



## Media release

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# \$1.6 million technology boost for East Coast Families

**750 East Coast families will benefit from a large proportion of the \$1.6 million Government grant to New Zealand's Computers in Homes programme.**

Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector, Hon Winnie Laban, today (Friday 5 October) launched the second round of funding from the Government's Digital Strategy Community Partnership Fund, at Gisborne's Awapuni School – the first East Coast school to participate.

The grant enables Computers in Homes to help schools provide computers, internet access and computer training to selected families in Ngati Porou, rural Gisborne and Wairoa.

Over 400,000 New Zealand Households don't have a computer. Computers in Homes National Co-ordinator, Di Das, estimates that more than 100,000 of these households are low-income families with school-aged children.

"Our aim is to empower families to become active participants in the online world. The funding is a real win for East Coast families and provides them with access to technology they wouldn't otherwise be able to afford, and the support necessary to succeed" she said.

The programme started in 2000 and has already provided 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.

The programme focuses on strengthening links between families and schools to lift education levels of children and parents in low income communities.

Parents receive 20 hours of basic computer training including word processing, emailing and using the internet, conducted at their children's school. The training is aimed at empowering parents to become actively involved in their children's learning, as well as increase their own employment opportunities and confidence.

Results from the programme have included employment success, upskilling and promotions in current employment, and continued education in more advanced computer courses. Ms Das said the programme had 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 with some parents completing university degrees and other qualifications in teaching, social work, computing and the arts,” Ms Das said.

“More importantly the programme strengthens that important link between the children, their family, and the school,” she concluded.

Computers in Homes is run by 2020 Communications Trust. Schools and families interested in the programme are advised to visit [www.computersinhomes.org.nz](http://www.computersinhomes.org.nz).

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