



Monday 25 March

## Joint Media Release

### **Accelerating economic cooperation: Vanuatu opens Consulate-General in Sydney**

**SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA:** Vanuatu and Australia celebrated another bilateral milestone in their enduring partnership today, with the official opening of the Vanuatu Consulate-General in Sydney.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and External Trade the Honourable Matai Seremaiah Nawalu opened the consulate-general in Sydney's Central Business District with Governor of New South Wales Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC.

Deputy Prime Minister Seremaiah said the occasion was a landmark achievement in the history of Vanuatu-Australia relations.

“I am convinced that the Consulate General will greatly contribute to the further enhancement of contacts between the Vanuatu and Australian peoples.

“It will become an indicator of warm relations between two friendly and neighbouring countries, a unique milestone for ensuring peace and security in the region,” said the Deputy Prime Minister.

Vanuatu's diplomatic presence in Sydney will enhance trade and investment links between Australia and Vanuatu, as well as providing consular services to ni-Vanuatu citizens including Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) workers based in New South Wales. Consul-General Donald Pelam has led this work since his appointment in May 2023.

Governor Beazley said she looked forward to the continued interaction with Vanuatu.

“I am proud and pleased the Deputy Prime Minister has travelled to Sydney for the occasion it shows the importance of this consular office in the state of New South Wales and the strength of our people-to-people links.

“We look forward to the continued interaction with you and the Consul-General,” said the Governor.

Vanuatu High Commissioner to Australia His Excellency Samson Fare, Australian High Commissioner to Vanuatu Her Excellency Heidi Bootle, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) NSW State Office Director Crispin Conroy, Deputy Lord Mayor of Sydney Councillor Robert Kok and City of Sydney Councillor Emelda Davis joined for the event.



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There was strong representation from Sydney's vibrant consular community, led by Dean of the consular corps Consul-General of Malta Lawrence Buhagiar.

Sydney has the second largest consular community in the world after New York City. In his remarks, DFAT NSW Director Conroy said he was excited by the economic, trade and tourism opportunities presented by Vanuatu's consulate-general in Sydney.

Pastor Johnny Obed Hillyalong, a former ni-Vanuatu educator and church leader now based in Sydney, blessed the plaque to be unveiled by Deputy Prime Minister Seremaiah and Governor Beazley.

Australian High Commissioner Bootle said Australia welcomed Vanuatu's expanding diplomatic footprint.

"It is not only geography, but the shared ties between our people that make Vanuatu and Australia close friends and good partners.

"Labour mobility workers already make significant investments in both Vanuatu and Australia's economies, but our work in partnership to support increased domestic and international trade in Vanuatu is taking our economic cooperation to a greater level," said High Commissioner Bootle.

Vanuatu and Australia partner in many initiatives to upskill Vanuatu's primary producers and support better market access for Vanuatu products; including to Australian markets.

Over the past 15 months, twenty Vanuatu suppliers have exported over 57,000 kilograms of kava to the Australian market. Vanuatu's Tahitian lime, cocoa and sandalwood industries also benefit from Australian support throughout the agricultural value chain.

The Consulate-General in Sydney will connect Vanuatu to more private sector partners in Australia. After the ceremony, Deputy Prime Minister Seremaiah convened a trade and economic roundtable with stakeholders from Australia's private sector, multilateral development banks based in Sydney and business and industry groups to discuss investment opportunities in Vanuatu.

Vanuatu's diplomatic presence in Sydney will deepen links between the nations, people and economies of Vanuatu and Australia. Australia welcomes Vanuatu's plans to further expand its footprint with consulates in Brisbane and Melbourne.



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*The Honourable Matai Seremaiah Nawalu, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and External Trade and Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of New South Wales cut ribbon to open the new Consulate-General in Sydney's Central Business District.*



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*The Honourable Matai Seremaiah Nawalu, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and External Trade in the new office of the Consulate-General in Sydney's Central Business District.*



*The Honourable Matai Seremaiah Nawalu, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and External Trade and Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of New South Wales cut cake at the opening of the new consulate-general in Sydney's Central Business District.*



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*Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of New South Wales, The Honourable Matai Seremaiah Nawalu, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and External Trade and Consul-General Donald Pelam.*



*His Excellency Samson Fare, Vanuatu High Commissioner to Australia, Her Excellency Heidi Bootle, Australian High Commissioner to Vanuatu, Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of New South Wales, Councillor Sreeni Pillamarri, Liberal and Councillor Emelda Davis, City of Sydney's Central Business District.*



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