

## KIRIBATI FACT SHEET

**Capital:** Tarawa  
**Population:** 133,515  
 (2023 World Bank)

**Pacific Grouping:** Micronesia

**Head of State:** President HE Taneti Maamau  
**Head of Government:** President HE Taneti Maamau  
**Foreign Minister:** President HE Taneti Maamau  
**Development Minister:** Vice President Hon Dr Teuea Toatu MP

### **Key Bilateral Issues**

- Australia has continued regular engagement with the re-elected Maamau Government
  - Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Marles visited Tarawa on 17 January 2025 to attend the commissioning of Kiribati's second Guardian-class patrol boat and met with key ministers including his counterpart Vice President Toatu.
- Australia is Kiribati's largest bilateral donor and is committed to its longstanding partnership.
- s 33(a)(iii), s 47E(d)

. Prime Minister Albanese met with President Maamau in Rarotonga at the Pacific Island Forum Leaders' Meeting (7 Nov 2023). Minister Wong met with President Maamau in Tarawa (21 Feb 2023) and in Adelaide (Bali Process Conference, 10 Feb 2023). Deputy Prime Minister Marles met with President Maamau in Seoul (PIF-ROK, 29 May 2023). Former Governor-General Hurley visited Kiribati and met with President Maamau on 24 June 2023. Minister Conroy met with President Maamau on 31 January 2024 in Nauru, on the occasion of Nauru's 2024 Independence Day celebrations. President Maamau did not attend PIFLM or CHOGM in 2024 due to Kiribati's national elections.

- Deputy Prime Minister Marles met with Vice President Toatu in Tarawa (17 Jan 25) and in Melbourne (22 Sep 23). Minister Conroy met with the Vice President in Washington (13 Oct 22). Assistant Minister Ayres met the Vice President in Brisbane (26 Sep 23). Senior officials met the Vice President at Asian Development Bank meetings in Sydney (6 Mar 24) and Tbilisi, Georgia (2 May 24).
- Kiribati is a Pacific Maritime Security Program member. Australia delivered Kiribati its second Guardian-class Patrol Boat in July 2024. It was commissioned in Tarawa on 17 January 2025.
- Australia has a resident diplomatic mission in Tarawa alongside NZ, China (switched from Taiwan in 2019) and Japan (since 1 Jan 2023). The US was granted permission to establish a mission in Oct 2023.

### **Development Programming Priorities/Issues**

- Australia is Kiribati's largest development partner and has allocated **\$39.5 million** in total ODA in **2025-26**, including \$26.1m in bilateral funding.
- Australia's aid supports economic governance, connectivity, health, skills/labour mobility and education. It is also supporting coastal protection, financial inclusion, food security and social protection to promote effective outcomes and links to Australia.
- Australia is also supporting critical infrastructure including the East Micronesia Cable project, police facilities, Betio Port master planning, and Kanton wharf survey work.

### **Key Country facts**

- The Republic of Kiribati is an independent sovereign state comprising 33 atolls (22 are inhabited) in three main groups running 4,000 kilometres along the equator.
- Kiribati has the 12<sup>th</sup> largest EEZ and is the third largest in the Pacific after Australia and New Zealand.

### **Trade and Investment data**

- The public service is the primary provider of formal employment and is largely financed from fishing licencing, which represents around 80 per cent of all government revenue.
- In December 2020, PACER Plus entered into force between Australia and Kiribati.

## Kiribati – Bilateral Relationship – Talking points

- Australia is committed to its longstanding partnership with Kiribati
    - and to addressing shared priorities through investments in Kiribati's health, education, security and economic growth.
  - Deputy Prime Minister Marles visited Tarawa on 17 January 2025 to participate in a commissioning ceremony for Kiribati's second Guardian-class Patrol Boat, the *RKS Tobwaan Mainiku*.
    - the Deputy Prime Minister was hosted by the Vice President, Dr Teuea Toatu (*Teh-where Tow-asu*) and met with other newly appointed Ministers
    - he also opened the Australian High Commission's new Chancery building in Tarawa, demonstrating Australia's commitment to its relationship with and support for Kiribati.
  - Foreign Minister Wong spoke with President Maamau (*Mah-mao*) during a call on 13 February
    - to congratulate him on re-election and discuss our bilateral relationship
    - the FM also met with Kiribati Speaker Willie Tokataake (*Toh-kah-tah-keh*) during his visit to Canberra on 10 February.
  - Employment and Workplace Relations Minister Watt met with his visiting counterpart, Employment and Human Resources Minister Auria Kitina (*Or-re-aah Ki-see-nah*), during his visit to Brisbane on 18 February.
  - s 33(a)(iii), s 47E(d)
- 
- Australia is proud to be Kiribati's largest donor of foreign assistance and our support touches every sector and every island. We have provided over \$740 million in development assistance since independence in 1979
    - estimated that Australia will spend \$44.0 million in ODA for Kiribati in 2024-25 – \$26.1 million in bilateral investments, the remainder from global and regional programs
  - s 33(a)(iii), s 33(b)

## Security activities in Kiribati supported by Australia – as at March 2025

### Policing Infrastructure

The AFP has procured new **radio equipment** and will begin installing a new police radio network in Q2 2025.

A new **police barracks** has been designed in consultation with the KPS, with construction due to start in the first half of 2025.

Master planning for a new KPS **headquarters, training facility and armoury** is anticipated to be completed in Q3 2025, with construction completed Q4 2027.

An additional two **fire trucks** donated by the South Australian Country Fire Service were delivered to Tarawa in January 2025 and will be delivered to Kiritimati Island in the coming months.

Construction on a new **humanitarian supplies warehouse** is expected to be completed in Q2 2025.

### Police Training

The AFP has ongoing senior level engagement with KPS, including a DFAT-funded **special visitor's program** by the a/g Police Commissioner, Eeri Aritiera in January 2024 and an upcoming DFAT-funded **Canberra Fellowships Program** for senior officials in May 2025 focused on Maritime Security.

Australia has **donated** celebrite data units (for extracting digital evidence), forensic consumables, drug testing kits, uniforms, cameras, laptops, bicycles, gym and band equipment.

The AFP has responded to priority training areas, including UN Peacekeeping, cybercrime, ceremonial duties, forensics investigations, intelligence, cyber safety and use of force and tactical assessment.

The AFP has offered to scope options for deployment of a **permanent AFP officer** in Tarawa to support the KPS.

### Maritime Security

Commissioning of a **second Guardian class Patrol Boat** was attended by Deputy Prime Minister Marles in January 2025.

Two **Maritime Security Advisors** are permanently located in Tarawa to support the KPS with sustainment and operation of its patrol boats.

Continuing to support Kiribati to access **air surveillance and Starboard Maritime Intelligence** software through the Forum Fisheries Agency.

Defence is working with the Government of Kiribati to complete **dredging, berthing and workshop upgrades** to support the operation of Kiribati's two patrol boats.

### Border Security

The ABF has **donated two X-ray machines**, which are now operational at the Bairiki (Tarawa) and Cassidy (Christmas) airports.

ABF has donated narcotic identification kits and provided **training to Kiribati Customs** on identifying illicit substances at the border.

The Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO) in partnership with the ABF will continue to invite Kiribati to capacity building programs for regional Customs agencies.

The ABF stands ready to provide ongoing support when requested by the Government of Kiribati.

## ***Kiribati Bilateral Meeting***

**Speaker Willie Tokataake (pronounced Toh-kah-tah-keh)**  
**Speaker of Kiribati Parliament**

Monday, 10 February, 1600-1630, President of the Senate's Office, APH

### **Context and objectives**

#### **Purpose of the meeting**

s 33(a)(iii), s 47C, s 47E(d)

#### **What they want**

- Support for Kiribati's development [and possibly a request for new parliamentary infrastructure]
- s 33(a)(iii), s 47C, s 47E(d)

#### **Handling note**

s 33(a)(iii), s 47C, s 47E(d)

*You last met Tokataake during a bilateral when he was Minister for Infrastructure and Sustainable Energy, along with the Minister for Information, Communications and Transport Tekuua Tarati, during your February 2023 visit to Kiribati.*

*Small gifts will be exchanged during the meeting.*

## Key Messages

- Congratulations on your appointment as Speaker of Parliament
  - You have enjoyed a distinguished career as Kiribati's longest-ever-serving MP before being elected as Speaker
- Australia deeply values our partnership with Kiribati
  - proud to be Kiribati's largest development partner, with over \$740 million in assistance provided since independence
  - Australia's support to Kiribati touches every sector and island
  - believe you met with DPM Marles during his recent visit for the commissioning of the second Patrol Boat?
    - a clear demonstration of Australia's commitment to Kiribati's maritime security.

s 47E(d), s 33(a)(iii), s 33(b)

s 33(a)(i), s 33(a)(iii), s 47E(d)

### ***If raised: Australian support for parliamentary infrastructure upgrades***

- As you know, we are supporting a significant number of major infrastructure projects across Kiribati
  - these included renovations to your former ministry in 2024

s 33(a)(i), s 33(a)(iii), s 47E(d)

### **Background**

Speaker Tokataake was Kiribati's longest-serving MP (elected in 1994) until his surprise defeat during the August 2024 elections. He was subsequently elected as Speaker in October 2024 by the ruling party (TKP) s 33(a)(iii), s 47C, s 47E(d)

s 33(a)(iii), s 47E(d)

### **Point of contact**

<b>Bilateral brief</b>	Tristen Slade, Assistant Secretary, North Pacific Branch, DFAT, Ph: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
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**s 22(1)(a)(ii)**

**From:** s 22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 11 December 2024 11:41 AM  
**To:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) ; Mark Tattersall  
**Cc:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) ; Tristen Slade  
**Subject:** RE: Maamau letter [SEC=OFFICIAL]  
**Attachments:** FM-President Maamau Letter.For FMO.docx

**OFFICIAL**

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Proposing some minor amendments to the letter (highlighted in the attached). Shout out if you have any concerns. No need to update what comes through PDMS, I can do that on my end.

Thanks,

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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**From:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 11 December 2024 11:15 AM  
**To:** Mark Tattersall <Mark.Tattersall@dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>  
**Cc:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; Tristen Slade <Tristen.Slade@dfat.gov.au>  
**Subject:** RE: Maamau letter [SEC=OFFICIAL]

**OFFICIAL**

Hi s 22(1)(a)(ii)

With thanks to s 22(1)(a)(ii), the letter is now on PDMS (with apologies for the slight delay, I understand there was a server issue with PDMS).

Best wishes,

**s 22(1)(a)(ii)**


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Assistant Director | Kiribati Section  
 North Pacific Branch | Polynesia, Micronesia and Development Division | Office of the Pacific  
 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
 Ts 22(1)(a)(ii)



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We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia, and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to all First Nations peoples, their cultures and to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

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**From:** Mark Tattersall <[Mark.Tattersall@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Mark.Tattersall@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 11, 2024 10:13 AM  
**To:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) <[s22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)@dfat.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)(a)(ii)@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) <[s22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)@dfat.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)(a)(ii)@dfat.gov.au)>; Tristen Slade <[Tristen.Slade@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Tristen.Slade@dfat.gov.au)>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) <[s22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)@dfat.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)(a)(ii)@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** RE: Maamau letter [SEC=OFFICIAL]

**OFFICIAL**

Hi s 22(1)(a)(ii) ,

In s 22(1)(a)(ii) absence can we get the Maamau letter into PDMS?

Many thanks,  
Mark

**Mark Tattersall**

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First Assistant Secretary  
Polynesia Micronesia and Development Division  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
P s 22(1)(a)(ii) | M s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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**From:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) <[s22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)@dfat.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)(a)(ii)@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 11, 2024 9:25 AM  
**To:** Mark Tattersall <[Mark.Tattersall@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Mark.Tattersall@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) <[s22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)@dfat.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)(a)(ii)@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** RE: Maamau letter [SEC=OFFICIAL]

**OFFICIAL**

Hi Mark,

Thanks for the Maamau letter. Could one of the team get this into PDMS asap?

Thanks again,

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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**From:** Mark Tattersall <[Mark.Tattersall@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Mark.Tattersall@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Sent:** Friday, 29 November 2024 5:07 PM  
**To:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) <[s22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)@dfat.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)(a)(ii)@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) <[s22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)@dfat.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)(a)(ii)@dfat.gov.au)>; Tristen Slade <[Tristen.Slade@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Tristen.Slade@dfat.gov.au)>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) <[s22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)@dfat.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)(a)(ii)@dfat.gov.au)>; Elizabeth Peak <[Elizabeth.Peak@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Elizabeth.Peak@dfat.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** Maamau letter [SEC=OFFICIAL]

**OFFICIAL**

Hi s 22(1)(a)(ii) ,

As discussed see attached a draft FM letter to Maamau.

s 22(1)(a)(ii) we will follow up with more detailed letters from MIDP to key Ministers outlining the specifics of our support in key sectors.

Happy of course to discuss.

Cheers,

Mark

Mark Tattersall

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First Assistant Secretary  
Polynesia, Micronesia and Development Division  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

P s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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*We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia, and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to all First Nations peoples, their cultures and to their Elders, past, present and emerging.*



**From:** s 22(1)(a)(ii)  
**To:**  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** FW: Kiribati - MIDPO request for tps [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]  
**Date:** Tuesday, 10 June 2025 5:11:13 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.jpg](#)  
[Kiribati - Bilateral Relationship March 2025.docx](#)  
[Kiribati security commitments - March 2025.docx](#)

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**OFFICIAL: Sensitive**

Include this one.

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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Director | Kiribati Section  
North Pacific Branch | Polynesia, Micronesia and Development Division  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
P s 22(1)(a)(ii) | Ms 22(1)(a)(ii)

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**From:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Friday, 14 March 2025 1:46 PM  
**To:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>  
**Cc:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>;  
Tristen Slade <Tristen.Slade@dfat.gov.au>  
**Subject:** FW: Kiribati - MIDPO request for tps [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]

**OFFICIAL: Sensitive**

Hi s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Hope you are well.

Please find a briefing on the Kiribati Bilateral Relationship attached as requested; accompanied by an updated Security Activities document.

Kind regards,

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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Assistant Director | Kiribati Section  
North Pacific Branch | Office of the Pacific  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
P +s 22(1)(a)(ii)  
[dfat.gov.au](mailto:dfat.gov.au)

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We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia, and their continuing connection to land, waters and community.

We pay our respects to all First Nations peoples, their cultures and to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

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**From:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Saturday, 8 March 2025 6:05 PM  
**To:** Tristen Slade <Tristen.Slade@dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(i) @dfat.gov.au>  
**Subject:** RE: Kiribati - MIDPO request for tps [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]

**OFFICIAL: Sensitive**

Thanks Tristen s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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**From:** Tristen Slade <Tristen.Slade@dfat.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Friday, 7 March 2025 5:17 PM  
**To:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>  
**Cc:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>  
**Subject:** RE: Kiribati - MIDPO request for tps [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]

**OFFICIAL: Sensitive**

Thanks s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Only quick annotation I'd make is to note the Feb 2023 document signed was an s 33(a)(iii), s 47E(d)

**Tristen Slade**

---

Assistant Secretary | North Pacific Branch  
Polynesia, Micronesia and Development Division | Office of the Pacific  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
**P** s 22(1)(a)(ii) **M** s 22(1)(a)(ii)

---

**From:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Friday, 7 March 2025 4:41 PM  
**To:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>  
**Cc:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>

s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](mailto:dfat.gov.au)>

**Subject:** RE: Kiribati - MIDPO request for tps [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]

**OFFICIAL: Sensitive**

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

No problem. We can have something for you early next week.

s 22(1)(a)(ii) summary is largely on point, although there are some nuances. There has been a lot more ministerial-level engagement, including an FM call with President Maamau, an FM meeting with the Speaker and a meeting between Minister Watt and his counterpart. We will include in the brief and update the security cooperation one-pager.

Cheers,

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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Director | Kiribati Section  
North Pacific Branch | Polynesia, Micronesia and Development Division  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
P s 22(1)(a)(ii) | M s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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**From:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](mailto:dfat.gov.au)>  
**Sent:** Friday, 7 March 2025 4:27 PM  
**To:** Tristen Slade <[Tristen.Slade@dfat.gov.au](mailto:Tristen.Slade@dfat.gov.au)>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](mailto:dfat.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](mailto:dfat.gov.au)>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](mailto:dfat.gov.au)>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](mailto:dfat.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** Kiribati - MIDPO request for tps [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]

**OFFICIAL: Sensitive**

Hi Tristen, s 22(1)(a)(ii)

MIDPO has made the following request:

s 33(a)(i), s 33(a)(iii), s 47E(d)

- - 
  - 
  -

s 33(a)(i), s 33(a)(iii), s 47E(d)

MIDPO has asked for this by **Friday 14 March** – please let us know if there are any issues with this timeframe.

Thanks in advance!

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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Departmental Liaison Officer (DFAT)  
Office of the Minister for International Development and the Pacific  
The Hon Pat Conroy MP  
T +s 22(1)(a)(ii) M s 22(1)(a)(ii)









