

# Planned \$7m fibre optic cable a connectivity boost for KI

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SA Power Networks will construct a 150-kilometre fibre optic cable connecting Kangaroo Island with the mainland in a bid to boost connectivity for the local community.



Red Banks Beach, Kangaroo Island. Photo: South Australian Tourism Commission/supplied

Steve Shotton, Director of Regional Development for Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island, advised the \$7 million project would be a boon for residents.

Announced today, the fibre optic cable will utilise undersea fibre cores built within a 15-kilometre undersea 33,000 Volt power cable installed in 2018 to connect Kangaroo Island with Cape Jervis on the Fleurieu Peninsula.

Installation of the cable, which will connect SA Power Networks' operations centre in Keswick to Kingscote substation, is underway and is expected to be completed by July 2024.

SA Power Networks hoped the project would improve the management of electricity supply to KI, and enable the transformation of the telecommunications sector for local households and businesses.

Shotton mentioned that many South Australians would probably take fast internet for granted at this point, but that KI residents are yet to be connected.

"The island is classified as remote and until this fibre gets connected they're reliant on microwave technology," Shotton said.

"That technology provides capacity issues but also reliability issues and there's no backup. If that goes down the island is without internet.

"The island is remote and it's felt remote to live there because of below-par internet and mobile phone coverage."

Shotton said the SA Power Networks project would bring KI up to speed.

"What will happen in due time with this fibre is that mobile phone coverage and NBN coverage and availability get better," he said.

"That flows through to internet consumers on the island - whether it's visitors, residents, businesses or government services. So there's a lot of benefits all around."

Shotton added the cable would bring significant benefits.

"RDA has been advocating for a fibre optic connection to Kangaroo Island and this is great news," he said.

"The connection has the potential to provide the Island and western Fleurieu Peninsula with greater mobile phone coverage, faster and more reliable internet, and access to cloud services - all of which will be a boon for residents and tourists, health and education providers, government, industry and businesses."

SA Power Networks said it was currently negotiating with telco businesses offering them the opportunity to utilise the fibre optic cable to deliver improved services for their customers on the island.

Words: David Simmons