Australia-Tuvalu Falepili Union

The Falepili Union is an agreement between sovereign nations to a more advanced, integrated, and comprehensive partnership. Safeguarding Tuvalu’s future lies at the heart of our Falepili Union.

What is the Falepili Union?
The Australia-Tuvalu Falepili Union comprises a bilateral treaty between Tuvalu and Australia, as well as a commitment articulated in a joint leaders’ statement to uplift our broader bilateral partnership. It was signed by Prime Minister Albanese and Prime Minister Natano on 9 November 2023.

The key features of the Falepili Union are:

- establishing a special visa arrangement for Tuvaluan citizens to live, work and study in Australia;
- a commitment to protect and promote each other’s collective security and sovereignty, including through security commitments that will support a peaceful, safe and prosperous region;
- Australian support for Tuvalu’s climate adaptation interests, including an additional contribution of AUD16.9 million for the Tuvalu Coastal Adaptation Project (TCAP); and
- a commitment to uplift our bilateral partnership, including Australia’s development assistance.

At the heart of our Falepili Union is a commitment to count on each other as we navigate our shared challenges, particularly climate change and security. It will also strengthen our ability to contribute to regional peace, prosperity, and the collective stewardship of the Blue Pacific Continent.

‘Falepili’
is the Tuvaluan term for neighbours who live in close houses.
It reflects the duty of neighbours to care for, share with, and protect each other. These values, along with respect for each other’s sovereignty and independence, underpin our Union.

How will the Falepili Union work?
The Falepili Union includes commitments between Tuvalu and Australia on:

- **Building climate resilience**
  Tuvalu and Australia will work together to support Tuvalu’s adaptation priorities. This includes an additional contribution of AUD16.9 million to Tuvalu’s Coastal Adaptation Project, which will increase Funafuti’s landmass by over six per cent and create new space for housing, critical infrastructure, and essential services. This will help Tuvaluans stay in their homes with safety and dignity and protect their choice to determine their future.

- **Supporting human mobility with dignity**
  Tuvalu and Australia have agreed to establish a small, capped annual mobility pathway for Tuvalu to access Australia to live, work, study and connect with family. Underpinning this arrangement is a shared commitment to ensuring human mobility with dignity.

- **Safeguarding our collective peace and security**
  Consistent with the Bee Declaration’s expanded concept of security, Australia will assist Tuvalu in response to a major natural disaster, health pandemic or military aggression. Our agreement will allow Australia access to Tuvalu’s territory if necessary to operationalise this commitment following a request from Tuvalu, as is standard in bilateral security arrangements. With the Pacific the best placed to support the Pacific’s own security, Australia and Tuvalu will also mutually agree cooperation with other countries in Tuvalu’s security sectors.

- **Uplifting our partnership**
  Tuvalu and Australia have committed to continue to work closely together to support Tuvalu’s development needs, including through our bilateral development programs, and Australia’s regional programs, budget support and contributions to Tuvalu’s Trust Fund. We will jointly explore opportunities to build capability in Tuvalu, including through collaborations regarding government services and regulation, and support key infrastructure, recognising its important role in economic development.

The treaty and joint statement are available at www.dfat.gov.au/geo/tuvalu