

VANUATU – AUSTRALIA NAKAMAL AGREEMENT

The Government of Vanuatu (“Vanuatu”) and the Government of Australia (“Australia”) (together, “the Parties”)

RESOLUTE in reaffirming the Parties’ sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence;

UNDERPINNED by the concept of *Nakamal* which connotes a traditional meeting place where community and its leaders discuss, consult, make decisions and resolve points of difference with mutual respect, trust and understanding;

ACKNOWLEDGING the ancient Melanesian connections, shared history and geography that underpin our Nakamal partnership and entwine our past, present and future;

ACKNOWLEDGING the difficult past under which the ancestors of Australian South Sea Islanders were brought to Australia and the significance of their contribution to the culture, history and economy of Australia;

RECALLING the many moments in history when Australia and Vanuatu have stood side-by-side in the face of humanitarian disasters, extending compassion, courage and solidarity;

RECOGNISING the Parties’ longstanding cooperation, mutual respect and shared interests reflected in Australia’s role as Vanuatu’s closest security, economic and development partner;

ACKNOWLEDGING that as Pacific countries and members of the Pacific Islands Forum, the Parties’ interests are intertwined and decisions taken by one Party affect the interests of the other;

REAFFIRMING a shared commitment to the *2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent*, the guiding principles outlined in the *Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific*, as committed members of the *Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations Plus*, and the *Boe Declaration on Regional Security*, which affirms an expanded concept of security;

COMMITTED through our Nakamal partnership to support a stable, prosperous and secure region, Pacific-led regional security and development, including by responding to current and emerging security challenges, such as climate change; and

REAFFIRMING their respective commitments under international and domestic law;

HAVE AGREED as follows:

Article 1: Purpose

- (1) The purpose of this Nakamal Agreement is to elevate our bilateral relationship by:
 - (a) deepening integration between the Parties and their peoples;
 - (b) supporting Vanuatu's development aspirations and economic transformation;
 - (c) enhancing climate and disaster resilience of Vanuatu for the benefit of our respective people; and
 - (d) recognising, protecting and promoting each Party's and the Parties' collective security and sovereignty.

Article 2: Enduring Cultural Connections

- (1) The Parties recognise that their relationship is enriched by the First Nations and Melanesian connections through Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, Australian South Sea Islanders, and Ni-Vanuatu.
- (2) The Parties commit to support dialogue to enhance connections between local communities in Australia and Vanuatu, in particular those affected by the historical practice of 'blackbirding'.
- (3) The Parties will facilitate bringing together community leaders to assist in working towards designing and implementing a pathway that acknowledges the past, embraces the present and builds for the future.

Article 3: Economic Transformation

- (1) The Parties commit to work together in the spirit of equality, mutual respect and common understanding, to support Vanuatu's economic transformation.
- (2) In support of Article 3 (1), the Parties shall facilitate linkages between our private sectors, including industry associations.
- (3) Australia shall:
 - (a) develop an Australian traineeship program with Australian recognised qualifications that supports Vanuatu's domestic labour market in demand areas;
 - (b) support Vanuatu's participation in the digital economy, through the provision of digital infrastructure and software, to strengthen Vanuatu's cyber resilience; and its transition to a cloud based digital economy; and
 - (c) provide budget support to assist Vanuatu's economic and fiscal certainty.

Article 4: Climate Cooperation

- (1) The Parties recognise the existential threat posed by climate change and commit to transition their economies to net zero by 2050 and meet their respective renewable energy targets.
- (2) The Parties commit to mutually advocate for ambitious and meaningful action by others in support of Pacific goals, consistent with positions endorsed by the Pacific Islands Forum, including the preservation of maritime zones and statehood and sovereignty, notwithstanding climate change-related sea level rise.
- (3) In support of this commitment, Australia and Vanuatu shall work together to drive the transition to renewable energy sources, including increasing renewable energy in Vanuatu's communities for both on-grid and off-grid solutions.

Article 5: Humanitarian Assistance

- (1) Following a request from Vanuatu, Australia shall, in accordance with its international commitments, domestic processes and capacity, provide assistance to Vanuatu in response to a major natural or humanitarian disaster.
- (2) Vanuatu shall, in accordance with its international commitments and domestic processes, prioritise any request to FRANZ for assistance in circumstances under Article 5 (1).
- (3) In the event that FRANZ formally conveys that it cannot assist with a request from Vanuatu pursuant to Article 5 (2), Vanuatu may seek the requested assistance from any other third party.

Article 6: Enhanced Mobility

- (1) Australia shall provide Vanuatu with enhanced mobility arrangements for Vanuatu visitors to Australia.
- (2) Vanuatu shall develop effective mechanisms to differentiate citizenship by investment from other forms of citizenship.
- (3) The Parties shall undertake an annual review of enhanced mobility arrangements under the Agreement.

Article 7: Security and Stability

- (1) The Parties commit to deepen, expand and advance security dialogue and cooperation on bilateral and regional issues on the basis of equal partnership and shared interests.
- (2) Dialogue and cooperation under Article 7 (1) shall be consistent with the Boe Declaration on Regional Security, which affirms an expanded concept of security.
- (3) To reinforce Pacific collective security and sovereignty Vanuatu shall not permit its territory to be used for any foreign military base or infrastructure.
- (4) Recognising Australia as Vanuatu's longstanding primary policing partner, Vanuatu shall prioritise any policing request to Pacific Islands Forum members.
- (5) The Parties agree to elevate assistance to the Vanuatu Police Force in police training and equipment, policing, maritime security, cyber security, intelligence cooperation, and infrastructure.

Article 8: Resilient Infrastructure

- (1) Australia shall work alongside Vanuatu in the development and protection of its critical infrastructure including ports, telecommunications and digital, aviation and energy infrastructure.
- (2) Recognising new security, safety and cyber challenges in relation to critical infrastructure in Article 8 (1):
 - (a) Vanuatu agrees that its critical infrastructure shall remain free from militarisation, any form of foreign interference or unauthorised access;
 - (b) Vanuatu agrees to consult Australia on proposed third party engagement in Vanuatu's critical infrastructure in Article 8(1);
 - (c) As part of consultations under Article 8(2)(b), Australia shall provide Vanuatu with technical advice and practical support.

Article 9: Nakamal in Action

- (1) Vanuatu and Australia shall establish a Nakamal Committee that will emphasise storian as our way of building common understanding to review implementation and resolve our differences in the way the Parties work together.
- (2) The Parties commit to transparency, including through advance notice where possible, on matters affecting sovereignty, peace or stability.
- (3) The Nakamal Committee shall meet as regularly as required, at least every six months, to discuss matters arising under this Agreement. Decisions of the Committee shall be made by consensus of the Parties.
- (4) In the event that either Party determines it necessary to discuss an obligation contained in this Agreement or any matters related to its implementation, the Nakamal Committee shall be convened within two weeks following written notification by either Party to determine individual or joint responses to the matters.

Article 10: Settlement of Disputes

- (1) Any dispute arising under this Agreement with respect to its interpretation, application or implementation shall be settled by consultation or negotiation between the Parties, and shall not be referred to any national or international tribunal or court or any other third party for resolution.
- (2) The Parties agree the Nakamal Committee will resolve disputes relating to the interpretation, application, or implementation of this Agreement, should such a dispute arise.
- (3) Either Party, following provision of written notice, can suspend compliance with their obligations under the Agreement pending resolution of a dispute.

Article 11: Amendment

- (1) This Agreement may be amended in writing by mutual consent of both Parties.
- (2) Any amendment to this Agreement shall come into force on the date of the later notification by either Party of the completion of their respective requirements for entry into force of the relevant amendment.

Article 12: Status, entry into force, duration, and termination

- (1) This Agreement is legally binding and shall enter into force on the date of receipt of the last notification by which the Parties notify each other in writing, through an exchange of diplomatic notes, that their respective requirements for the entry into force of this Agreement have been completed.
- (2) This Agreement shall continue in force unless terminated in accordance with this Article.
- (3) The Parties may agree in writing to terminate this Agreement at any time. Such termination shall become effective on the date agreed by the Parties.
- (4) Either Party may terminate this Agreement upon written notice to the other Party. Such termination shall become effective twenty-four months following the date on which the other Party receives the written notice of termination.
- (5) Article 10 (1) of this Agreement shall remain binding upon the Parties notwithstanding any termination of this Agreement in accordance with this Article, unless otherwise mutually determined in writing by the Parties.

Article 13: Supplementary instruments

- (1) The Parties may enter into subsidiary agreements and implementing arrangements for the purposes of the interpretation and implementation of this Agreement.
- (2) Any subsidiary agreements or implementing arrangements shall be read together with this Agreement. For avoidance of doubt, where there is a conflict or inconsistency between any terms of any subsidiary agreement or implementing arrangement and this Agreement, the provisions of this Agreement shall prevail.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned, being duly authorised by their respective Governments, have signed this agreement.

Done at Canberra, this day of , 2026 in duplicate.

For Australia:

For Vanuatu: