



Australian High Commission

Vanuatu

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## Joint Media Release

### Australia and Vanuatu sign new agreement for aviation infrastructure

Vanuatu's critical aviation sector will benefit from a new Memorandum of Understanding between Australia and Vanuatu for a package of infrastructure works at Vanuatu's international airports.

Design and scoping works are expected to result in an estimated AUD80 million [VT 6.2 billion] in infrastructure investments. The infrastructure investments, delivered through the Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific (AIFFP), will respond to Vanuatu's aviation priorities, boost connectivity and benefit Vanuatu's economy.

At the signing ceremony on 24 August, the Government of Vanuatu acknowledged Australia's broad support across the aviation sector as vital for economic resilience, market access and regional connectivity.

Australian High Commissioner Heidi Bootle spoke about how Australia had expanded its economic partnership with Vanuatu.

"The aviation sector is a core connectivity priority, which Australia as a close economic partner is pleased to support. Australia will maximise local employment and use of local business in taking forward this investment."

"Quality and sustainability are central tenets of Australian infrastructure investments in Vanuatu and the region. AIFFP projects are climate resilient and incorporate appropriate environmental, social and gender safeguards," said High Commissioner Bootle.

The agreement reflects continued Australian support for Airports Vanuatu Limited (AVL), including to update the 2018 Airports Masterplan to identify and prepare potential investments.

Minister of Infrastructure and Public Utilities, Marcellino Barthelemy Melteirov spoke at the signing today.

"I thank the previous Vanuatu Governments who have developed our aviation sector and infrastructure, since independence up until now that we have three international airports and four operators. We have an Airports Masterplan that was developed and Government after Government have tried to implement this AVL Airports Masterplan, to cater for wider bodied aircrafts and long haul flights, but due to financing constraints have not progressed to developing this Masterplan.



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“As Minister responsible for Aviation, I am glad and thankful that the Australian Government has picked this up, and has decided to work with Government of Vanuatu to further progress realisation of implementing the Airports Masterplan. This will benefit the Government and the people of Vanuatu,” said the Minister.

Minister of Finance and Economic Management, Minister John Salong Damasing concluded on behalf of the Government of Vanuatu by thanking the Australian Government for the continuation of a good working relationship, and for the availability of a financing opportunity through AIFFP to review the AVL Masterplan, and the possibilities for implementing the AVL Airports Masterplan, which will boost the economy of this country.

The AIFFP adheres to the highest international standards of debt sustainability. Any investment proposal will be highly concessional considering Vanuatu’s economic needs.



*Photo: Australian High Commissioner Heidi Bootle; Minister of Infrastructure and Public Utilities, Marcellino Barthelemy Melteirov; and Minister of Finance and Economic Management, Minister John Salong Damasing signing a new Memorandum of Understanding between Australia and Vanuatu for aviation infrastructure works.*

**ENDS**

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