



MEDIA RELEASE

15 July 2019

CORAL SEA CABLE INSTALLATION COMMENCES

A ceremony featuring a symbolic handover of a 'golden buoy' has formally marked the commencement of laying the Coral Sea Cable link to Sydney. Prime Minister, the Hon Manasseh Sogavare, and Acting Australian High Commissioner Ms Sally-Anne Vincent took part in the official handover on Monday 15 July. Senior Government officials, members of the Solomon Islands Submarine Cable Company Board, traditional landowners, and other dignitaries, were also in attendance to mark the significant event.

The ceremony followed Friday's official tour of the cable-laying ship, the *Ile de Brehat*, by the Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon John Maneniaru, Acting High Commissioner Vincent and other senior representatives last week.

The *Ile de Brehat* laid the first section of cable connecting Papua New Guinea in early July. With the ship's arrival in Solomon Islands it has begun laying the cable from Honiara to Sydney. The ship will return in September to complete the Solomon Islands Domestic Cable Network.

Prime Minister Sogavare, speaking at the event, said the Coral Sea Cable project will be transformative for the Solomon Islands, helping to drive economic development, and transforming the way that the people of Solomon Islands connect with the global marketplace.

"The arrival of the Coral Sea Cable and Solomon Islands Domestic Cable Network heralds a connected future for Solomon Islands," he said.

Acting High Commissioner Vincent said the Coral Sea Cable will bring the Solomon Islands economic and development opportunities, and shows Australia's deep and long-lasting commitment to Solomon Islands.

"Australia's investment in the Coral Sea Cable is a clear example of our step up in the Pacific," she said.

The Coral Sea Cable System and the Solomon Islands Domestic Network are on track to be ready for service by December 2019.

Further information on the Coral Sea Cable System and Solomon Islands Domestic Network can be found at www.coralseacablesystem.com.au.

Enquiries: Australian High Commission Media Unit, Phone: 21561



Caption: The Golden Buoy is passed to Prime Minister Sogavare from traditional landowners.



Caption: Hilda Kii gives thanks on behalf of traditional landowners.



Caption: Landowners at the 'golden buoy' handover ceremony