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**NEW ZEALAND**  
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Te Aka Aorere

**AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION TO TONGA**  
**NEW ZEALAND HIGH COMMISSION TO TONGA**

### **AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND TO FUND CRITICAL UNDERSEA CABLE INFRASTRUCTURE FOR TONGA**

The Australian and New Zealand Governments have committed to construct the Tonga Hawaiki Branch System, a new international undersea telecommunications cable to Tonga.

The new cable will provide critical redundancy for Tonga’s undersea cable network, reducing the risk of outages to Tonga’s international telecommunications. It will allow more reliable service to the public, with flow-on benefits for Tonga’s natural disaster resilience, and national digitalisation and economic goals.

In the wake of the 2022 Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha’apai undersea volcano eruption, international and domestic cables were severed. In response, Australia provided financing for immediate repairs, followed by a AUD2 million investment in 2023 to permanently repair the domestic cable, and co-funded with New Zealand a feasibility study to provide a comprehensive assessment of international cable redundancy options to the Government of Tonga.

A survey of the 383-kilometre route for the cable has been conducted over the past week between the Hawaiki trunk cable and the landing point in Vava’u to identify the most efficient and resilient cable lay route.

Australian High Commissioner to Tonga, His Excellency Brek Batley said that Australia was proud to further invest in Tonga’s economic recovery and development through secure and reliable digital connectivity.

“The project is part of Australia’s broader investment in secure and resilient telecommunications infrastructure across the region, including through the Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific.”

Along with the Queen Sālote Wharf, this marks the second major investment by the AIFFP in Tonga, showing Australia's commitment to providing quality, climate resilient infrastructure in the Pacific.

New Zealand High Commissioner to Tonga, His Excellency Matthew Howell said the project also reaffirms the strong and longstanding relationships between Australia, New Zealand and Tonga.

“The redundancy cable will support resilience and connectivity and be an important enabler for economic growth — all three are priorities at the heart of New Zealand's partnership with Tonga.”

Prime Minister Hu'akavameiliku said the Government of Tonga is pleased to be working with the Governments of Australia and New Zealand to deliver a second international undersea cable to improve digital connectivity for the people of Tonga.

“The Tonga Hawaiki Branch System will connect Tonga to Auckland and Hawaii in a few milliseconds and empower the development of Tonga's digital economy.”

Digital infrastructure operator BW Digital will work closely with Tonga Cable Limited to oversee project delivery and assist in increasing local knowledge and capacity to support service delivery and maintenance into the future.

The cable is expected to be in place by late 2025.