



**STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT
HIS EXCELLENCY MOLI NIKENIKE VUROBARAVU MOLIUNAVANUA
ON THE OCCASION OF THE AUSTRALIA DAY – VANUATU PARTNERSHIP
RECEPTION**

14 March 2024

**Her Excellency Heidi Bootle, Australia High Commissioner to the Republic of Vanuatu;
Honourable Charlot Salwai Tabimasmās, Prime Minister of the Republic of Vanuatu;
Honourable Seule Simeon, Speaker of the Vanuatu Parliament;
Honourable Alatoi Ishmael Kalsakau, Leader of the Opposition;
Honourable Ministers, and Members of Parliament;
Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps;
Heads of Business Sectors
Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen –**

I am honoured to stand before you on this auspicious occasion, celebrating not only Australia Day but also the enduring partnership between Australia and the Republic of Vanuatu. Tonight, as we reflect on the deep-rooted friendship that binds our nations, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Her Excellency Heidi Bootle and the Australian people for their unwavering support and commitment to Vanuatu's sovereignty.

Australia has played a pivotal role in our journey towards independence, offering invaluable support within the Pacific Forum and the United Nations. This history of cooperation forms the foundation of the strong ties we share today. It is a testament to the shared values of fairness, freedom, and equality that have bound our nations together.

In the realm of economic and social development, Australia has been a steadfast partner, contributing significantly to Vanuatu's growth. Through collaborative efforts, we have witnessed positive transformations in various sectors, improving the livelihoods of our citizens. The partnerships in defence cooperation have not only bolstered our security but have also fostered a sense of regional stability.

Education and health are paramount in shaping the future of our nations. Australia's support in these areas has been instrumental in enhancing the quality of life for our

people. The exchange of knowledge, resources, and expertise has empowered our communities to strive for excellence in education and to build resilient health systems.

One noteworthy collaboration that highlights our cooperative efforts is the Seasonal Workers Program. This initiative has not only provided economic opportunities for our citizens but has also strengthened the bonds between our nations, fostering a deeper understanding of our shared values and cultures.

As we celebrate the successes of our collaboration, we also acknowledge the challenges that lie ahead. Together, we must continue to address pressing issues, from climate change to global health, and work hand in hand to find sustainable solutions.

Tonight, let us recognize and honour the men and women who have served in our countries, past and present. Their dedication and sacrifice ensure our safety and security, and for that, we are forever grateful.

In conclusion, I would like to express the Vanuatu Government's unwavering commitment to further strengthening our partnership with Australia. Together, we are not only stronger but also capable of achieving remarkable feats. Let us look to the future with hope and confidence, continuing to forge new connections and cooperation globally to compliment the Australia-Vanuatu partnership for generations to come.

To the success of Australia Day and the enduring partnership between our nations, I invite you all to join me in a toast.

Thank you, and happy Australia Day!