



## AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION HONIARA

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**3 February 2020**

### **Solomon Islands Domestic Cable Network: Cable Landing Station opens in Taro**

The Honourable Prime Minister, Manasseh Sogavare, along with the new Australian High Commissioner to Solomon Islands, Dr Lachlan Strahan, visited Taro today to officially open the Taro cable landing station.

Taro is the third cable landing station in the Solomon Islands Domestic Network. The station houses the transmission equipment for the Taro portion of the Solomon Islands Domestic Network. As such, it is a vital part of the Network – a 730km submarine fibre optic cable that links Taro, Noro and Auki to Honiara, and then Honiara to Sydney via the Coral Sea Cable System.

Speaking at the event, Dr Strahan said the cable would significantly increase internet usage and allow people living in Taro to access online learning and professional development opportunities, and improved government and health services.

“As a result of the enhanced connectivity the cable will bring Taro faster, cheaper and more reliable internet than ever before,” he said.

Returning to his home province, the Prime Minister Sogavare spoke of the many benefits that the cable would bring to the people of Choiseul, and of this important collaboration with Australia.

Also in attendance were the Minister for Finance and Treasury, the Honourable Harry Kuma, Minister for Communication and Aviation, the Honourable Peter Shanel, the Member for South Choiseul, the Honourable Robertson Galokale, the Premier of Choiseul Province, the Honourable Watson Qoloni, New Zealand High Commissioner to Solomon Islands, Her Excellency Georgina Roberts, and members of the Solomon Islands Submarine Cable Company Board.

The Solomon Islands Domestic Network is part of Australia’s ongoing commitment to the Pacific, and in particular driving prosperity in regional areas such as Choiseul Province.

On 29 November 2019, once the cable construction was completed, ownership of the Coral Sea Cable was transferred to the Coral Sea Cable Company, a company jointly owned by PNG, Australia and Solomon Islands. The Solomon Islands Domestic Network is now owned by the Solomon Islands Submarine Cable Company (SISCC), and SISCC will receive all revenue generated by the international and domestic cables in Solomon Islands.

Both the Coral Sea Cable System and the Solomon Islands Domestic Network are majority grant financed by Australia and reflect Australia’s stepped up engagement in



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the Pacific. Customers are expected to be able to access better and cheaper services in early 2020.

For more information on the Coral Sea Cable System and Solomon Islands Domestic Network visit: [www.coralseacablesystem.com.au](http://www.coralseacablesystem.com.au) and [www.siscc.com.sb](http://www.siscc.com.sb).

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*Official ribbon cutting by: Chair of the Solomon Islands Submarine Cable Company, Mr Chris Hapa, Minister for Communication and Aviation, Hon. Peter Shanel, Member for South Choiseul Hon. Robertson Galokale, Minister for Finance and Treasury, Hon. Harry Kuma, Prime Minister Hon. Manasseh Sogavare, High Commissioner Dr Lachlan Strahan, landowners representative, Provincial Member for Choiseul Bay Ward Hon. Josiah Vana and Premier Choiseul Province, Hon. Watson Qoloni.*



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*Australian High Commissioner Dr Lachlan Strahan, Chair of the Solomon Islands Submarine Cable Company, Mr Chris Hapa, Prime Minister Hon. Manasseh Sogavare, Minister for Finance and Treasury, Hon. Harry Kuma, Minister for Communication and Aviation, Hon. Peter Shanel, a landowner representative, and the Premier of Choiseul Province, Hon. Watson Qoloni.*



*Prime Minister Hon. Manasseh Sogavare and High Commissioner Dr Lachlan Strahan at the official opening of the Taro cable landing station.*



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*High Commissioner Dr Lachlan Strahan speaking at the official opening of the Taro cable landing station.*



*Prime Minister Hon. Manasseh Sogavare speaking at the official opening of the Taro cable landing station.*



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*Prime Minister Hon. Manasseh Sogavare with Minister for Finance and Treasury, Hon. Harry Kuma at the official opening of the Taro cable landing station*



*Inside of the cable landing station*