



An Australian Government Initiative



# Communique

## Pacific Partnership for Prosperity Round Table

14 June 2024

### Opening Address:

Professor Hurriyet Babacan, RDATN Chair, opened the "Follow Up Pacific Partnership for Prosperity Roundtable," highlighting the importance of building on the outcomes from the inaugural roundtable. The focus remains on fostering strong partnerships and driving prosperity across the Pacific region.

### Key Outcomes and Actions:

One of the primary initiatives discussed was the development of a 1-page capability statement designed to showcase the strengths and opportunities within the Pacific region. This initiative aims to provide a clear and compelling narrative that can be utilised to attract investment and support.

The roundtable also underscored the importance of continued collaboration with Tradelinked. This collaboration includes organising one-on-one meetings with stakeholders to strengthen existing ties and identify new opportunities for growth and development. To further drive these initiatives, a technical working group will be formed, bringing together experts and stakeholders to address key areas and advance the collective goals of the partnership, culminating in a Pacific Engagement Strategy.

Ben Alexander, Trade Advisor – Trade Start, provided an update on the significant activities and progress made by Trade and Investment Queensland (TIQ). He reported a notable investment deal with PNG and the appointment of Jaimie Healy to support First Nation businesses. Additionally, insights from the Asia Bank Forum in Fiji and the PNG Business Advantage Investment Conference revealed promising opportunities for the seafood and distillery industries in Queensland.

Addressing challenges and opportunities within the fisheries sector, the roundtable discussed the issues surrounding the closing of barramundi farms. Plans are underway for the upcoming PNG Business Exchange, led by Austrade, scheduled from September 23-27. Furthermore, six businesses are set to participate in the HOTECH major food and beverage event in the Pacific, with the aim of selling their products to hotels in the region.

Tony Sheehan provided a comprehensive overview of recent Tradelinked activities. The roundtable reflected on the success of the Townsville field day, which saw participation from 30 delegates from the Pacific. Follow-

up actions included engaging with the Deputy Prime Minister of PNG and the Mareeba delegation to strengthen relationships and explore further opportunities.

David Nye provided an update on airport development, particularly focusing on route development and maintaining engagement with Asian carriers. There is significant potential for developing aircraft maintenance facilities in Cairns and expanding the airport precinct to support aviation growth and enhance regional connectivity.

The federal government is exploring regional partnership programs that focus on design, engineering, and shovel-ready initiatives. Weipa has been identified as a potential distribution hub, which could play a crucial role in supporting regional development and trade.

A key outcome of the roundtable was the agreement to develop a comprehensive Pacific Engagement Strategy. This strategy will focus on institutional capacity building, statecraft and cultural inclusion, and the development of training facilities and regional precincts. The strategy will outline short, mid, and long-term deliverables, targeting goals within 1 year, 3-5 years, and 10+ years.

#### **Roundtable Discussion and Action Items:**

In the short-term (1-12 months), the focus will be on capitalising on immediate opportunities such as aviation, agriculture, and recyclable waste/resource recovery. Efforts will also be directed towards developing efficient supply chains. For the mid-term (3-5 years), the strategy aims to address health and economic issues, while also strengthening education and sports links. The long-term goals (10+ years) will concentrate on building capacity and developing infrastructure in the Pacific region, aiming for sustained growth and prosperity.

#### **Closing Summary:**

In conclusion, an active working group will draft the Pacific Engagement Strategy, with contributions from key stakeholders, including Tradelinked/EiiC, Regional Development Australia Tropical North, Cairns Airport, Red Peak Advisory, Trade and Investment Queensland, Advance Cairns, the Australian Strategic Policy Institute and the Cairns Regional Council. The strategy will focus on taking consideration of political environments, cultural inclusion, clear narratives, and capacity building to drive sustained growth and prosperity in the Pacific.

For further information or to get involved, please contact the RDA Tropical North office.