

## THE AFFORDABLE ALTERNATIVE TO SATELLITE

Counting down each day of a six week shift until seeing their family and friends again could soon be a thing of the past for offshore workers.

The multi-award winning Balconi Tracker is enabling isolated fly-in fly-out workers to phone home as often as they want without being restricted by massive Satellite costs - and they can even talk to their families face to face if they use Skype and a Webcam.

“The crew can put their kids to bed every night ...or their girlfriends!” laughs inventor and Managing Director of BALCONI Telecommunications Solutions, Con Michael.

The Balconi Tracker is eclipsing expensive Satellite Communications by providing a very affordable option, delivering reliable voice and data connection - at normal mobile phone prices.

“With Satellite costs continuing to rise, mobile phone rates are now 80% cheaper than satellite – so, if you have a Tracker onboard, phone calls can be made at a fraction of the cost,” says Mr. Michael.

The Tracker also allows cheaper – and faster - internet connectivity.

“Data works out to be 99% cheaper than Satellite if you use the Tracker, and with the speed of Telstra’s Next G network increasing every six months, it’s currently 225 times faster.. and that’s only going to get faster. ” said Mr. Michael.

Forced to spend so much time away from their families, the isolation and detachment experienced by offshore workers is being blamed for an extremely high divorce rate....experts say the rate of relationship breakdowns for fly-in fly-out workers is as high as 80%.

Mr. Michael says the Tracker is not only helping to bring the crew and their families closer together, it’s also a great benefit to their employees.

“The Balconi Tracker helps to keep the crew happier by connecting them to their loved ones. In turn, this enables the companies to retain a more stable workforce – at a minimal cost. Everybody wins.” says Mr. Michael.

The mobile antenna tracking system works by extending the coverage of Telstra’s Next G network up to 200 kilometres out to sea.

Various clients have already jumped on the bandwidth and installed a Balconi Tracker.

The crew onboard Farstad’s offshore support vessel Lady Grace is enjoying affordable mobile phone and internet connection. Floating oil production facility ‘Four Vanguard’, located 90 kilometres off the North West coast of WA in the Woollybutt field, will soon have data connectivity.

And as the need to cut costs escalates with the economic downturn, it’s not just the Oil and Gas Industry that’s making the conversion.

Trackers have been installed aboard the New South Wales Water Police vessel ‘Nemesis’, and luxury vessels which are currently being built in Fremantle and Queensland.

The Balconi Tracker works just as well on dry-land. The State and Federal Governments have recently purchased 30 of them to improve the communications, safety and data connectivity of the Health Departments remote health-workers.