

Joint Statement on commitment to the Falepili Union

Today, we, the Prime Minister of Tuvalu and the Foreign Minister of Australia, confirm our shared commitment to elevating our partnership through the Falepili Union.

Respect and support for each other's sovereignty are at the heart of our Falepili Union. We are putting in place transformational arrangements to safeguard the future of Tuvalu's people, identity and culture, and to advance our shared interests in a Pacific that is peaceful, safe and prosperous.

The values of *falepili* are embodied in our union: good neighbourliness, care and mutual respect. We declare our enduring resolve to support each other as neighbours, as partners, and as Pacific family. We share a region, an ocean, and a future. We have a responsibility to care for and protect each other, and are stronger when we work together. We acknowledge our mutual obligations to each other, and our commitment to the collective peace and security of the Pacific.

We remain committed to transparency and open engagement with our peoples and our region as we move forward together. Parliamentary scrutiny and consultation is underway, and will inform our work to operationalise our special union. We share an intention for the treaty to enter into force as soon as possible in 2024.

Today we jointly release an explanatory memorandum to confirm our joint understandings on implementation and interpretation of the Falepili Union. Both Governments commit to adhere to this shared understanding as we operationalise our deeper, more integrated partnership. We hope this document will help our peoples better understand how the Falepili Union will be brought to life, and how it will help to safeguard both countries' sovereignty and prosperity.

We reaffirm the commitments made through the treaty and joint statement by Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and former Prime Minister Kausea Natano on 9 November 2023. Climate change remains the single greatest threat to the livelihoods, security and wellbeing of Tuvaluans. We are committed to work together to protect Tuvalu's future, and to support Tuvalu's efforts to enable its people to continue to live and thrive in their homes. We call on others to join us in the effort.

We recommit to the concept of mobility with dignity. We recognise that the people of Tuvalu deserve the choice to live, study and work elsewhere, as climate change impacts intensify at home. We will work together to establish a special mobility pathway for Tuvaluan citizens to come to Australia, with an initial allocation of 280 people per year. This will allow Tuvaluans to send remittances, diversify livelihoods and acquire new skills. Tuvalu will establish a High Commission in Australia which will support Tuvaluans to maintain connection with home and culture. Australia will also increase its presence in Tuvalu, enhancing the High Commission that was established in 2019.

We recommit to deepening our security cooperation, recognising that our interests and futures are intertwined. We are committed to protecting sovereignty of both countries and

commit to work together to operationalise the enhanced security relationship through friendly consultation and frank and honest dialogue in the spirit of *falepili*. We concur that the treaty would not limit Tuvalu’s liberty to enter into diplomatic relations with other States.

We recommit to also deepening our development partnership, to respond to Tuvalu’s national priorities. Australia will provide development assistance of at least \$86.7 million in 2024-25 - a substantial uplift on its estimated \$17.1 million in 2023-24. Together, we will build a brighter future for Tuvaluans today and for generations to come through enhanced education, health, skills, and economic opportunities. We will deepen our economic partnership to support Tuvalu’s reform agenda and fiscal sustainability. We will invest in essential infrastructure in Tuvalu to support critical telecommunications, services, and improve connectivity, which underpins inclusive economic growth.

Tuvalu and Australia enter into the Falepili Union freely and cognisant of the significance of our shared achievement. It is a demonstration to each other, to our region, and to the world, that we are – and always will be – Pacific family.

SIGNED at Funafuti, this ninth day of May 2024.

FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF
TUVALU

FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF
AUSTRALIA

Feleti Teo OBE
Prime Minister

Penny Wong
Minister for Foreign Affairs