

**FIJI-AUSTRALIA VUVALE UNION (VUVALE UNION) AND**  
**OCEAN OF PEACE ALLIANCE (VEITACINI TREATY)**

**WRITTEN ANALYSIS**

**1.0    INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1    The Fiji-Australia Vuvale Union (*Vuvale Union*) and the Ocean of Peace Alliance (*Veitacini Treaty*) embrace the Pacific Islands Forum Boe Declaration expanded definition of security that embraces climate change, economic and security pillars. The definition is premised on the understanding that security issues are essentially integrity issues.
- 1.2    The relationship between Fiji and Australia was recently formalised under the Vuvale Partnership, grounded in mutual respect, shared values, and close cooperation between political leaders. Cooperation across all sectors have witnessed decades of growth. On the defence front, Fijian and Australian service personnel have trained and served together in multiple theatres since World War 1 (WW1) and this trend has escalated exponentially in recent times.
- 1.3    In June 2025 Fiji, at his national statement at the National Press Club in Canberra Prime Minister Rabuka proposed to Australia to elevate the Vuvale Partnership to treaty level to give practical expression to the Ocean of Peace Declaration.
- 1.4    A formal communication was extended by Fiji's Prime Minister to his Australian counterpart which was promptly and fully accepted by the Australian Prime Minister. One important element in Fiji's proposal was the inclusion of economic security as a pillar of the treaty. Further, both sides agreed that a systemic and structured approach is prudent for longer term stability and efficacy of the agreement.
- 1.5    After defining the purpose, scope and frame of the treaty with positive progress of negotiations by the joint Fiji and Australian team of officials, Fiji's Prime Minister, in January 2026, proposed to the Australian Prime Minister that the two countries consider an 'alliance'. This proposal was accepted without hesitation by the Australian government.

**2.0    SUMMARY - VUVALE UNION**

- 2.1    The *Vuvale Union* is the Fiji-Australia Security Treaty that is premised on core values the two countries hold. Its purpose is to:
- (a)    embed and operationalise the Blue Pacific Ocean of Peace Declaration as a cornerstone of our partnership;

- (b) establish a Vuvale Union to enhance the Party's collective security, stability and prosperity; and
- (c) protect and promote each Party's sovereignty and democracy and the solidarity of the Pacific region.

## 2.2 Under the *Vuvale Union*:

- (a) the Parties recognise the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and democratic systems of the Parties.
- (b) the Parties shall take progressive steps to deepen and evolve it over time.
- (c) the Parties commit to move forward in partnership, grounded in the Pacific Way, to:
  - (i) strengthen prosperity and resilience;
  - (ii) enhance cultural and people connections;
  - (iii) advance climate security; and
  - (iv) cultivate and sustain a culture of peace.

## 2.3 In advancing the *Vuvale Union*, the Parties consider the best interests of their peoples as well as the peoples of the Pacific region.

- (a) The Parties commit to listen and consult with trust, respect and understanding on matters affecting the Vuvale Union.
- (b) The *Vuvale Union* comprises the following additional articles:
  - (a) Article 3: Prosperity and People
  - (b) Article 4: Climate and Peace
  - (c) Article 5: Pacific Regionalism
  - (d) Article 6 & 7: Architecture (Vuvale Forum and Vuvale Talanoa)
  - (e) Articles 8-11: Include Settlement of Disputes, Amendment, Status, Entry into Force , Duration and Termination, Supplementary Instruments.
- (c) The *Vuvale Union* will run indefinitely unless either Party seeks to exit.

## 3.0 **REQUIREMENTS FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

### 3.1 Article 10 of the *Vuvale Union* provides that it enters into force on the date of receipt of the last notification by which the parties notify each other in writing, through an exchange of diplomatic notes, that their respective requirements for the entry into force of the *Vuvale Union* have been completed.

#### 4.0 **STATEMENT OF IMPACT**

- 4.1 The *Vuvale Union* elevates the Fiji-Australia Vuvale Partnership to a treaty to make it enduring across the political spectrum in both countries. It also seeks to protect and promote sovereignty through partnership, collective efforts on shared challenges and responses.
- 4.2 The *Vuvale Union* further increases ambition and mutual accountabilities, recognises close historical, cultural and personalise ties.
- 4.3 In support of regional peace, unity and solidarity, deepen bilateral integration with a view to advancing regional integration, it also embed the Ocean of Peace Declaration building on the *Boe Declaration* and *Biketawa Declaration*.
- 4.4 The *Vuvale Union* formalises our strategic trust to provide reassurance that security and critical infrastructure sectors are domains for traditional partners and provides an agreed pathway for a broader regional security agreement, recognising the leadership roles and responsibilities of Fiji and Australia in the region.
- 4.5 On transformative initiatives, the Vuvale Union is proposed to focus on:
- (a) **Tackling the transnational crime, drugs and HIV crisis** – through a step change in law enforcement cooperation and enhancing Fiji’s ability to control its maritime domain through enhanced surveillance and interdiction capabilities; and an uplift for Fiji’s health workforce, hospital and targeted measures to control the HIV epidemic.
  - (b) **Boosting economic growth and security** - through financing for key economic infrastructure, support for the digital transition and Fiji’s diversification agenda and enhancing protection of cyber security and critical infrastructure.
  - (c) **Enhancing circular migration** – with stronger border security enabling enhanced visa settings and skills and education cooperation.
  - (d) **Driving ambitious climate action** – starting by bringing the world’s attention to the climate crisis at this year’s pre-COP and leveraging that in support of greater resilience for communities and people, including expanding adaptation funding.
  - (e) **Leading enhanced regionalism** – through an Ocean of Peace Institute promoting Pacific-led solutions to the region’s security challenges.
  - (f) **Building unity through sport, faith and culture** – a Veimoana Partnership for grassroots and elite Rugby Union, and pathways for faith and traditional leaders to strengthen social cohesion and connections between Fiji, Australia and the region.

## **5.0 SUMMARY - OCEAN OF PEACE MUTUAL DEFENCE TREATY (VEITACINI TREATY)**

5.1 The *Veitacini Treaty* recalls the common history and legacy of the Parties in standing together in times of conflict and instability since World War 1.

5.2 The purpose of this Treaty is to recognise and affirm the commitment between the Parties to protect their sovereignty, secure their mutual defence and security interests and contribute to the stability and security of the Pacific.

5.3 Components of the *Veitacini Treaty* include:

- (a) Article 2: Democratic Values
- (b) Article 3: Peaceful Settlement of Disputes
- (c) Article 4: Cooperation
- (d) Article 5: Consultation
- (e) Article 6: Mutual Defence
- (f) Article 7: Visiting Forces
- (g) Article 8: Governance
- (h) Article 9: Charter of the United Nations
- (i) Article 10: Performance of Obligations
- (j) Article 11: Dispute Between the Parties
- (k) Article 12: Signature, Ratification and Accession
- (l) Article 13: The Depositary
- (m) Article 14: Entry into Force
- (n) Article 15: Duration and Withdrawal
- (o) Article 16: Amendment

## **6.0 REQUIREMENTS FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

6.1 Article 14 of the *Veitacini Treaty* provides that it enters into force on the date of the deposit of the second instrument of ratification by the signatories. The instruments of ratification must be deposited as soon as possible with the Depositary (Government of Australia).

6.2 It also states that the Treaty enters into force for acceding States in accordance with Article 12 i.e. *inter alia* by unanimous consent, by invite to other Pacific States.

## **7.0 STATEMENT OF IMPACT**

### **Security Pillar**

- 7.1 Fiji outlined several priority areas to strengthen its national and regional security posture. These included improving defence recruitment and skills development, enhancing situational awareness, building air and maritime capability, upgrading infrastructure, strengthening cybersecurity, and addressing counter-terrorism risks, countering transnational organised crime. Fiji expressed interest in exploring recruitment and training models with Australian defence, embedding officers in both armed services to support professional development and the re-professionalisation of Fiji's armed services. Closer look is accorded to models that support structured training and employment pathways, facilitate skills transfer, and support remittance generation.
- 7.2 Stronger intelligence sharing was identified as critical to addressing geostrategic posturing, transnational organised crime, illegal fishing, drug and people smuggling and trafficking, and other emerging security threats. Detection, disruption and dismantling of criminal network and business model are key to reestablishing control over Fiji's (and regional) jurisdiction. Detection of drug submersibles and related mode of delivery is essential to a credible forward defence posture. The approach is to move from defensive to offensive posture.
- 7.3 Consideration for Fiji to developing its own sovereign air capability to support surveillance, medical evacuations, disaster response, and maritime monitoring was noted. The establishment of forward operating bases in remote island locations as a way to improve presence, reach, readiness, and response across Fiji's maritime domain.
- 7.4 Cybersecurity and the protection of critical infrastructure are key areas, with concern over increasing threats to undersea cables, digital and communication systems. Both sides emphasised the need for a whole-of-government approach, supported by appropriate legislation and secure systems, especially for defence, border control and enforcement.
- 7.5 Border security and migration management reforms were noted as broadly aligned with a need for increased sharing of practices. Fiji proposed stronger political-level engagement, including an Immigration Ministers' meeting and drawing lessons from existing Australia - New Zealand cooperation and those from other regions in Europe and Asia.
- 7.6 Both sides recognised the importance of trade and connectivity. Pending consideration of PACER Plus, Fiji has been invited by Australia to participate in its Commonwealth, State and Territory Ministers of Investment and Trade Forum. Fiji focused on tangible

benefits, and ensuring stronger alignment between trade, security, and connectivity objectives. Australia affirmed its supporting role in Fiji's ambition as a regional production, logistics, and trade hub, while complementing broader economic and security goals.

### **Economic Pillar: Fiscal Stability and Budget Support**

- 7.7 Fiji acknowledged the ongoing fiscal pressures it continues to face including high public debt level, miniscule fiscal space, and constraints on public service delivery thus took a systemic approach to building the economic structure for long term sustainability
- 7.8 Fiji noted capacity gaps in the economic structure including health and education infrastructures, particularly at the CWM Hospital, noting that Australia's support in planning and direct project delivery has been essential due to Fiji's limited implementation capacity.
- 7.9 Australia's budget support has been critical in maintaining macroeconomic stability and supporting reform efforts during this period. Fiji posited that a treaty framework should include predictable, multi-year budget support to agreed reform priorities, as well as continued Australian advocacy within international financial institutions to support Fiji's development agenda and to which Australia indicated its support.
- 7.10 Fiji proposed continued Australian involvement in priority infrastructure delivery, alongside knowledge transfer and skills development, and the exploration of limited access for Fijian patients to specialised medical treatment in Australia.
- 7.11 Australia acknowledged Fiji's dual burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases, the importance of strengthening primary health care, and expressed openness to exploring structured medical referral pathways.
- 7.12 Fiji noted the systemic role Australian banks play in its economy and proposed a framework for early consultation should major institutions change their operations, while respecting commercial independence and safeguarding financial stability.
- 7.13 Fiji noted the long-term decline of the sugar industry and the need for broader agricultural diversification. Proposed areas for cooperation include land use optimisation, development of higher-value crops, strengthened biosecurity and quality standards, and improved market access to Australia. Fiji underscored regulatory standards, certification, and alignment as critical enablers of economic transformation and growth.
- 7.14 Fiji acknowledged its role as a regional medical hub supporting smaller Pacific Island countries, noting that future hospital and infrastructure planning must account for both national and regional demand. These include upgrades to Nausori Airport, extension of the Labasa Airport runway, development of climate-resilient ports, increase in energy supply, and improvements to remote island airstrips.

- 7.15 Fiji elevates digital transformation across business and regulatory services to reduce manual processes, enhance investor confidence, and strengthen information security. In parallel, modernising border management systems, including use of technology solutions supported by ongoing legislative and systems reforms and skills development are embraced.

## **8.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION**

- 8.1 Fiji will provide resourcing support per capital investment programs through its annual budgeting process. Long term budgeting by the Australian government is supported for certainty and confidence. Resourcing is aim at infrastructure, capacity-building initiatives and capability improvement, provision of technical assistance, subject to policy priorities, for long term growth.

## **9.0 CONCLUSION**

- 9.1 Fiji and Australia agree to establish a long-term, partnership-based "Vuvale Union" that integrates economic and security cooperation through a balance of commitments and flexibility. The partnership views shared sovereignty as a capability multiplier in specific areas to strengthen national and regional capacities.
- 9.2 The *Vuvale Union* gives practical expression to the Ocean of Peace Declaration with both parties embracing the Ocean of Peace framework to guide regional stability and cooperation.
- 9.3 The *Veitacini Treaty* formalises defence commitments of both Parties. These commitments are not new, as Fiji and Australia's stand since WW1 speaks to the depth of their mutual trust and the values they hold dear.
- 9.4 The agreed Work Plan for the first 10 Years earmarks resourcing on agreed priorities for the different sectors. The WP is a living document that will respond to emerging needs.
- 9.5 The *Vuvale Union* and the *Veitacini Treaty* will run indefinitely.