



Committee Secretary  
Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

27 June 2024

Dear Committee Secretary

## **Submission to the Inquiry into Australia's response to the priorities of Pacific Island countries and the Pacific region**

We write to make a submission to the Inquiry into Australia's response to the priorities of Pacific Island countries and the Pacific region.

Since early 2022, the University of Adelaide has been leading the Regional Perspectives Research Project in collaboration with partners in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu and the Defence Science and Technology Group. The project is about listening to, and learning from, Pacific people on a range of topics that reflect Pacific priorities, including relationships with other countries.

The project aims to help Defence, and the Australian Government more broadly, better understand Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, develop more sustainable and culturally sensitive engagement strategies, and play its part in creating a safer, fairer, and more stable and prosperous Pacific Islands region.

To do this, our researchers have used traditional local storytelling methods to gather data – 'storian' in Vanuatu and 'tok stori' in Solomon Islands. These approaches gathered in-depth and diverse views directly from the people living in these islands. The information collected is crucial for ensuring policies are fair and well-informed, culturally sensitive, and beneficial.

This report presents a summary of the key findings from phase I of the project. Full reports have been prepared for internal analysis by Defence. We are pleased to submit our summary reports to the Committee for consideration by the Inquiry. These reports were briefed to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Defence in June 2024.

Joanne Wallis, Professor of International Security

Maima Koro, Pacific Research Fellow