

Senator The Hon. Marise Payne

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His Excellency David W. Panuelo

President of the Federated States of Micronesia

His Excellency HAYASHI Yoshimasa

Minister for Foreign Affairs, Japan

His Excellency Taneti Maamau

President of the Republic of Kiribati

His Excellency Lionel Aingimea

President of the Republic of Nauru

The Honorable Antony J. Blinken

Secretary of State, United States of America

**JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT: IMPROVING EAST MICRONESIA
TELECOMMUNICATIONS CONNECTIVITY**

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Australia, Japan, and the United States are committed to working in partnership with the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Kiribati, and Nauru to improve internet connectivity to these three Pacific nations by providing funding to build a new undersea cable.

The proposed undersea cable will provide faster, higher quality, and more reliable and secure communications to approximately 100,000 people across three countries. This will support increased economic growth, drive development opportunities, and help to improve living standards as the region recovers from the severe impacts of COVID-19.

The new cable will connect Kosrae (FSM), Nauru, and Tarawa (Kiribati) with the existing HANTRU-1 cable at Pohnpei (FSM), providing internet connectivity through a submarine cable for the first time.

Improved connectivity and access to digital technologies can provide significant economic and social benefits and are key enablers of sustainable development. They also help increase the availability of digital government services, particularly in education and health, and provide businesses and households with improved access to services, information and trade, and employment opportunities.

This six-country collaboration highlights our commitment to work together on critical telecommunications infrastructure and contribute to reliable and secure internet for the region.

We will continue to coordinate closely with the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank to ensure this project complements investments by these institutions to enhance digital connectivity in FSM, Kiribati, and Nauru.

This is more than an infrastructure investment. It represents an enduring partnership to deliver practical and meaningful solutions at a time of unprecedented economic and strategic challenges in our region. This project builds on the strong foundations of trilateral collaboration between Australia, Japan, and the United States in the Indo-Pacific, including support for Palau's undersea cable.

It is a further demonstration of our shared commitment to quality, transparent, fiscally sustainable, catalytic infrastructure partnerships with, and between, Pacific nations. These partnerships meet genuine needs, respect sovereignty, and complement the Trilateral Infrastructure Partnership and the Build Back Better World (B3W) initiative. Trilateral partners will continue to work together to promote an open, inclusive and resilient region.