

Emergency Communications to Find Missing Tramper Provided by IPSTAR

On June 3, 2008, Wellington Land Search and Rescue (WLSAR) received a report that a Polish tourist tramper had not returned for the past 3 days from a day trek in the Rimutaka Forest Park, New Zealand.

The Situation

With very limited information available on the trek, and with 3 cold and wet nights had elapsed, WLSAR immediately launched a search operation to find the missing tramper. Urgently within that day, the Hutt Valley Emergency Management Office (HVEMO) was contacted to provide communication equipment, and other assistance and services for the search operation. The team immediately deployed IPSTAR at the HVEMO headquarters and in the forest park.

Emergency Communications via IPSTAR

IPSTAR was used for 4 consecutive days at the Rimutaka Forest Park. It enabled weather, transportation, mapping and forensic information to be remotely accessed via satellite broadband Internet. IPSTAR established email and satellite phone links to the police investigation team assisting the search operation. Moreover, the satellite platform was used to download large aerial photographs of the forest park provided by the Hutt City Council's Land Information Services.

"IPSTAR allows us to have complete communication facilities. It gives us internet and phone coverage in places where we would otherwise be completely out of touch", said Dave Jack, Senior Emergency Management Adviser of HVEMO.

Designed to push satellite Internet into the mainstream of broadband access, IPSTAR offers affordable bandwidth and rapidly deployable user terminals for emergency communications – anywhere, anytime under its extensive footprint. IPSTAR is the only satellite designed for high speed communications over an IP technology to facilitate seamless two-way broadband connectivity. The satellite solution provides interoperability between networks, broadcasting services, last mile connectivity and Ku-band mobile communications whenever terrestrial infrastructures are unavailable.

IPSTAR Proves its Real Worth

"While the search ended tragically for the tourist tramper, who was found dead in the forest park a week after he went for a day trek, the IPSTAR system showed its real worth. It's a fantastic system that greatly enhances our emergency response capability", said Dave.



About HVEMO

HVEMO carries out the emergency management, civil defense and rural fire responsibilities in Hutt City, and works in coordination with other emergency management organizations throughout New Zealand.

About Rimutaka

Rimutaka Forest Park is situated in the hills between Hutt Valley and Western Wairarapa in New Zealand. The 22,000 hectares forest park is remotely located east of Wellington, the capital city of New Zealand. Steeps, bush-clad hills, narrow fern-filled valleys, freshwater creeks and streams surround the entire area of the Rimutaka Forest Park.