



## AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION HONIARA

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**5 February 2019**

### **Australian Foreign Minister Payne joins Prime Minister Hou for Coral Sea Cable ground-breaking ceremony**

Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne joined Caretaker Prime Minister Rick Houenipwela in a ground-breaking ceremony to mark the commencement of the next phase of the Coral Sea Cable System construction at the cable landing station at Lengakiki.

Foreign Minister Payne, who is visiting Solomon Islands again for a two day official visit, said the Coral Sea Cable was a critical infrastructure project and historic investment for Australia in Solomon Islands.

“Australia will invest up to AUD 200 million in the Coral Sea Cable System and Solomon Islands Domestic Network. This is a tangible symbol of our ongoing commitment to the Pacific,” Minister Payne said.

“I look forward to celebrating this project’s completion – another milestone in relations between our two countries.”

Caretaker Prime Minister Houenipwela said it was an honour to mark the commencement of the next phase of the Coral Sea Cable System construction alongside Foreign Minister Payne.

“This game-changing infrastructure will be transformative for the Solomon Islands nation as a whole,” he said.

Since signing a AUD 137 million contract with Vocus in June 2018, construction of the Coral Sea Cable System and Solomon Islands Domestic Network has progressed at rapid pace. The landing station at Lengakiki will soon host a 4,700 kilometre-long fibre optic submarine cable, linking up Sydney, Port Moresby and Honiara.

Additional cable landing stations will be built for the Solomon Islands Domestic Network, which will link up the rest of the country, connecting Honiara with provincial hubs in Auki, Noro and Taro.

Submarine cable manufacture is currently underway in France in accordance with the specifications from the marine survey completed in November 2018. Installation of the cable will take place from June, with the cable scheduled to be ready for service in December 2019.



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The Coral Sea Cable will enable digitisation of government services and help drive economic development, including connecting Solomon Islanders with the global marketplace.

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