

UK minister to strengthen ties across the pacific in first overseas visit

- Minister for the Indo-Pacific Anne-Marie Trevelyan will visit Vanuatu and Australia this week.
- She will attend the Conference of the Pacific Community to boost diplomatic links with the region.
- Minister will then travel to Australia for talks on trade and security.

Underlining the UK's commitment to deepening ties with the Pacific Islands, Minister for the Indo-Pacific Anne-Marie Trevelyan will today (23 November) arrive in Vanuatu for her first overseas trip, following her appointment as an FCDO Minister last month.

Minister Trevelyan will hold talks with Vanuatu's Prime Minister Ishmael Kalsakau and Minister of Foreign Affairs Jotham Napat about the priorities of their recently-elected government. As a Commonwealth partner on the front line of climate change, the UK works closely with Vanuatu to strengthen maritime security, climate resilience as well as capacity building in the region.

The Minister will then attend the [12th Conference of the Pacific Community](#) to build closer diplomatic ties with leaders from across the region. Representatives of the 26 countries and territories that constitute the bloc will attend for talks on climate change, development, science and innovation. The region remains critical to delivering on key UK priorities, including securing an open and stable Indo-Pacific, tackling climate change and biodiversity loss.

Many Pacific Islands have small populations and face geographic isolation and vulnerability to natural disasters. Rising sea levels could see some countries uninhabitable within four decades. The UK is working with these small island developing states to build a cleaner, safer and more resilient future, including through the [Blue Planet Fund](#), which will support economic development while protecting nature and increasing climate resilience.

Minister of State for the Indo-Pacific, Anne-Marie Trevelyan, said:

On my first trip as Minister for the Indo-Pacific, I want to underline the UK's steadfast commitment to the region and how we can work together to bolster global prosperity and security.

The UK will deepen our engagement in the Pacific, a region where we have a close history, many friends, and share the values of sovereignty, territorial integrity and free trade.

Vanuatu is on the front line of the climate emergency, and we are working with them alongside other partners to accelerate global action on tackling climate change.

During the conference, Minister Trevelyan will hold talks with her counterparts from across the Pacific and support their work addressing climate change, security and prosperity.

The UK is working with the region to deliver its 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, which sets out Pacific countries' vision for a cleaner, safer and more resilient future.

While in Vanuatu's capital, the Minister will co-host a dinner with the New Zealand High Commissioner to celebrate women in leadership across the Pacific, alongside Vanuatu's Deputy Speaker Gloria Julia King.

She will also join young volunteers with community group and non-profit organisation Wan Smolbag to hear how they are affected by and adapting to climate change. The group operates across the South Pacific, running programmes to boost youth engagement on education, health and the environment.

Following her visit to Vanuatu, the Minister will travel to Australia, arriving on 25 November. She will attend talks with her Foreign and Defence Ministry counterparts to discuss UK-Australia security and defence cooperation, including the AUKUS agreement.

The Pacific Community (formerly the south Pacific Community and still referred to as SPC) is the principal scientific and technical organisation in the Pacific region, supporting development since 1947. It works in over 20 sectors including climate change, disaster risk management and human rights.

The conference will be the first in-person meeting since UK re-joined as a metropolitan member in 2021. Current UK support to SPC is delivered through the [CSSF-funded Extended Continental Shelf Programme](#).

Members of the Pacific Community are: American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, France, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Pitcairn Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, United Kingdom, United States, Vanuatu, and Wallis and Futuna.