

Barton Deakin Brief: \$250 million Solomon Islands Infrastructure Funding

3 June 2019

Overview

Prime Minister Scott Morrison today announced \$250 million for priority infrastructure projects in the Solomon Islands. The announcement comes as part of a \$2 billion infrastructure fund to strengthen ties in the Pacific region.

The policy announcement will offer up to \$250 million in grant financing over ten years for national and economic infrastructure projects of critical and strategic importance in the Solomon Islands. This funding complements the [Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific](#), which will come into effect in July 2019, managed by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

The bilateral program will also conduct a cost-benefit assessment of the national transport core initiative, which would connect 74 per cent of the population in the first ten years of the project and 100 per cent of the population by 2035. 37 of the Solomon Islands' constituencies would be interconnected via new transport links in the next decade, and all fifty constituencies would be connected by 2035.

Australia will also support the Solomon Islands in the construction of a new Prime Minister's Office, a new Ministry for Foreign Affairs and External Trade Complex in the capital city of Honiara. Australia will work with the Solomon Islands on a modern design plan for the buildings, in keeping with the new vision of a transformed central business district in Honiara.

The Prime Minister and Minister for International Development and the Pacific, Alex Hawke MP also met with the Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands, Manasseh Sogavare, prior to the formal bilateral negotiations to discuss Australia's security partnership with the island nation.

Australia's other commitments to development in the Pacific

The Coalition have allocated a total of \$4 billion in **Official Development Assistance** under the **Pacific Step Up** initiative and have increased humanitarian assistance for the Indo-Pacific Region as part of foreign aid budget measures for 2019-20. Other initiatives to strengthen Australia's diplomatic ties with the Pacific, announced as part of the Coalition's 2019-20 Budget and pre-election commitments, include:

- **\$2.7 million** for labour programs such as the **Pacific Labour Scheme** and the **Seasonal Worker's Programme** to encourage workers from the Solomon Islands and the Pacific to come to Australia.



- Creation of a new **Pacific-Australia Card (PAC)** to streamline travel and access to Australia for Pacific Islanders
- Creation of an **Office of the Pacific** as part of the **\$1.4 billion** in Pacific development assistance
- **Trilateral Partnership for Infrastructure and Investment** with the US and Japan, which seeks to mobilise private investment and deliver sustainable infrastructure in the Pacific region
- Allocation of **\$4 billion** in **Official Development Assistance** for 2019-20 and increased humanitarian assistance
- Technical assistance for the Solomon Islands to help the nation develop its own **border security strategy**.
- Assistance in **upgrading existing police outposts** in the western border region.
- Deepening collaboration between churches in the Pacific and through the **Church Partnerships Program**
- **\$84 million** for a six-year investment into an Australia-University of the South Pacific partnership to support tertiary education needs in the Pacific
- Creation of new **scholarships** for Pacific students to study in Australian secondary schools and in the Technical Vocation sector
- A **Sport's Linkages Program** with Fiji, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu.
- Partnership with PNG and the Solomon Islands to install a high-speed undersea internet cable for new digital opportunities
- **\$260,000** for the **'Get into Rugby' Plus Program** to initiate a women's and girls' Rugby 7's competition, as well as to develop highly trained coaches to facilitate the equal participation of boys and girls in rugby.

For further information on the Coalition's commitments to development in the Pacific, click [here](#).

Further Information

To read the Prime Minister's Joint Statement, click [here](#).

For further information on the Federal Government, please click [here](#) to read Barton Deakin's recent briefs.

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