



**MINISTRY OF FINANCE, STRATEGIC PLANNING, NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
AND STATISTICS**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Welcoming Eased Visa Restrictions for Pacific Islanders Travelling to New Zealand

I warmly welcome the recent announcement by the Government of New Zealand to ease visa restrictions for Pacific Islanders.

The new provisions — allowing multiple entries and longer-term stays over a two-year period — represent a hugely positive step forward. This decision acknowledges the reality that most Pacific Islander travel to New Zealand is centred around family connections. Parents visiting their children, grandparents visiting extended families — these visits are at the heart of our Pacific values.

This policy better reflects what Pacific Islanders value most: strong kinship ties, and the ability to take part in ceremonial and cultural events within the vibrant island communities now settled across New Zealand.

It is also a meaningful step toward deeper integration between New Zealand, Australia, and the wider Pacific region.

I will continue to encourage the governments and citizens of New Zealand and Australia to consider the long-term benefits of a fully integrated Pacific. Visa-free travel would be a cornerstone of such integration. A Pacific-wide visa-free region would strengthen our cultural solidarity, support our businesses, empower our young people, and enhance regional security.

The recent global turmoil has only served to highlight the importance of regional unity. The case for a larger, fully integrated Pacific region — and a stronger Pacific bloc — has never been more compelling.

While visa decisions remain sovereign matters, we can continue to urge and respectfully request. We remain hopeful that our closest neighbours will see the immense value a visa-free Pacific region can bring to our collective prosperity and security.

Professor Biman Prasad
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance,
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