

# SMART ECONOMY GRANT

## SMART Economy grant to kick-start local ICT industry via Flowx weather app

The Ministry of Finance and Economic Management (MFEM) is excited to announce it has awarded a \$100,000 grant to Rarotonga-based Duane Malcolm's company Flowx Limited under the Government's SMART Economy Initiative (SMART). This major SMART grant will enable Flowx to relocate its business to the Cook Islands and expand its reach to Apple device users.

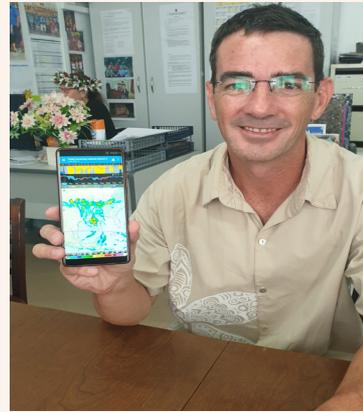
Flowx is a popular Android weather app used by 80,000 people worldwide, including pilots, sailors, farmers and photographers. Local Cook Islands users include pilots at Air Rarotonga and the Meteorological Service. The SMART grant will enable Duane to develop an Apple version of Flowx, which will essentially double its market. Flowx already has a 4.5-star rating on the Google Play Store and has been ranked among the best weather apps online by New York Times, Business Insider, Popular Mechanics, The Verge and Android Central.

Financial Secretary Garth Henderson is excited about the opportunity Flowx will bring to the Cook Islands economy. "Information and Communication Technology (ICT) applications and services play a critical role in transforming the Cook Islands into a smarter, more complex, and diverse economy," he says. "The transfer of the Flowx company from New Zealand to the Cook Islands is a real win for our emerging

ICT sector. As an already successful and growing business with exciting future prospects and a global reputation as a high-quality product, we expect Flowx will inspire other Cook Islanders to start their own ICT businesses."

Duane developed Flowx in 2012 and is now set to both expand and relocate his business home. "We started developing the Flowx android app as a side project in 2012, then when we returned to Raro in 2016 we committed more time to grow the app business. With this grant, we are able to make the big step of porting to Apple and as part of this process we are shifting our NZ-based company here to the Cook Islands," says Duane. "We also have some exciting new app features planned for the future, including a lightning detector for the Cook Islands."

Duane is of Atiuan descent and grew up in Atiu, leaving at age 13 to attend Napier Boys High School, then the University of Auckland in New Zealand. At university he chose to study Bio-Medical Engineering and went on to complete his PhD in the same subject in 2006. His



parents, Kura and Roger Malcolm, still live in Atiu and Duane, his wife Sally and two young boys Niva and Varo are now settled in Rarotonga. Duane describes how his Flowx app is unique, and how it is set up to support free access to Cook Islands users and for users in weather-related disaster regions.

"Flowx has an innovative swipe action that shows weather information for the time selected by the user. This makes it easier for people to understand the weather pattern and make better informed decisions about their intended activity, for example whether to take their boat out. Another innovative feature is OpenZones. We use OpenZones to release all weather data for free in regions where it can help people make critical decisions during a disaster, for example when a hurricane is approaching. We also use OpenZones to release all data and features for free in the Cook Islands."

SMART provides eligible businesses with financial support to make smart and productive commercial investment decisions that will accelerate the bounce back to a more complex and diverse Cook Islands economy. Encouraging more innovative and productive technologies like Flowx is key to securing these benefits, as technologies underpin industry productivity, competitiveness, and profitability.

