

# Strengthening Australia's relationships with countries in the Pacific region

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**POLICY BRIEF**

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## Introduction

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This policy brief focuses on how Australia can further develop and strengthen its relationships with Pacific island countries and with the Pacific islands region more generally. Over and above specific areas of engagement that are the focus of other inquiries underway at this time (e.g. in relation to trade or defence relationships), there is a need to examine some of the fundamental precepts on which relationships with the Pacific are based. Indeed, we would argue that if these fundamental (and to some extent conceptual or philosophical) aspects are not given sufficient attention by policy makers, it will be increasingly difficult to achieve meaningful success in other, more discrete areas.

Australia's relationships with the countries of the Pacific islands region are many and varied. Whilst there are a number of commonalities across this range of relationships, the overall picture is one of diversity. In fact, this is a facet that is not given sufficient attention by policy makers and commentators in Australia. Not only is each Pacific island country different from other Pacific island countries (making references to 'the Pacific' often unhelpful and largely irrelevant), but Australia's relationship with one country is not the same as its relationship with other Pacific island countries.

These relationships are informed by many factors, including geographical proximity, historical connections (including via colonisation), trade and investment relationships, educational linkages and cultural exchanges. One of the most important ways in which Australia's relationships with the Pacific islands region can be significantly enhanced is to acknowledge and embrace this diversity. It is intellectually weak and strategically unhelpful to see the multiplicity of linkages that Australia has with the countries of the Pacific region through one-dimensional paradigms such as 'security' or 'aid'.

A number of aspects of Australia's relationships with the countries of the Pacific islands region—and with the region as a whole—are presented below. We believe more and better investment on the part of the Australian policy community is needed in these areas. Whilst there will certainly be a need for financial investment in some areas, we wish to state from the outset that we see intellectual investment (including by way of research where appropriate) to be key to optimising success in this field.

## Australia's Pacific 'step-up': Driven by Canberra's own concerns?

Australia's Pacific 'step-up' is in large part driven by Australia's own strategic concerns. As Hugh White recently argued, Australia's interest in the Pacific islands is above all driven by a strategic imperative to maintain political influence, and to deny the islands to other powers.<sup>1</sup> Underlying this imperative is a long-standing concern that a major power with interests inimical to Australia's own, might someday establish a presence in the southwest Pacific. Viewed through this prism of strategic considerations, Australian policymakers and analysts tend to see Pacific island states as part of Australia's 'backyard', and the southwest Pacific in particular as Australia's natural 'sphere of influence'. This results in a curious state of affairs: there persists a tendency to view Australia's position as one of regional leadership (in the broader context of the United States alliance), even when Australia's identity as a Pacific nation remains ambiguous.

To be sure, Australia is formally a part of many Pacific regional processes and is the largest and most powerful member of the Pacific Islands Forum. Australia has also been the largest provider of development aid to Pacific countries for the whole of the post-independence period. In the Pacific, Australia is often described as a 'big brother' to island countries: part of the Pacific family by geography and history, but set apart by wealth and national identity.

Australians themselves are not sure if the country is part of the Pacific. A 2010 poll from the Lowy Institute, found that just 31 per cent of Australians thought the country was part of the Pacific.<sup>2</sup> In addition, as Jonathon Schultz has persuasively argued, Australia's engagement with the Pacific tends to be episodic, driven by occasional crises that are understood to require Australian intervention. Thus, while Australia understands itself as "overseeing" the Pacific islands, for much of the time it also tends to "overlook" the region.<sup>3</sup>

In a related argument, Joanne Wallis suggests that Australia is something of a "hollow hegemon" in the Pacific: while it may feel it has a right to lead, there are clear limits to its ability to actually exercise influence.<sup>4</sup> Nonetheless, and despite inconsistent political engagement, Canberra's relations with Pacific island countries are generally warm, underpinned as they are by shared interests and a broad commitment to liberal democracy. Australia is also home to a large Pacific diaspora, which underwrites the strength of people-to-people relations within the region.<sup>5</sup>

Australia's recent 'step-up' in engagement with Pacific island states is widely understood to be driven by perceived security threats, particularly a concern that in the future China may leverage infrastructure lending to island governments to establish a military base in the region. In this context, the Pacific 'step-up' is intended to cement political relations and to limit Chinese influence in the region. It has certainly entailed unprecedented political engagement with Pacific island countries.

During 2019 for example, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison made bilateral visits to Fiji (twice), Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, as well visiting Tuvalu for the Pacific Islands Forum.<sup>6</sup> This was the first ever bilateral visit to Fiji by an Australian prime minister, the first to Solomon Islands in 10 years, and the first to Vanuatu since 1990.<sup>7</sup> Australia also established a new 'Office of the Pacific'—a whole-of-government arrangement to coordinate engagement with Pacific island countries—and launched a new infrastructure bank for the Pacific.<sup>8</sup>

The apparent goal of Australia's 'step-up' in the Pacific is to more closely bind Pacific island states to Australia. As much is spelt out in the 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper (FPWP), which suggests Canberra will look to "integrate Pacific island countries into the Australian and New Zealand economies and our security institutions".<sup>9</sup> Regional economic integration has been a goal for Canberra for decades. However, the FPWP and its underpinning rationale pays insufficient attention to the lessons of the past, particularly in relation to the political economy factors that influence the success (or lack thereof) when it comes to pooled service delivery in the Pacific islands region.<sup>10</sup>

Over recent years there have been some significant developments. In 2017 after long and difficult negotiations, Canberra concluded a regional free trade arrangement with Pacific island countries. However, the deal, called PACER-Plus, does little to address unique constraints to international trade facing island countries, and the largest island economies—Papua New Guinea and Fiji—refused to sign up to it.<sup>11</sup> In addition, progress in getting enough of the signatories to ratify the agreement so that it can be brought into force is slow. Island governments were however more supportive of arrangements allowing Pacific workers to fill seasonal labour shortages. After New Zealand introduced a Pacific labour scheme in 2007, and Australia followed suit soon thereafter, tens of thousands of island workers took up the opportunity to earn incomes in both countries.

Canberra has also moved to deepen cooperation between Australian security agencies and island counterparts, including through intelligence sharing and training. In 2019, a new Australia-Pacific Security College was established in Canberra to train a regional network of security officials and help Pacific island states “develop and implement” national security strategies.<sup>12</sup> Australia also established a Pacific Fusion Centre, a new institution (initially based in Canberra) which collates information from various agencies, including ‘real-time’ satellite data, to improve maritime domain awareness and provide curated security advice for Pacific officials. In addition, a new Pacific Faculty was established at the Australian Institute for Police Management, and Australia funded a new Pacific Cyber Security Operational Network.

The integration of Pacific security agencies into Australian security institutions was capped off by a new, annual, Joint Heads of Pacific Security Forces meeting (the inaugural meeting was co-hosted in Brisbane in October 2019 by Australia’s Defence Chief, Australia’s Federal Police Commissioner and Border Force Commissioner). In recent times Australia has also dramatically increased its military presence in the Pacific. New initiatives include: the announcement of a new naval base on Manus Island;<sup>13</sup> joint development of a regional military base in Fiji;<sup>14</sup> a new rotational Australian Defence Force mobile training force for the Pacific, based in Brisbane; an increase in security spending in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Fiji; and the announcement of a new “large naval ship” that will operate semi-permanently in the South Pacific.<sup>15</sup>

Much of Australia’s recent ‘step-up’ in the Pacific is essentially unilateral in nature, driven by its own security concerns, and key substantive elements have been designed in Canberra. This is to an extent understandable: Australian policymakers seek to pursue Australia’s national interests. However, to cement relations with Pacific island countries, more will need to be done to engage with island states as partners, on their own terms, and to develop initiatives *together*. Ameliorating tensions and finding consensus will require sustained engagement. In turn, this will require providing support for the Pacific’s own regional priorities and working through processes like Pacific regional diplomacy to develop joint initiatives. Ultimately, Australia should strengthen its relationship with Pacific island countries not only for the narrow purpose of competing with China, but because durable relations with neighbouring states are manifestly in Australia’s national interests.

### *Possible ways forward:*

1. Australia’s ‘step-up’ in the Pacific needs to be driven by more than narrowly-defined security priorities. Developing close and durable relations with neighbouring states is in Australia’s national interests.

## **Support Pacific-led regionalism in the *Blue Pacific***

The contemporary Pacific has been shaped by processes of regional cooperation and collective diplomacy. In the post-colonial period, a distinctive and uniquely Pacific form of regional diplomacy has emerged: a ‘Pacific Way’ that is guided by Pacific sensibilities and protocols. Pacific regionalism has developed guiding ideas, shared norms, and even regional sources of international law—all of which are important to Pacific island countries. This history of Pacific regionalism is in large part absent from Australia’s recent Pacific ‘step-up’, which contributes to perceptions that the ‘step-up’ has focussed on “unilateral initiatives” that are “done for or to the Pacific, not with it”.<sup>16</sup>

Regional multilateral cooperation has a proud history in the post-colonial Pacific. As Pacific islanders gained national independence in the decades following World War Two, they also sought to shape the *regional* diplomatic agenda. During the 1960s Pacific islanders took greater control of decision-making at the South Pacific Commission, where they had initially been relegated to a triennial ‘advisory’ conference.<sup>17</sup> Then, in 1971, Pacific island leaders established a regional political organisation of their own—the South Pacific Forum<sup>18</sup>—which would become key to collective diplomacy. Both Australia and New Zealand were founding members of the Forum.

During the 1970s and ‘80s, Pacific island countries worked as a bloc to pursue shared objectives. Even in the context of the Cold War, they were able to take on major powers—and prevail. At the United Nations (UN) for example, they secured recognition of their Exclusive Economic Zones under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). As a bloc, Pacific island states banned driftnet fishing in the South Pacific, negotiated a regional treaty for American boats fishing in their waters, and had New Caledonia and French Polynesia added to the UN’s list of non-self-governing territories. With the support of both Australia and New Zealand, Pacific island states also established a South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone.<sup>19</sup>



Pacific regionalism has tended to be deployed as a means of negotiating impinging global forces—of asserting a uniquely *Pacific* identity to manage the dynamic interaction between autonomous states and pressures to conform to globalising ideas about trade, economics, governance and security. As Greg Fry explains, Pacific island societies have deployed a regional identity “as a shield against global forces”.<sup>20</sup> Regionalism has been embraced by island leaders, not as a means to achieve market efficiencies or to pursue deeper integration, as per the model of regionalism in Europe, but rather to achieve political ends. Thus, Pacific regionalism has served as an “arena for negotiating globalisation, as a source of regional governance through agreed norms, as a regional political community, and as a diplomatic bloc”.<sup>21</sup>

Over the past decade, Pacific leaders have again shown a willingness to use collective diplomacy to pursue their interests.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, island states have embraced a ‘New Pacific Diplomacy’ consisting of shared strategies to pursue pan-Pacific interests in a range of areas, including oceans management, fisheries, climate change, sustainable development, decolonisation, seabed mining, and trade.<sup>23</sup> These strategies have yielded significant successes. Pacific island states have, for example, secured much greater financial returns from their collective sovereign control of tuna resources.<sup>24</sup>

In recent times, looking to build on recent successes of collective diplomacy, Pacific island states have looked to work together as an ocean ‘continent’. Island leaders have asserted a new framing of the region, as the *Blue Pacific*. As Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum Dame Meg Taylor explains, the Blue Pacific formulation seeks to: “reframe the region away from the enduring narrative of small, isolated and fragile islands, to a narrative of a large, connected and strategically important ocean continent”.<sup>25</sup>

Recent articulations of the *Blue Pacific* draw from a well-spring of literature and art in the Pacific that has, in the decades since independence, revived pre-colonial culture and custom and emphasised pan-Pacific identities.<sup>26</sup> Since the 1970s in particular, key works by Pacific islander poets, novelists, musicians, visual artists, choreographers and dancers have sought to “destabilise myths of island isolation” and to assert a “transoceanic imaginary” rooted in ocean voyaging and maritime kinship connections.<sup>27</sup> Seminal texts in this tradition include the 1976 essay *Towards a New Oceania*, by Samoan poet and novelist Albert Wendt,<sup>28</sup> the essays *Our Sea of Islands* (1993) and *The Ocean in Us* (1998) by Epeli Hau’ofa,<sup>29</sup> and writings by poet and academic Teresia Teaiwa, who

explained: “we sweat and cry salt water, so we know the ocean is really in our blood”.<sup>30</sup> More recent works include those of Katerina Teaiwa, Cresantia Koya and Karin Amimoto-Ingersoll.<sup>31</sup> This cultural production—artistic, literary and academic—has deeply influenced political forms of regionalism. As political scientist Greg Fry explains, postcolonial diplomacy in the Pacific has been guided by “the unifying links of the past—the epic ocean voyages, the exchange relationships and the unifying Pacific Ocean”.<sup>32</sup>

In 2017 Pacific leaders endorsed a ‘Blue Pacific’ strategy that called for inspired leadership and a long-term foreign policy commitment to act as one ‘Blue Continent’.<sup>33</sup> Samoan Prime Minister Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi explained that the Blue Pacific strategy “aims to strengthen collective action as one Blue Pacific Continent by putting the ‘Blue Pacific’ at the centre of the policy making and collective action”.<sup>34</sup> In 2019, Pacific Islands Forum leaders agreed to develop a shared *2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent*.<sup>35</sup> This strategy is currently under development.

### Possible ways forward:

2. Australia’s ‘step-up’ should support Pacific-led regionalism. Regional cooperation has a proud history in the postcolonial Pacific, and new initiatives should be designed and led by Pacific island states.

## Support island leadership on the global stage

As a bloc of nations, Pacific island states have considerable soft-power resources and are able to exercise significant influence in processes of multilateral diplomacy. Today, Pacific island nations are working together, as an ocean continent, to pursue their shared interests on the global stage. Far from being small and insignificant, Pacific island nations are sovereign across a vast swathe of the world’s surface. They possess significant assets, including control of the world’s largest tuna fishery and a significant voting bloc at the UN. Over the decades since decolonisation Pacific island countries have steadily reclaimed a pan-oceanic identity and doggedly pursued their interests through collective action. Despite opposition from major powers, they have had many successes, including recognition of their exclusive economic zones under UNCLOS, and securing greater economic returns from tuna caught in their waters. Furthermore, island states now exercise global leadership to tackle

multilateral challenges, in areas such as tackling climate change and protecting the world's oceans.

Over the past decade, working together through the auspices of the *Blue Pacific*, Pacific island states have sought to influence global cooperation on ocean management. Through collective diplomacy at the UN for example, Pacific island states successfully championed an ocean goal as part of the UN's 2030 *Sustainable Development Goals*.<sup>36</sup> Subsequently, Fiji co-hosted the inaugural UN Ocean Conference in 2017, and Fiji's ambassador to the UN, Peter Thomson, was appointed UN Special Envoy for the Ocean. Today, Pacific island states are active in simultaneous UN negotiations to develop a new management regime for the high seas,<sup>37</sup> and to govern seabed mining in international waters.<sup>38</sup>

At the UN Headquarters in New York, over recent years, Pacific island states have developed regional positions through the auspices of the Pacific Small Island Developing States (P-SIDS) grouping, a coalition of Pacific ambassadors that notably does not include representatives from Australia or New Zealand.<sup>39</sup> Coordination of regional positions on oceans management has also been improved through the 2010 establishment of an 'Office of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner'.<sup>40</sup>

For the past 30 years Pacific island leaders have shaped multilateral diplomacy intended to effectively tackle climate change. In 1991, Pacific island leaders stressed the urgency of securing a global convention that would entail "significant and immediate reductions in emissions of industrially generated greenhouse gases".<sup>41</sup> Subsequently Pacific island countries—along with other countries in the Caribbean, and the Indian and Atlantic Oceans—formed an Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) to lobby for a global response to climate change.<sup>42</sup> This Alliance came to comprise 44 countries, around 20 per cent of the UN's total membership. Through determined diplomacy, Pacific island states have disproportionately shaped climate talks at the UN.<sup>43</sup>

In 1994 for example, Nauru's UN ambassador Marlene Moses, acting as chair of AOSIS, drafted the first proposal for what later became the Kyoto Protocol.<sup>44</sup>

Subsequently, Pacific island diplomacy was crucial for achievement of the 2015 Paris Agreement. In a brilliant example of diplomatic strategy, the Marshall Islands patiently fostered, then ably led, a global High Ambition Coalition (a grouping of nations from across traditional negotiating divides at the UN) which was crucial for achievement of the Paris Agreement. When he met with Pacific leaders in Hawaii in late 2016, [then] United States President Barack Obama acknowledged that "we could not have gotten a Paris Agreement without the incredible efforts and hard work of the island nations".<sup>45</sup>

Australia should acknowledge, support, and celebrate Pacific island leadership on the world stage. Providing material support to Pacific engagement in multilateral diplomacy would help to cement relations with Pacific island states. Furthermore, where possible, Australia should work with Pacific island states to strengthen and to reform multilateral rules and institutions. Doing so would dramatically enhance Australia's own soft power. In those rare cases where Australia's perceived interests differ from those of Pacific island countries—as, for example, has occurred in recent years with regard to climate policy—Australia should find a way to take a back seat, and allow Pacific island states to clearly state their collective position.

On climate change for example, Pacific island states are providing moral leadership for all states, as they remind major polluters of their responsibilities under the 2015 Paris Agreement. Attempting to veto Pacific collective diplomacy on climate change would likely be harmful to relations. The acrimonious nature of the 2019 Pacific Islands Forum leaders' meeting in Tuvalu, which exposed differences on climate change, attests to the depth of feeling on this issue.<sup>46</sup> It is also the case that an inability or refusal to stand in solidarity with Pacific states on this issue runs the risk of creating or exacerbating strategic fault lines, including with 'like-minded' partners and allies outside the region.<sup>47</sup>

### *Possible ways forward:*

3. Australia's 'step-up' in the Pacific should acknowledge, support, and celebrate Pacific leadership on the global stage.



## Improve access to Australia for Pacific goods

Pacific island states face unique and intractable difficulties in taking advantage of international trading opportunities. Due to factors of economic geography—such as small size, distance from external markets, expensive transport costs and a remarkable vulnerability to natural disasters—the costs of production in the Pacific are invariably higher than for other parts of the world. These factors render Pacific island economies *fundamentally different* from those of other developing countries. Nonetheless, economic opportunities do exist. Australia should look to support Pacific producers, and to develop Pacific economies, by improving access to Australian markets for Pacific producers.

Pacific populations are by world standards young, and rural. It is important that efforts to expand Australia's trading relationship with Pacific island countries should aim to promote new employment and livelihood opportunities for young people in agriculture.<sup>48</sup> In the past, agricultural exports from Pacific island countries were generally in the form of undifferentiated colonial-era crops—such as copra and sugar—that were destined for distant markets in Europe. For some time, large-scale plantations dominated commercial exports. Over recent decades, however, the smallholder sector has been fastest growing, particularly in Melanesia. This sector has also proved to be remarkably price-sensitive, with many farmers choosing what to grow based on the vagaries of international markets.

Key to the future of commercial agriculture in the Pacific islands is high-value, low-volume, niche exports. Higher-value exports include 'single source' products (coffee, chocolate, spices etc.), virgin coconut oil, cosmetics, indigenous nuts and oils, fresh fruit and vegetables, livestock, cut flowers, organic produce, and plantation timbers. A continuing diversification of agricultural exports in Pacific island countries means that rural communities are presented with the opportunity to participate in higher-value production chains. There are excellent opportunities to further commercialise production of high-value timbers, nuts, and tropical fruits and vegetables.<sup>49</sup>

Through its aid program, the Australian government should strengthen value chains for Pacific exports and work with Australian retailers to promote niche, high-value Pacific produce. An expansion of agricultural exports from the Pacific will ultimately be driven by consumer demand. We will see new and increased

Pacific exports where there is a demand for high-value tropical produce (for example, coffee, chocolate, tropical fruit), where there are transport options available, and where market access and quarantine arrangements are in place. At present, a greater range of Pacific produce is sold into New Zealand than into Australia. Consumers in cities like Auckland want access to Pacific produce. Good examples include exports of sweet red papaya from Fiji (a popular breakfast fruit) and exports of taro to a Pacific diaspora living in New Zealand.

In Pacific island countries, local businesses and government officials are working together to prioritise areas of cooperation for gaining (and maintaining) access to Australian markets. The Australian government already supports the development of new commercial opportunities in agriculture, particularly through the Pacific Horticultural and Agricultural Market Access (PHAMA-Plus) scheme. However, much more could be done *in* Australia to improve market access. At present just one person within the Department of Agriculture (supported by the PHAMA-Plus program) is tasked with facilitating access to Australia for products such as ginger, taro, limes, leafy vegetables, breadfruit, dried spices, and handicrafts. The Australian aid program should consider working with Australian retailers (including large supermarket stores in parts of Australia with a large Pacific diaspora population) to improve awareness of what Pacific products are available, to develop new product supply chains, and perhaps even to incentivise retailers to source Pacific produce. Support for market testing and research should also be considered.

During a visit to Vanuatu and Fiji in 2019, Prime Minister Scott Morrison flagged a trial of commercial importation of kava into Australia.<sup>50</sup> While a welcome step, this commercial trial has yet to commence and there are aspects of what has been proposed that require revision. One is the length of the trial, which has been set at 12 months. This is not of sufficient length for producers to establish a viable consumer market. This is particularly the case for producers from Vanuatu, who do not have a ready market in the form of a large diaspora in Australia (as is the case for Fijian, Samoan, and Tongan farmers).

Finally, new research is needed to explore the challenges and opportunities facing Australian businesses that already source Pacific products. This would help to develop a greater understanding of 'weak points' in the value chain 'from the farm to the plate' that might be ameliorated with targeted support from the Australian aid program.



## Possible ways forward:

4. Australia should improve access to Australia for Pacific goods. Opportunities to do so include:
  - a. Expansion of high-value agricultural exports to Australian consumers. Australia should, through its aid program, help to strengthen agricultural value chains for Pacific exports, and work with Australian retailers to promote niche, high-value Pacific produce.
  - b. Support for Pacific agricultural export pathways, particularly through the PHAMA-Plus program, is important. More resources should be allocated to addressing Australian quarantine requirements and expediting the assessment of Pacific products.
  - c. Australia's aid program should look to strengthen value chains for Pacific exports and work with Australian retailers to promote niche, high-value Pacific produce. This could include direct support for the marketing of Pacific produce (financing for a unique 'Pacific' brand), a semi-regular Pacific Expo linking island exporters with Australian business, and the establishment of a working group with Australian retailers who source Pacific produce. New research is also needed to explore challenges and opportunities facing Australian businesses who work with Pacific suppliers.
  - d. Australia should continue the announced trial of commercial imports of kava from Pacific island countries. The initial trial period (of 12 months) should be extended (to at least 24 months) to allow would-be exporters to develop a viable market.

## Improve access to Australia for Pacific people

The cost of production in the Pacific is higher than it is in most other parts of the world and trading competitively is a uniquely difficult prospect for island businesses. In this context, orthodox prescriptions for economic growth and export-led development do not hold, and policymakers must look for unique solutions. Increasingly, attention is being paid to opportunities linked with migration and mobility. Allowing a greater number of Pacific islanders to migrate and to work in Australia will do much to help cement relations with Pacific island states.

Over the past decade Australia has trialed, and then established, labour mobility programs that allow Pacific islanders to work temporarily in Australia. Today some 12,000 workers per year participate in Australia's Seasonal Worker Programme (SWP), undertaking temporary work picking fruit and other horticultural jobs in rural and regional areas.<sup>51</sup> Australia has also expanded opportunities in other areas as well. In 2018 Australia introduced a Pacific Labour Scheme (PLS), which allows Pacific workers to be employed in low and semi-skilled occupations in rural and regional Australia for up to three years. While the PLS scheme is still in its infancy, six industries are currently participating in the scheme in a range of sectors—ranging from hospitality to aged care—and more than 80 businesses are approved employers.

Australia's temporary mobility schemes are not without their challenges. In future, policymakers ought to do more to ensure that women, and people from isolated or poor communities, have opportunities to participate in mobility arrangements. They also need to ensure that Pacific island workers are not subjected to exploitation by unscrupulous employers abroad. Migrant workers in Australia and New Zealand need effective representation to protect their rights around pay, conditions, and health and safety in the workplace. This will continue to require tripartite dialogue between governments, trade unions, and private sector





representatives. Schemes that allow for longer stays—the PLS scheme for example—present a particular challenge for Pacific island families. Consideration should be given to allowing families to accompany workers to Australia, or better yet allowing permanent migration to workers employed under the scheme.

Restrictions on mobility linked with the COVID-19 crisis makes it difficult to assess prospects for Pacific labour mobility in the immediate future. Nonetheless, it is clear that labour mobility programmes have been a major success in developing Australia's relations with Pacific island countries over the past decade. Mobility has also generated much needed income for Pacific island communities and helped to build skills of island workers.

Australian policymakers should look to build on the successes of labour mobility by creating new pathways for temporary mobility, and permanent migration, for Pacific island workers. The World Bank and the Development Policy Centre at the Australian National University have recommended Australia initiate a new 'Pacific Integration Visa' that would allow a quota of Pacific islanders (initially set at 9,000 visas per annum) to enter Australia and to become permanent residents after a period of employment. As well as helping to meet labour shortages in Australia, such a scheme would have many of the same benefits (and fewer challenges) of longer-stay mobility schemes.

Finally, as climate change and sea-level rise threaten the future of low-lying atoll islands, Australian policymakers should plan for migration and resettlement. Here again the World Bank proposes the establishment of an Australia and New Zealand 'Atoll Access Agreement', which would allow open access to Australia and New Zealand for people from the atoll nations of Kiribati and Tuvalu. People living on other atoll islands in the Pacific already have migration opportunities to metropolitan countries (namely France, New Zealand and the United States). Analysis from the World Bank suggests such a scheme would see i-Kiribati and Tuvaluan migration to Australia and New Zealand increase significantly, while remaining a tiny fraction (0.6 per cent) of the overall permanent migration program.

### *Possible ways forward:*

5. Australia should improve access to Australia for Pacific people. Pacific labour mobility entails significant economic benefits for Pacific island countries and for Australian employers. Australian policymakers should build on existing labour mobility schemes in the Pacific and look to extend them to new industries and sectors. Consideration should also be given to expanding options for permanent migration, including through a new 'Pacific Integration Visa'. Finally, Australia should create an 'Atoll Access Visa' allowing permanent migration to Australia for Pacific islanders from Kiribati and Tuvalu.

## **Support Pacific arts, education and sports**

When it comes to people to people links there is more that can be done to build networks of professional and personal relationships between Australians and the people of the Pacific islands region. Investments in activities of this sort will go some way to addressing the glaring lack of Pacific literacy that exists in Australia, across all walks and areas of life.<sup>52</sup> In addition, the sorts of networks and linkages that can be established within the realms of the arts, education, and sport are ones that can form the basis of long lasting relationships that are based on reciprocity and trust rather than transactions.

Cultural expression via the arts is a prime candidate for transforming the way in which Australians perceive Pacific islanders. This is a realm in which Pacific artists, writers, poets, musicians and artisans participate as equals and, indeed, as leaders, teachers, guides and mentors. Cultural and artistic expression provide the means and opportunity for sophisticated and nurturing relationships between Pacific islanders, members of the Pacific diaspora living in Australia and Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people. However, it remains the case that too little is invested in these areas, especially when it comes to providing development assistance, scholarships, training opportunities, etc.<sup>53</sup>



In addition, there are further opportunities to direct development assistance to support livelihood and employment opportunities arising out of creative and cultural expression. There is insufficient awareness in Australia of what Pacific producers have to offer. And yet, we can point to some success having been achieved by using very tailored methodologies that promote business to business (B2B) relationships, which can be mutually beneficial. An example is *Maketi Ples* which has previously showcased creative producers from the region by providing a platform for art, textiles, handicrafts, and other creative products—through an annual gallery of high-end Pacific art.

Given that the creative industries in the Pacific draw on cultural histories and traditions that are rich and diverse, they are the epitome of production that has a niche competitive advantage. It has long been argued that the place of artistic expression has been neglected in development strategies in the region, including those supported by development partners such as Australia. And within that, the role of creative industries to provide livelihood opportunities has yet to be fully explored.

Within the scope of tourism, there are opportunities in some countries to sell domestically produced souvenirs and supply artwork, textiles and other creative products to hotels and resorts. However, the real opportunity lies in brokering B2B relationships with Australian enterprises so that they become high-value markets for what Pacific artisans, artists and creators can supply. This builds on the lessons learned from the *Maketi Ples* experience which has now been discontinued.

Australia's contributions to education in the Pacific islands region are well recognised and highly valued. In particular, Pacific islanders who have benefited from the Australia Awards scholarships retain a very high level of positivity towards Australia and Australians. This demonstrates the ability of investments of this type to establish and sustain important people-to-people links among future leaders of countries and within the region more widely.

There are opportunities to develop these linkages further. This includes by offering more scholarships of the type that are already offered plus widening the scope of the offerings that are currently made. In particular the Australian government should work with appropriate providers in Australia to provide access to TVET and professional training, including via short courses. This will be of particular benefit to the private sector in the region. Widening the scope of offerings should be led and informed by national development plans and human resource frameworks in those countries that have them.

Whilst there have been some efforts recently to develop alumni networks for returning Australian Awardees there is scope for this area of engagement to be further

developed to good effect. For example, professional associations in Australia should be encouraged and/or incentivised to offer associate membership to Pacific professionals to foster peer-to-peer learning and ongoing professional development within a community of peers that includes Australia and other Pacific island countries.

The foreign policy objectives of the New Colombo Plan are yet to be fully achieved in relation to the Pacific given that such a small percentage of the participants spend time in Pacific island countries.<sup>54</sup> Of those that have engaged with the Pacific, the majority have done so by way of mobility tours rather than longer periods of study and/or work placements. Whilst the mobility tours do a great job in opening the eyes of young Australians to the Pacific and may spark an interest in future engagement, they do not contribute anything meaningful in terms of building an understanding of language, politics, economic structures or culture. Greater effort needs to be made to have young Australians spending time in Pacific island countries as the foundation for key relationships in the future.

When it comes to sport as a vehicle for enhancing people-to-people links there is much to be gained. This is especially so given the overall youth of Pacific populations. Whilst there have been some new investments in this space recently, there is more to be done to make them the basis of meaningful relationship building. One of the most significant limitations on the way that Australia engages with Pacific island countries is that there is something of a 'one size fits all' approach which makes the offering insufficiently sophisticated and nuanced. It is not the case that 'everyone in the Pacific plays rugby' and the fact that rugby league is the national sport of Papua New Guinea is largely meaningless in other countries of the region.

Where investments are to be made, including by way of providing financial, technical and coaching support, they should be led by a well-developed understanding of what sports are already successful and/or popular in any given country. That is not to say that there is no scope in developing new sporting connections and outlets. However, initiatives of this type should be demand and not supply led. As with other areas, development of enhanced relationships via sporting connections should include opportunities for Pacific athletes and teams to develop twinning arrangements with brother/sister clubs, teams and associations in Australia. Again, this provides pathways for expanded communities to develop around areas of shared interest, and expertise that comprise Australians and Pacific islanders. This is another way in which the Pacific 'step-up' can evolve from something that Australia does to/for the Pacific to something that Australia does *with* the Pacific.

### *Possible ways forward:*

6. Australia need to invest more in developing a wider, deeper and more sophisticated set of people-to-people links across the Pacific islands region. The areas of arts, education and sport lend themselves to work of this type. In particular Australia should:
  - a. Promote, support and incentivise partnerships and exchanges around cultural and artistic expression with a particular focus on promoting linkages between Pacific islanders, members of the Pacific diasporas and Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander peoples.
  - b. Invest in the arts in the Pacific islands region, including in support for the creative industries as a means of economic empowerment and livelihood enhancement.
  - c. Increase the number of scholarships available to Pacific island students to study in Australia and widen the offering to include VET and professional training by way of short courses.
  - d. Facilitate associate membership of professional associations for Pacific professionals to promote peer to peer learning and continuing professional development.
  - e. Increase the number of New Colombo plan participants who spend time in Pacific island countries, with particular focus on extended periods for study and/or work placements rather than by way of mobility tours.
  - f. Develop investments in sporting programs and linkages from the basis of a demand rather than supply led philosophy and recognise that a 'one size fits all' approach is inappropriate.
  - g. Facilitate twinning arrangements between athletes, clubs and sporting organisations across the region and in Australia, to foster a sporting community that includes everyone.

## **Work as a regional bloc to drive global ambition on climate change**

The single most significant thing Australia could do to improve relations with Pacific island countries would be to take meaningful action on climate change—including through the introduction of domestic policies to reduce emissions, and the pursuit of ambitious middle power diplomacy to drive global emissions reductions. It is difficult to overstate how critical the issue of climate change is to Pacific island countries. Nearly 30 years ago, at the 1991 meeting of the South Pacific Forum, Pacific leaders agreed that “global warming and sea-level rise were the most serious environmental threats” and that “the cultural, economic and physical survival of Pacific nations is at great risk”.<sup>55</sup> Over the decades since, Pacific island states have lobbied the UN Security Council to understand climate change as a threat to the security of nations; one that ought to be considered a matter of “high politics” in international affairs, akin to matters of war and peace.<sup>56</sup>

Threats posed to Pacific island nations by climate change are multiple, and include more frequent and intense cyclones, dying coral reefs, ocean acidification, sea-level rise and coastal inundation.<sup>57</sup> In recent years a number of Pacific island countries have been devastated by cyclones that have killed dozens, left tens of thousands of people in emergency shelters, decimated food crops and crippled sorely needed infrastructure—including schools, hospitals, clinics and houses. Climate change is ‘super-charging’ the strength of Pacific cyclones. In the past five years alone, category 5 cyclones have slammed Vanuatu (twice), Fiji and Tonga; providing a terrifying window to our warmer future, when these storms become even more frequent. Recent estimates suggest that as the Pacific Ocean warms, Category 5 storms could occur four times more often by the end of this century.<sup>58</sup> Ultimately, sea-level rise presents a threat to the territorial integrity of low-lying Pacific island states—particularly Kiribati, Marshall Islands and Tuvalu. A study commissioned by the US military, published in 2018, found that sea-level rise will make dozens of atoll islands uninhabitable from the middle of this century, as salt-water intrusion undermines access to drinking water.<sup>59</sup>

Security officials from Pacific island states tend to argue climate change is a more likely, and more tangible, risk than those associated with other geopolitical issues in the region; including increased competition between China and the United States. As the commander of Fiji’s



military, Rear Admiral Viliame Naupoto, told the 2019 Shangri La Dialogue in Singapore:

I believe there are three major powers in competition in our region ... there is the United States, it has always been there, forever. There is China, which has been a loyal friend for many of us. The third competitor is climate change. Of the three, climate change is winning, and climate change exerts the most influence on countries in our part of the world. If there's any competition, it's with climate change.<sup>60</sup>

In 2018, Pacific leaders issued a regional security declaration—the Boe Declaration—which reaffirmed climate change as the “single greatest threat to the livelihoods, security and well-being of peoples of the Pacific” and reaffirmed a commitment to “progress implementation of the Paris Agreement”.<sup>61</sup>

For decades, Pacific island countries have called for states to work together to limit global warming to 1.5 °C above the long-term average. With the best available science indicating that warming beyond this threshold would critically threaten island futures, island leaders and ambassadors widely adopted the slogan: ‘1.5 to stay alive’. In 2018, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) indicated that keeping global warming to below 1.5 °C would require major transformation in the global economy, and most pointedly, a rapid global phase out of coal-fired power.<sup>62</sup> At present however, global emissions continue to rise, and greater ambition is needed from all states. Even if national pledges to reduce emissions—made under the 2015 Paris Agreement—are met, the planet’s average temperature is set to rise by more than 3 °C by the end of the century, a devastating outcome for Pacific island states.<sup>63</sup>

Like its Pacific island neighbours, climate change poses a direct threat to Australia’s national security. These threats were underscored by unprecedented large-scale bushfires over the 2019–2020 bushfire season.<sup>64</sup> Australia also faces drought and water shortages, stronger cyclones, flooding, and coastal inundation. In a world headed toward 4 degrees of warming this century, the continued habitability of parts of the continent is in doubt. Australia has a history of responsible middle-power diplomacy. Working with

other states Australia has strengthened multilateral rules, having for example formed the Cairns Group to shape global rules on agricultural trade, and leading global efforts to protect whales. In 2020 alone, the Australian government has looked to strengthen the World Health Organization, and has joined other states to call for reform of the World Trade Organization.

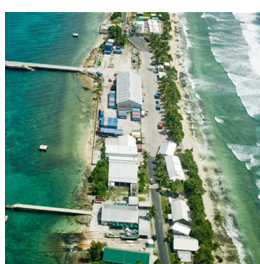
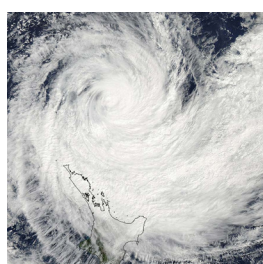
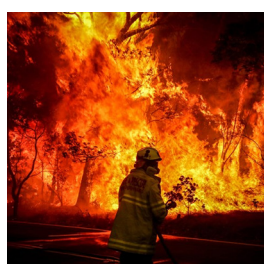
Australia should look to leverage its diplomatic strengths to help build international support for emissions reductions. In doing so, Australia should work with New Zealand and Pacific island states. Working as part of a regional bloc would dramatically enhance Australia’s soft-power on the global stage. It would also be immensely beneficial for Australia’s ‘step-up’ in the Pacific. Working *with* Pacific island states to drive global climate ambition would help to counter China’s influence in the Pacific.

It is noteworthy that, if a Democrat president is elected to the White House in 2020, the United States will look to drive global ambition on climate change. Joe Biden, the Democrat front-runner for the Presidential campaign, has indicated he would organise a major climate summit in Washington in the first 100 days of office. He has also indicated he will challenge China’s promotion of coal-fired power. If Australia’s most powerful security ally does take the lead on climate change, this policy shift will no doubt win friends in the Pacific islands. In turn, Australia would also face renewed pressure to step up on climate change.

Ultimately, Australia should see Pacific island states not as potential sources of threat in its neighbourhood, but as partners. If Australia wants to strengthen the rules-based global order in ways that protect its interests, Pacific island states would prove powerful allies, not liabilities.

### *Possible ways forward:*

7. Australia should work with Pacific island states, as a diplomatic coalition, to drive global ambition to reduce carbon emissions. Doing so would dramatically enhance Australia’s own soft power on the global stage and would do much to further the goals of Australia’s Pacific ‘step-up’.





## Notes

1. As Hugh White recently explained: "Let's be honest: Australians have never had much time for our South Pacific neighbours. The island nations that lie to our north and northeast, stretching from Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands to Vanuatu, Fiji and beyond, may be close to us geographically, but we have not found them especially interesting, important or profitable ... Only their strategic significance has attracted us: the islands scattered widely across the north of our continent are critical to our protection from armed attack". Hugh White, 'In Denial: Defending Australia as China looks South', *Australian Foreign Affairs*, no. 6 (2019): 5–27.
2. Respondents were asked whether "Australia is more a part of Asia, Europe, the Pacific or, is it not really part of any region". In response Australians were divided: 32% said Asia, 31% the Pacific and 31% said the country was "not really part of any region". For more see, Lowy Institute, *Australia and the World: Public Opinion and Foreign Policy* (Sydney: Lowy Institute for International Policy, 2010).
3. See Jonathan Schultz, *Overseeing and Overlooking: Australian Engagement with the Pacific Islands (1988–2007)*, (PhD Thesis, School of Social and Political Science, The University of Melbourne, 2012).
4. Joanne Wallis, 'Hollow Hegemon: Australia's Declining Influence in the Pacific', *East Asia Forum*, 21 September 2016, <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2016/09/21/hollow-hegemon-australias-declining-role-in-the-pacific/>.
5. See Tess Newton Cain, James Cox and Geir Henning Presterudstuen, *Pacific Perspectives on the World: Listening to Australia's Island Neighbours in Order to Build Strong, Respectful and Sustainable Relationships* (Sydney: The Whitlam Institute & Peacifica, 2020).
6. For more see, Tess Newton Cain, 'The State of the Step-Up: Australia's Engagement with the Pacific Islands Region' in *State of the Neighbourhood* (Brisbane: Griffith Asia Institute, 2019).
7. Island leaders—including from Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and Cook Islands—have also been hosted for high-level bilateral visits to Australia.
8. The *Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific* was launched in mid-2019.
9. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *2017 Foreign Policy White Paper: Opportunity, Security, Strength* (Canberra: Australian Government, 2017).
10. See Matthew Dornan and Tess Newton Cain, 'Regional Service Delivery Among Pacific Island Countries: An Assessment', *Asia and the Pacific Policy Studies* 1, no. 3 (2014): 541–560.
11. Wesley Morgan, 'Much Lost, Little Gained: Contemporary Trade Agreements in the Pacific Islands', *Journal of Pacific History* 53, no.3 (2018): 268–286.
12. See Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Design Summary: Australia Pacific Security College*, <https://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/business-opportunities/Pages/design-summary-for-the-australia-pacific-security-college>.
13. Stephen Dziedzic, 'US to Partner with Australia, Papua New Guinea on Manus Island Naval Base', *The ABC*, 17 November 2018, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-11-17/us-to-partner-with-australia-and-png-on-manus-island-naval-base/10507658>.
14. Stephen Kuper, 'Australia Confirms Blackrock Camp MoU with Fiji', *Defence Connect*, 23 April 2019, <https://www.defenceconnect.com.au/key-enablers/3921-australia-confirms-blackrock-camp-mou-with-fiji>.
15. David Wroe, 'Christopher Pyne Promises New Ship in 'Pivot' to the South Pacific', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 November 2018, <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/christopher-pyne-promises-new-ship-in-pivot-to-the-south-pacific-20181108-p50es8.html>.
16. See Newton Cain, Cox and Presterudstuen, *Pacific Perspectives on the World*.
17. Greg Fry, 'Regionalism and International Politics of the South Pacific', *Pacific Affairs* 54, no. 3 (1981): 455–84.
18. Now the Pacific Islands Forum.
19. For a discussion of Pacific collective diplomacy during the Cold War, see Greg Fry, 'International Cooperation in the South Pacific: From Regional Integration to Collective Diplomacy', in *The Political Economy of Regional Cooperation: Comparative Case Studies*, ed. Andrew Axline (London: Pinter Press, 1994). See also Greg Fry, 'At the Margin: The South Pacific and Changing World Order', in *Charting the Post-Cold War Order*, eds. Richard Leaver and James L. Richardson (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993).
20. Greg Fry, *Framing the Islands: Power and Diplomatic Agency in Pacific Regionalism*, (Canberra: ANU Press, 2019), 11.
21. Fry, *Framing the Islands*, p. 21.
22. Anna Naupa, 'Indo-Pacific Diplomacy: A View from the Pacific Islands', *Politics & Policy* 45, no. 5 (2017): 902–917.
23. For a detailed discussion of the New Pacific Diplomacy, see Greg Fry and Sandra Tarte, *The New Pacific Diplomacy* (Suva: University of the South Pacific, 2016). See also Sandra Tarte, 'Regionalism and Changing Regional Order in the Pacific Islands', *Asia and the Pacific Policy Studies* 1, no. 2 (2014): 312–324.
24. Transform Aqorau, 'How Tuna is Shaping Regional Diplomacy', in *The New Pacific Diplomacy*, eds. Greg Fry and Sandra Tarte (Canberra, ANU Press, 2016).
25. Aqorau, 'How Tuna is Shaping Regional Diplomacy'.
26. The Fiji campus of the University of the South Pacific (USP) proved a key site for renewed cultural production, hosting the inaugural Festival of Pacific Arts in 1972 (a major event held every four years since) and spawning important Pacific literary journals like *Mana Review*. In 1997, Epeli Hau'ofa established at USP the Oceania Centre for Arts, Culture and Pacific Studies, which remains a key site of Pacific cultural production. To this day, the university's student newspaper is titled *Wansolwara*—a pidgin word which can be translated as 'one ocean—one people.'
27. For an overview of postcolonial literature in the Pacific Islands, see discussion in: Elizabeth Deloughrey, *Roots and Routes: Navigating Caribbean and Pacific Islands Literatures*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007).
28. Albert Wendt, 'Towards a New Oceania', *Mana Review* 1, no. 1 (1976): 49–60.
29. See Epeli Hau'ofa, 'Our Sea of Islands', in *A New Oceania: Rediscovering Our Sea of Islands*, eds. Eric Waddell, Vijay Naidu and Epeli Hau'ofa (Suva: University of the South Pacific, 1993); Epeli Hau'ofa, 'The Ocean in Us', *The Contemporary Pacific* 10, no. 2 (1998): 392–410.

30. Teresia Teaiwa cited in Epeli Hau'ofa, 'The Ocean in Us'.
31. See, for example Katerina Teaiwa, 'Our Sea of Islands: Pan-Pacific Regionalism in the Age of Climate Change', *Pacific Studies* 41 (2018): 26–54; Katerina Teaiwa, 'Reframing Oceania: Lessons from Pacific Studies', in *Reframing the Global*, ed. Hilary Kahn (Bloomington: Indiana University Press); Cresantia F Koya, Lingikoni Vaka'uta and Rosiana Lagi (2018) 'Reflections from Oceania on Indigenous Epistemology, the Ocean and Sustainability', in *Tidalectics: Imagining an Oceanic Worldview through Art and Science*, ed. Stefanie Hessler (Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2018), 127–132; and Karin Amimoto Ingersoll, *Waves of Knowing: Seascape Epistemology*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016).
32. For a discussion see Fry, *Framing the Islands*.
33. Pacific Islands Forum, *Forty Eighth Pacific Islands Forum: Forum Communique* (Suva: Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 5–8 September 2017).
34. See Pacific Islands Forum, 'The Blue Pacific: Pacific Countries Demonstrate Innovation in Sustainably Developing, Managing, and Conserving Their Part of the Pacific Ocean', *Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat*, 5 June 2017.
35. Pacific Islands Forum, *Fiftieth Pacific Islands Forum: Forum Communique* (Suva: Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 13–16 August 2019).
36. For an excellent overview of the Pacific's collective 'ocean diplomacy' at the UN see: Genevieve Quirk and Quentin Hanich, 'Ocean Diplomacy: The Pacific Island Countries' Campaign to the UN for an Ocean Sustainable Development Goal', *Asia-Pacific Journal of Ocean Law and Policy* 1 (2018): 68–95.
37. Negotiations at the UN are ongoing for a treaty to manage Biodiversity in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ), that is, in the high seas.
38. Negotiations are underway at the International Seabed Authority to develop an "exploitation code"—a legal framework that would enable deep sea mining in waters beyond national jurisdiction.
39. For an overview of the P-SIDS Grouping see: Fulori Manoa, 'The New Pacific Diplomacy at the United Nations: The rise of the PSIDS', in *The New Pacific Diplomacy*, eds. Greg Fry and Sandra Tarte (Canberra: ANU Press, 2016).
40. The Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum acts as the Pacific Ocean Commissioner, and is supported in that role by the Office of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner. The Oceans Commissioner aims to "improve high-level representation and provide dedicated advocacy on oceans issues for the region". For a discussion see: Genevieve Quirk and Harriet Harden-Davies, 'Cooperation, Competence and Coherence: The Role of Regional Oceans Governance in The South West Pacific for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction', *International Journal of Marine and Coastal Law* 32, no. 4 (2017): 672–708.
41. The Forum "stressed the urgency of securing international action through the timely conclusion of a strong and substantive global convention with commitments to control the adverse effects of climate change by, inter alia, significant and immediate reductions in emissions of industrially generated greenhouse gases". See Pacific Islands Forum, *Twenty-Second Pacific Islands Forum: Forum Communique* (Suva: Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 29–30 July 1991).
42. For a discussion see, Espen Ronneberg, 'Small Islands and the Big Issue: Climate Change and the Role of the Alliance of Small Island States', in *The Oxford Handbook of International Climate Change Law*, eds. Kevin R. Gray, Richard Tarasofsky, and Cinnamon Carlarne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).
43. Indeed, the primary mechanism for cooperation on climate change, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) established in 1992, explicitly recognises unique threats faced by islands states, and island states have specially allocated seats on key UNFCCC bodies.
44. Under the Protocol developed countries agreed to a collective target of a 5.2 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions below 1990 levels by between 2008 and 2012.
45. The White House, *Remarks by the President to Leaders from the Pacific Island Conference of Leaders and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature World Conservation Congress* (The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, 1 September 2016).
46. See Stefan Armbruster and Tess Newton Cain, 'Trying Times in Tuvalu', *Devpolicy Blog*, 20 August 2019, <https://devpolicy.org/trying-times-in-tuvalu-20190820>.
47. See Tess Newton Cain, 'Australia Shows Up in Tuvalu and Trips Over', *East Asia Forum* 30 August 2019, <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2019/08/30/australia-shows-up-in-tuvalu-and-trips-over/>.
48. For a discussion see, Ron Duncan, 'Enhancing the Labour Absorption Capacity of Pacific Agriculture', *Pacific Economic Bulletin* 22, no. 1 (2007): 164–174.
49. For a discussion on how Australia can be a bigger and better market for Pacific goods and services see, Wesley Morgan and Tess Newton Cain, *Activating Greater Trade and Investment Between Australia and Pacific Island Countries* (Brisbane: Griffith Asia Institute, 2020), [https://www.griffith.edu.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0022/1083154/pacific-trade-policy-brief-9-6-20.pdf](https://www.griffith.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0022/1083154/pacific-trade-policy-brief-9-6-20.pdf).
50. Scott Morrison, 'Stepping Up Trade and Cultural Ties in the Pacific', Media Release. Office of the Prime Minister of Australia, 11 October 2019, <https://www.pm.gov.au/media/stepping-trade-and-cultural-ties-pacific>.
51. Stephen Howes and Holly Lawton, 'The Pacific Labour Scheme: Is it a Flop?', *Devpolicy Blog*, 29 July 2019.
52. See Newton Cain, Cox and Geir Presterudstuen, *Pacific Perspectives on the World*.

53. Pacific Institute of Public Policy, *The Art of Development: Investing in the Creative Economy*, (Pacific Institute of Public Policy, 2012).
54. Tess Newton Cain, *Walking the Talk: Is Australia's Pacific Engagement a Step-Up or a Stumble?* (Cairns: The Cairns Institute, James Cook University, 2018).
55. Pacific Islands Forum, *Twenty-Second Pacific Islands Forum: Forum Communique* (Suva: Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 29–30 July 1991).
56. See Marcus Stephen, 'On Nauru, a Sinking Feeling', *New York Times*, 18 July 2011, <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/19/opinion/19stephen.html>.
57. For a discussion see, Wesley Morgan 'Climate Change, at the Frontlines', *The Interpreter*, 20 September 2018, [www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/climate-change-frontlines](http://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/climate-change-frontlines).
58. See Adelle Thomas, Patrick Pringle, Peter Pfeleiderer and Carl-Friedrich Schleussner, 'Briefing Note on Tropical Cyclones: Impacts, the link to Climate Change and Adaptation', *Climate Analytics*, 2016, [http://climateanalytics.org/files/tropical\\_cyclones\\_impacts\\_cc\\_adaptation\\_2.pdf](http://climateanalytics.org/files/tropical_cyclones_impacts_cc_adaptation_2.pdf).
59. Curt Storlazzi et al., 'Most Atolls Will be Uninhabitable by the Mid-21st Century Because of Sea-Level Rise Exacerbating Wave Driven Flooding', *Science Advances* 4, no. 4 (2018): 1–9.
60. Viliame Naupoto cited in Peter Hartcher, 'Cool Rationality Replaced by US-China Fight Club', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 June 2019, [www.smh.com.au/world/asia/cool-rationality-replaced-by-us-china-fight-club-20190603-p51tvu.html](http://www.smh.com.au/world/asia/cool-rationality-replaced-by-us-china-fight-club-20190603-p51tvu.html).
61. Pacific Islands Forum, 'Boe Declaration on Regional Security', Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, <https://www.forumsec.org/2018/09/05/boe-declaration-on-regional-security/>. See also Matthew Dornan and Tess Newton Cain, 'The Nauru 2018 Pacific Islands Forum: The New Boe on the Block and More', *Devpolicy Blog*, 12 September 2018, <https://devpolicy.org/2018-pacific-islands-leaders-forum-20180912/>.
62. See IPCC, 'Chapter 2: Mitigation Pathways Compatible with 1.5°C in the Context of Sustainable Development', in *Global Warming of 1.5°C: An IPCC Special Report on the Impacts of Global Warming of 1.5 °C above Pre-industrial Levels and Related Global Greenhouse Gas Emission Pathways, in the Context of Strengthening the Global Response to the Threat of Climate Change, Sustainable Development, and Efforts to Eradicate Poverty* (IPCC, 2018), 93–174, [https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/sites/2/2019/05/SR15\\_Chapter2\\_Low\\_Res.pdf](https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/sites/2/2019/05/SR15_Chapter2_Low_Res.pdf).
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64. The unprecedented fires—fanned by record heat and dry conditions—destroyed more than 2,000 houses, left dozens of people dead, and more than a billion animals lost their lives. For a discussion see, Matt McDonald, 'Climate Change, Security and the Australian Bushfires', *The Interpreter*, 12 February 2020.

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