Australian Government
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

THE CORAL SEA CABLE SYSTEM: SUPPORTING THE FUTURE DIGITAL ECONOMIES OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA AND SOLOMON ISLANDS

Work is underway to lay high speed telecommunications cables from Australia to Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, including a domestic network connecting Honiara with Auki, Taro and Noro.

The Coral Sea Cable System (CS^2) will deliver faster, cheaper and more reliable communications infrastructure, affording both countries significant economic and development.

Papua New Guinea's existing undersea cable to Sydney is nearing the end of its useful life. Solomon Islands has no undersea telecommunications cable link, leaving it dependent on expensive and unreliable satellite communications.

For countries which are struggling with a number of development challenges, slow and unreliable internet connections are an obstacle to economic growth. It also hinders communities from building bridges with each other.

World Bank research has found that improved internet access and connectivity could translate into additional GDP of more than USD5 billion and close to 300,000 additional jobs in the Pacific by 2040.

As a close neighbour and friend, Australia is committed to supporting Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands to build their economies through sustainable development and resilient technologies, allowing e-governance and the digital delivery of services.

CS^2 will support Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands' development of entrepreneurship, digital skills and their further integration into the global marketplace.

It is a realisation of *Australia's International Cyber Engagement Strategy* which sets out Australia's approach to help bridge digital divides across the Indo-Pacific.

The project supports Australia's 'Step Up' in the Pacific, as outlined in the *Foreign Policy White Paper.*

Australia is majority funding the cable through Official Development Assistance, with the Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands Governments jointly contributing up to one third of project costs.

The cable will be ready for service at the end of 2019.

Above: Exploring the mobile internet, Solomon Islands.
Photo: Irene Scott/DFAT.
Left: Hohola Youth Development Centre, PNG.
Photo: Ness Kerton/DFAT.