



STATEMENT

JOINT STATEMENT: AUSTRALIA-NEW ZEALAND LEADERS' MEETING 2023

1. The Prime Minister of New Zealand, Rt Hon Chris Hipkins, and the Prime Minister of Australia, the Hon Anthony Albanese MP, met in Wellington on 26 July 2023 for the annual Australia New Zealand Leaders' Meeting.
2. The relationship between New Zealand and Australia is unlike any other. Our shared values, common outlook and people-to-people links underpin a critical partnership. New Zealand and Australia are family and working together is intrinsic to our respective interests. Even as the world evolves, our partnership goes from strength to strength.
3. The meeting came during the joint Australia-New Zealand hosting of the FIFA Women's World Cup – embodying both countries' passion for sport and our proud commitment to gender equality and fairness.
4. Prime Ministers noted that 2023 is a year in which New Zealand and Australia celebrate a trifecta of significant anniversaries: the 40th anniversary of the world leading Closer Economic Relations Trade Agreement that has transformed our economies and societies; the 50th anniversary of the Trans-Tasman Travel Arrangement, a landmark achievement that facilitated seamless movement of people between our nations; and the 80th anniversary of the establishment of High Commissions in our respective capitals.
5. It is fitting that in this anniversary year, Leaders committed to a Trans-Tasman Roadmap to 2035 to ensure the trans-Tasman partnership remains agile and responsive to a changing world. The Roadmap outlines how we will work together over the coming decade across five pillars that offer the greatest potential for achieving our shared vision: sustainable, inclusive and prosperous economies; security and resilience; active partners in the Pacific; upholding shared principles and values; and our peoples.

Economic Issues

6. Prime Ministers noted that the 40th year of Closer Economic Relations (CER) is a special milestone in the Australia-New Zealand relationship. They also reflected that CER has served for forty years as an example of how a high quality trade agreement should operate; the opportunity now was to ensure CER continues to project our shared ambition to the world.

7. Prime Ministers noted the success of the Single Economic Market (SEM), including progress across a range of work-streams. This includes science and innovation, with Prime Ministers celebrating reaching the delivery of SouthPAN early Open Services. This system augments satellite positioning services to improve the accuracy and reliability of satellite-based navigation systems, significantly benefitting science, businesses and communities. Prime Ministers also acknowledged that our science and innovation agencies are looking at ways to level-up our research collaboration.

8. Prime Ministers also agreed on the continued importance of the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Arrangement, and reaffirmed the long-term goal of nurturing a seamless trans-Tasman business environment. To this end, Prime Ministers supported a review and modernisation of the SEM agenda, to ensure that it was fit for purpose in facilitating regulatory alignment and greater economic integration during a period of swift economic and industrial change. They noted the importance of officials meeting to take forward priorities under the SEM agenda and implementing the Trans-Tasman Roadmap to 2035. Prime Ministers agreed that practical steps towards this include updating our Double Taxation Agreement, and modernising the Joint Food Regulation System including Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ).

9. Prime Ministers reflected on the role both countries play in advancing sustainable and inclusive trade policy, and on the advancements and achievements made in this area since the entry into force of CER four decades ago. To this end, Prime Ministers welcomed the announcement of Australia's membership in the Inclusive Trade Action Group and Global Trade and Gender Arrangement, joining New Zealand and other like-minded countries in committing to advance an inclusive and sustainable trade policy globally.

10. To mark 40 years of Australia and New Zealand's comprehensive trading relationship under CER, Prime Ministers agreed that the countries would conclude the Australia-New Zealand Sustainable and Inclusive Trade Declaration, to amplify our trade commitments across these wide-ranging areas of economic collaboration. They directed officials to take forward this work in advance of the next CER Ministerial Meeting, to prioritise an integrated and climate focused approach to building modern, resilient and inclusive economies on both sides of the Tasman.

11. Prime Ministers also looked forward to the signing in a timely manner of the upgrade of the Agreement Establishing the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area. They commended the upgraded Agreement for creating new commercial opportunities for services and investment, and in the digital economy and green economy. They also welcomed the Agreement's commitments on sustainable development and inclusive trade, ensuring that it remains ASEAN's highest-quality Free Trade Agreement.

Climate

12. Prime Ministers welcomed the inaugural Australia–New Zealand Climate and Finance Dialogue, held in Wellington on 8 June 2023. Ministers responsible for Climate and Finance agreed to hold this dialogue annually, to establish a Net Zero Government Working Group to support decarbonising public services, to coordinate efforts on production and supply of electric and zero emissions vehicles, work to align sustainable finance frameworks, develop adaptation indicators and monitoring frameworks and support the development of internationally aligned Guarantee of Origin schemes. Prime Ministers look forward to the next dialogue, which will be hosted by Australia in 2024.

13. Noting with concern the findings of the most recent report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change demonstrating the world is not on track to limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels, Prime Ministers recognised the need to take accelerated action to reduce global emissions this decade to keep the 1.5 degree temperature goal within reach.

14. Leaders noted the economic opportunities of the net zero transition and agreed to work together to harness the significant opportunities that transitioning to low-emissions, climate-resilient economies offers for both countries.

15. Prime Ministers acknowledged that climate change remains the single greatest existential threat facing the Pacific, underscoring the need for both our nations to take accelerated climate action and drive forward the clean energy transition to deliver rapid, deep and sustained reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. They discussed the need to deliver on Pacific priorities, including effective climate finance and strengthened climate adaptation and resilience in the region.

16. Prime Ministers reinforced that as Pacific Island Forum members, New Zealand and Australia stand alongside other Forum members in facing the climate crisis, and are committed to working closely together to support Australia's bid to host the 31st UN Climate Conference of the Parties (COP31) in partnership with the Pacific in 2026 as a means to elevate Pacific priorities and bring profile to the unique climate challenges faced by the region. To this end, Prime Ministers recognised the positive impact of leveraging Australia and New Zealand's collective resources, including by pursuing innovative models to support adaptation and resilient infrastructure, sharing our respective project pipelines to identify Pacific-led projects suitable for co-financing, and collaborating with like-minded partners.

People-to-People Links

17. Prime Minister Hipkins reiterated his thanks to Prime Minister Albanese for the establishment of a new direct pathway to Australian citizenship for New Zealand citizens, ensuring the rights of New Zealanders who choose to live and work in Australia long-term.

Prime Ministers welcomed efforts between New Zealand and Australian government agencies to support Australia's implementation of the pathway to citizenship for New Zealand applicants.

18. Prime Ministers announced the revitalisation of a joint Australia-New Zealand working group to scope initiatives to move closer towards seamless travel across the Tasman, to report back by end of June 2024.

19. Prime Ministers acknowledged the unique role of Māori and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in the identity of both countries, including their rich cultures and languages, and their ancestral, spiritual and continuing connection to lands and waters. Prime Ministers spoke of the importance of working in genuine partnership with Māori and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to embed and strengthen Indigenous led approaches and voices in policy and decision making for better outcomes. They remain committed to this engagement, including through the Australia and Aotearoa-New Zealand Indigenous Collaboration Arrangement (ICA), in place since 2020, and reaffirmed their commitment to refresh the ICA.

20. Prime Ministers also noted the 2021 Indigenous Peoples Economic and Trade Cooperation Arrangement, of which Australia and New Zealand are founding participants, and the Indigenous Business Sector Group within the Australia New Zealand Leadership Forum. Prime Ministers shared ambition to see these economic links grow and welcomed the work under way to this end, including the advancement of Indigenous communities, businesses and organisations.

Defence Cooperation

21. In the context of Australia's Defence Strategic Review and New Zealand's Defence Policy Review, Leaders tasked Defence Ministers to update Closer Defence Relations (CDR) to ensure it is fit for purpose, drives interoperability and enables us to respond as allies in a deteriorating strategic environment, including supporting the security and resilience of the Pacific.

The Pacific

22. Our countries' deep friendship is bound together by our history, our Pacific communities, and our shared home in the Blue Pacific Continent. Leaders are committed to partnering with Pacific island countries to advance the region's priorities, including by implementing the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent. This includes a commitment to listen to and support Pacific aspirations for resilience, prosperity, climate and food security, conservation of land-based environment and ocean resources, safety and common values. Leaders also committed to mobilise the goodwill and energy of the Partners in the Blue Pacific initiative to deliver on Pacific priorities, guided by the 2050 Strategy.

23. Our shared Blue Pacific Continent faces a range of challenges including climate change, institutional and economic fragility, social and demographic issues and increasing geostrategic

competition. The Pacific is a resilient, vibrant region with its own voice and priorities. Leaders committed to continue to work closely together with Pacific partners to support prosperity, peace and resilience in the region.

24. Prime Ministers acknowledged that New Zealand and Australia must renew our efforts to invest in effective regionalism by supporting the Pacific Islands Forum and other regional institutions. Leaders reaffirmed their commitment to the centrality of the Pacific Islands Forum and acknowledged that the region is stronger together. Leaders agreed that this architecture not only provides an opportunity for Pacific countries to deliberate key regional priorities, but that a united Pacific Islands Forum is central to protecting our shared interests in a peaceful, stable, prosperous and resilient region.

25. Prime Ministers expressed concern that the implementation of the new policing agreement between China and Solomon Islands would undermine the Pacific's agreed regional security norms, including a 'family first' approach to peace and security. The agreement is inconsistent with Pacific Islands Forum leaders' commitments and the approach the Forum has taken on regional security matters. Leaders agreed it would be important for the Pacific Islands Forum to discuss these issues and encourage transparency, enabling the region to collectively consider the implications for our shared security.

26. Prime Ministers looked forward to Samoa hosting the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in October 2024, the first time a Pacific island country has hosted CHOGM. They noted their shared commitment to helping Samoa host a successful meeting that advances the priorities of Pacific island countries and other Commonwealth small island developing states.

The Indo-Pacific

27. Prime Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to an open, stable and prosperous Indo-Pacific that is respectful of sovereignty and free from coercion. Leaders reaffirmed respect for international law and agreed rules and norms in the region, and strengthening cooperation to support robust regional institutions. Prime Ministers reiterated their commitment to ASEAN centrality and ASEAN-led architecture, and to the principles underpinning the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific, in support of their shared vision for the wider Indo-Pacific region.

28. Prime Ministers affirmed the need for both countries to hold fast to their values in support of the international rules-based order, which underpins the rights and sovereignty of all countries. They agreed to work together through the United Nations and multilateral institutions, including to protect and promote human rights. Leaders expressed serious concerns about human rights violations in Xinjiang and the continuing systematic erosion of Hong Kong's autonomy, freedom and rights, including through the introduction of the National Security Law and the recent arrest warrants issued for democracy advocates.

29. Prime Ministers expressed concern about growing challenges to regional stability in a more contested and difficult world. They expressed serious concern over developments in the South China Sea and an intensification of destabilising activities, including the continued militarisation of disputed features and unsafe behaviour at sea and in the air. Prime Ministers further underscored the importance of maintaining freedom of navigation and overflight, consistent with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). They emphasised the obligation of all states to adhere to international law, particularly UNCLOS. They further emphasised the importance of the peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with international law, and reiterated that the 2016 South China Sea Arbitral Award is final and binding on the parties.

30. Prime Ministers expressed concern about tensions across the Taiwan Strait. Both called for the peaceful resolution of cross-strait issues through dialogue without the threat or use of force or coercion.

31. Prime Ministers acknowledged China would remain an important economic partner for both countries, and the importance of engagement and dialogue with China to advance and uphold national interests and manage differences. They reiterated the importance of China and the United States re-opening lines of communication at all levels and managing strategic competition responsibly.

32. Prime Ministers condemned North Korea's repeated ballistic missile launches, in violation of multiple United Nations Security Council resolutions. Leaders encouraged North Korea to return to dialogue and abandon its nuclear, other weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs, which threaten stability and security on the Korean peninsula and in the broader Indo-Pacific region.

33. Prime Ministers reiterated their support for ASEAN's efforts to facilitate inclusive dialogue towards achieving an end to the crisis in Myanmar. They called on the Myanmar military regime to honour its commitments to ASEAN under the Five-Point Consensus and end the violence; engage in dialogue; release those unjustly detained and allow unimpeded access for humanitarian assistance.

34. Prime Ministers welcomed the increased engagement in the region of the United States and United Kingdom, who share our vision of an open, inclusive and resilient Indo-Pacific. Prime Ministers discussed the AUKUS security partnership and the partnership's shared objectives of peace, stability and the preservation of the international rules-based system in the wider region, including a commitment to non-proliferation. Prime Ministers also welcomed the Quad's positive and practical agenda to support Indo-Pacific countries' priorities and needs.

Global Issues

35. Prime Ministers reiterated their strong commitment to multilateralism and the international rules-based order as essential to the peace, security, and prosperity of all countries and to ensuring every nation has voice on the world stage. Leaders committed to continuing to work together to strengthen multilateral institutions and ensure that they reflect the interests of all states, including to protect and promote human rights.

36. Prime Minister Hipkins confirmed New Zealand's support for two priority Australian candidacies: its candidature for a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council for the term 2029–2030; and its nomination of Judge Hilary Charlesworth for re-election to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for the term 2024–2033.

37. Prime Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to reinforce the rules-based multilateral trading system with the World Trade Organization (WTO) at its core, including having a fully and well-functioning WTO dispute settlement system as soon as possible.

38. Prime Ministers condemned in the strongest terms Russia's illegal and immoral war in Ukraine. They discussed the need to ensure the international community remains steadfast in holding Russia to account for its unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression. They reaffirmed their strong support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and underlined their commitment to assist Ukraine.

39. Prime Ministers acknowledged their shared commitment to realising a world without nuclear weapons, and are seized of the urgent need for progress on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, including as States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Treaty of Rarotonga. They recognised the importance of strengthening the international disarmament and arms control regime, and also expressed support for interim disarmament measures such as nuclear risk reduction and enhanced transparency and accountability, in the context of the challenging arms control environment.

40. Prime Ministers noted the ever present danger of state sponsored foreign interference targeting democratic institutions and society, and reaffirmed the importance of continuing to engage bilaterally, as well as with Pacific and global partners to respond to this issue.

41. Prime Ministers noted the importance of cyber security to protect individuals and businesses from the growing threat of malicious cyber actors and as an enabler for a prosperous and thriving digital economy. They also reinforced the importance of both countries continuing to work together to strengthen cyber security and rules and norms in cyberspace.

WEDNESDAY 26 JULY 2023