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The representatives from seven German companies led by Iris Heinz, Head of DEInternational Projects and Services for the German-New Zealand Chamber of Commerce Inc. (third from left), outside the Office of the Prime Minister. 25121228

German companies explore green energy partnerships in Cook Islands

A delegation of seven German companies specialising in renewable energy, environmental monitoring and infrastructure resilience recently visited the Cook Islands to explore opportunities for collaboration on sustainable energy solutions tailored to island communities. Talaia Mika reports.

LED by Iris Heinz, Head of DEInternational Projects and Services for the German-New Zealand Chamber of Commerce Inc. (GNZCC), the visit follows three years of groundwork and relationship-building aimed at bringing German expertise in decentralised renewable systems to the Pacific.

For Heinz, the recent visit was her fourth to the Cook Islands, but the first time she had returned with a delegation of German companies.

"I'm very honoured to be here again," she told Cook Islands News. "It's the first time with a delegation of German companies."

The delegation spent three days in Rarotonga and continued on to Aitutaki for two days.

According to Heinz, the key distinction of this group was that all seven companies operate in the environment and renewable energy space.

"This is a project we've been working towards for the last three years and the result is that we have seven well-known international companies from Germany here in the Cook Islands now and it's amazing what they can bring."

Heinz said the technologies the companies offer are particularly suited to smaller markets like the Cook Islands, where decentralised systems and scaled-down technologies are required.

"Now it's a smaller market, you need decentralised systems for smaller appliances, for smaller technologies."

Beyond technology, Heinz

said the visit was also about Germany better understanding the Pacific region, while offering the Cook Islands opportunities to work towards long-term environmental protection.

"What they can bring here for the Cook Islands, I think it's a really good opportunity for us in Germany to understand the Pacific region much better but of course for the Cook Islands hopefully that we can work together on keeping this beautiful paradise for our children and grandchildren as well."

According to Heinz, the visit delivered in partnership with the German-New Zealand Chamber of Commerce focused on listening first.

"Understanding what Rarotonga and the Pa Enua really need in terms of power reliability, infrastructure security, costs and resilience to storms and outages," she says.

From there, the aim is to co-design sustainable systems that reduce diesel dependence, strengthen critical infrastructure, lower emissions and support healthier environments and local economies.

Among the companies in the delegation was TriOS Analytics Oceania, represented by Eike Breitbarth.

TriOS manufactures optical sensors used in the water industry, environmental monitoring, energy and marine applications.

"We measure for example hydrocarbons in ports, or also nitrates, UV and algae for safe drinking water, wastewater treatment and lagoon moni-



A groundbreaking load management test conducted at Motu Beachfront Villas Resort earlier this year marked a significant step towards developing an off-grid energy solution powered by green hydrogen. The test, carried out by Cook Islands-based technology company ICTNexus, is part of a larger initiative supported by the German Chamber of Commerce and funded by the German Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation, and Nuclear Safety (BMUV). School principal of Titikaveka College Raewyn Morgan, who observed the test alongside the students, with Tai Tangaroa of ICTNexus during a system stress test in March. 25032018

toring," explained Breitbarth.

He said sustainability was central to the company's operations, with TriOS using solar and geothermal energy for its production, and expressed interest in working with local partners in the Cook Islands on water treatment for hydrogen production and water quality monitoring.

H2PowerCell Ltd., represented locally by ICTNexus directors Michael Welzel and Tai Tangaroa, is working with island communities to deliver renewable energy solutions that are practical and easy to manage.

Their approach combines green hydrogen, solar power and battery storage with smart metering, IoT monitoring, energy management, building automation, wastewater and drinking water treatment, and security systems to protect critical infrastructure and maintain essential services.

Tim Meyer of GEFELtd, the local focal point for the delegation and a business development manager for ICTNexus,

said part of the work involved supporting tourism operators to adopt more sustainable practices.

"One simple step on that journey is the installation of smart meters," said Meyer. "They help understand the actual usage, create a baseline from which we actively assist the operators to reduce their fossil fuel dependency."

Reducing fossil fuel use benefits both business costs and the environment, adds Meyer.

Timo Schusel of the Ostermeier Hydrogen Solutions said energy security and independence were key benefits of green, self-generated energy.

"In addition to the benefits of using 100 per cent green, self-generated energy, the security of electricity supply, resilience and independence from energy suppliers and thus from unpredictable cost increases is particularly noteworthy."

Schusel said his company develops, produces and implements hydrogen systems, particularly electrolyser systems,

and he wants to better understand local energy projects.

"One topic that I'm here for is to get a little bit more familiar with the XE project where I am writing a study for."

He said the aim is to increase green energy usage on the island and to explore whether the system could eventually be scaled up to achieve 100 per cent green energy.

Representing Everllence, formerly known as MAN Energy Solutions, Mikhail Skvortsov said the visit also marked the company's rebranding after 250 years.

"We were formerly known as MAN Energy Solutions and it's the first time in 250 years we've changed our name to Everllence."

Everllence is a global leader in maritime engine manufacturing and also operates in power generation. Skvortsov said one of the company's generators was already installed in the Cook Islands at Te Aponga Uira.

Everllence employs 15,000 people and operates in 140

countries, offering not only marine engines but also green solutions such as hydrogen and biogas power generation.

Justin Skaines of R&J Batteries said that his company distributed batteries across Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific, with a focus on renewable energy and energy storage.

"For the islands and for communities, for homes, it's about providing secure, safe, reliable power," he said.

According to Skaines, the main battery brand supplied by R&J Batteries comes from German manufacturer BAE Batterien GmbH, noting that lead batteries remain the most recycled product in the world.

He raised concerns about the disposal of newer battery technologies, citing discussions with the Cook Islands Port Authority about lithium batteries that cannot be shipped out for recycling.

"The main purpose of being in the Cook Islands is to develop the relationships," Skaines said, adding that meeting end users helps him better tailor solutions to island markets.

He said meetings with the Prime Minister and discussions with utilities and government departments had been productive, with more engagements planned as the delegation continues its visit.

Heinz thanked the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for its role in organising meetings during the visit, saying the reception had been overwhelmingly positive.

"We have amazing meetings. Thank you so much to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs here in the Cook Islands who have been integral to organise these meetings and how we've been received here."

The visit comes as Cook Islands works towards a goal of reaching 100 per cent renewable energy by 2030.