kiwi families with school-aged children are still waiting for access to ICT for their education...

37 Far North families celebrated today at a Computer in Homes graduation attended by the Honourable John Carter, National Party MP for Northland, Kelvin Davis, Te Tai Tokerau Labour candidate along with other local dignitaries.

Through the national Computers in Homes programme, local families are provided with computers and internet access along with training, skills and support to use this technology, via their local schools.

The programme brings computer technology within reach of all New Zealand families with school-aged children and allows parents and grandparents to connect with their children's learning.

Computers in Homes estimates more than 100,000 New Zealand families with school-aged children in low income communities still don't have a computer at home. The organisation is in Kaitia today to both celebrate local achievements and raise awareness of the programme to encourage government and business to scale up their support.

"We are encouraged by the level of support from local community leaders that will be present today. We do hope regional celebrations such as the Far North's will encourage the Government and businesses to expand their support for the programme to ensure it gets the funding it needs to connect the other 100,000 families in New Zealand without a computer and the internet," said Computers in Homes' National Coordinator, Di Das.

Ms Das says New Zealand's 2006 Census results reinforce the need for funding and support to establish and develop Computers in Homes into a national programme and policy.

“47% of households with school-aged children in the Far North District have no access to ICT for their education, according to the 2006 Census. This is compared with 13% of households in the North Shore City,” Ms Das says.

“This region ranks 69th for internet access out of 73 districts in New Zealand. Computers in Homes have helped to connect some of these Far North families but there are many more here and across the country who are waiting to be included,” she says.

The programme started in 2000 and has already supported more than 4,000 New Zealand families with recycled computers, six months of free internet access, computer training and technical support, via their local schools.

Parents receive 20 hours of basic computer training including word processing, emailing and using the internet, conducted at their children’s school or a local community hub.

The training is aimed at empowering parents to become actively involved in their children’s learning, as well as increasing their own employment opportunities and confidence. Results from the programme have included employment success and continued education. Ms Das says the programme has also seen a number of parents actively engaging with their school for the first time.

“We receive numerous emails of thanks from participants in the programme. It opens up a whole new world of opportunity for families who participate.” Ms Das says.

Computers in Homes is an initiative of the 2020 Communications Trust with support from the Ministry of Education and the Government’s Digital Strategy Community Partnership Fund. The 2020 Trust is looking for funding and support to expand Computers in Homes to all low income communities where children do not have access to computers and the Internet in their homes.

For a visual representation of internet access needs across New Zealand see the attached map. For further information visit www.computersinhomes.org.nz.

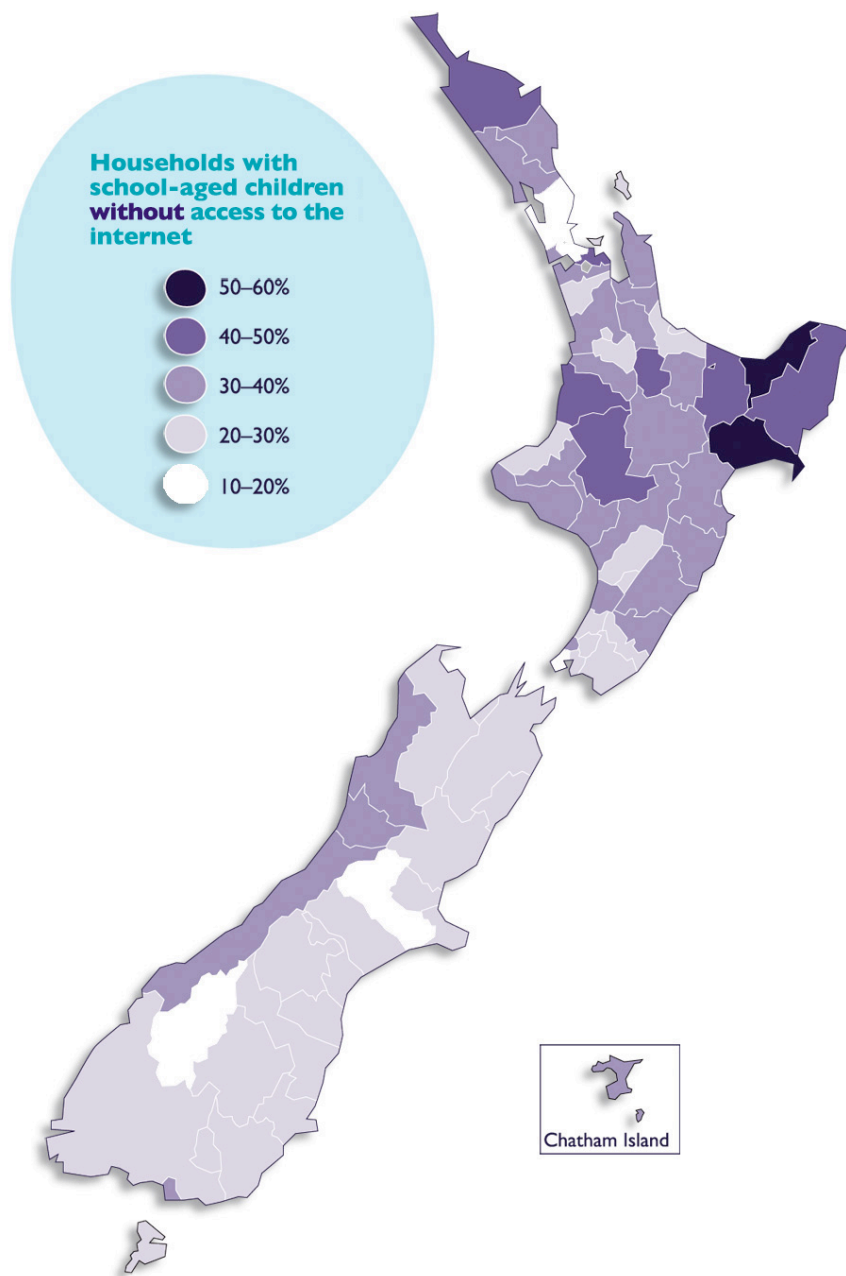
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*Source: Statistics New Zealand 2006 Census



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