

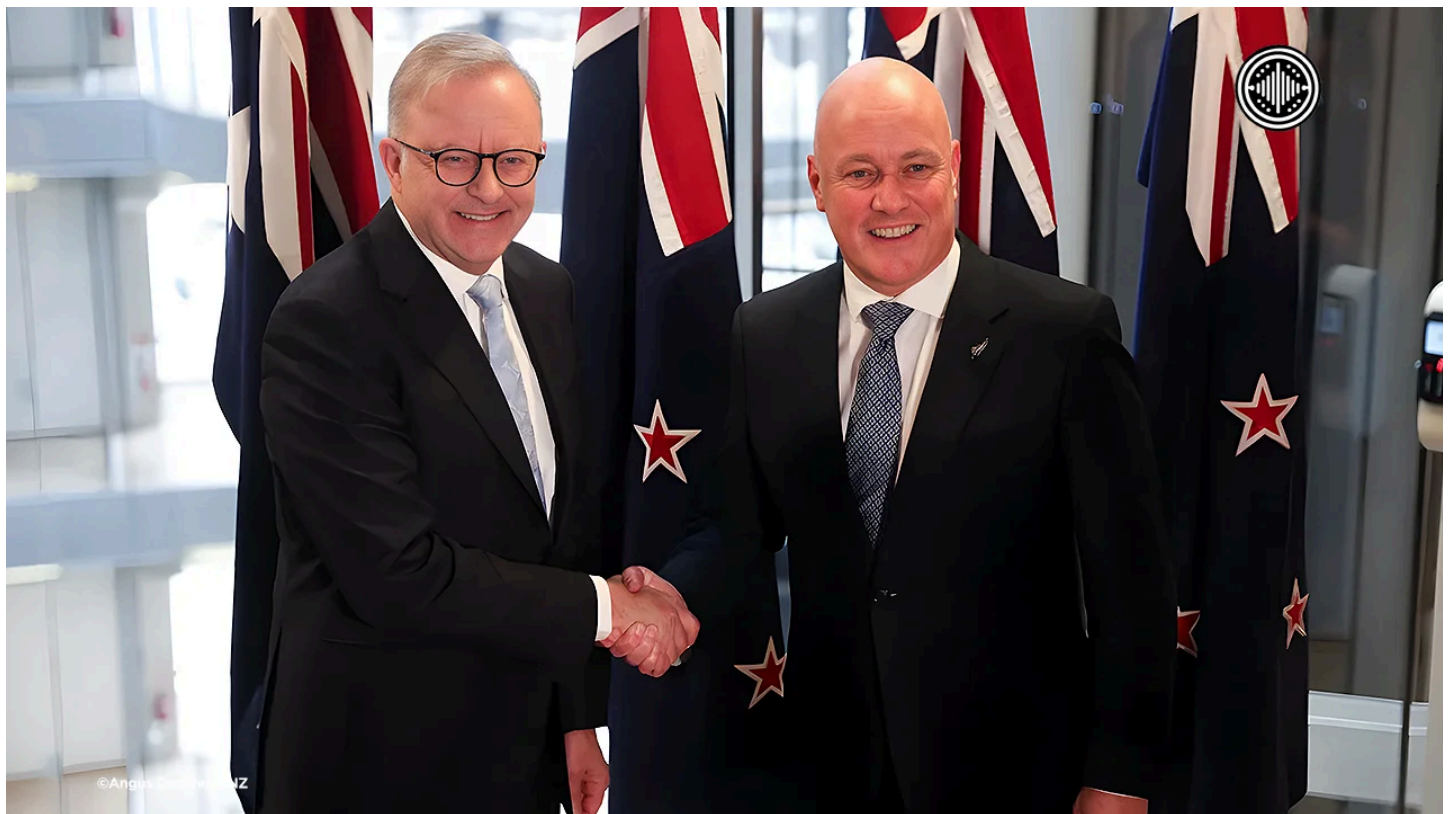
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Luxon, Albanese Bolster Ties in Queenstown Summit

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New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon hosted Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese in Queenstown, concluding robust talks to strengthen trans-Tasman economic and defence cooperation.

On August 9, 2025, New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon welcomed Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese to Queenstown for the annual Australia-New Zealand Leaders' Meeting at Te Wharehuanui, a private retreat. The summit, hosted by Ngāi Tahu with a traditional pōwhiri ceremony, focused on deepening the Single Economic Market (SEM) and enhancing defence ties amid regional challenges. Luxon described the talks as “energetic,” highlighting shared economic goals, according to a statement from the New Zealand Government’s Beehive website. The leaders announced a new partnership

between their national standards bodies to streamline trade, supporting the \$32 billion two-way trade relationship, as reported by Mirage News.

Luxon emphasized the alignment of New Zealand's Going for Growth agenda with Australia's productivity agenda, stating, "The crossover provides plenty of cooperation opportunities," per Mirage News. The leaders committed to the Trans-Tasman Roadmap to 2035, aiming to boost economic resilience and innovation, including mutual recognition of digital identity services. Albanese met with business leaders from the Australia New Zealand Leadership Forum (ANZLF), including Qantas CEO Vanessa Hudson, to discuss reducing trade barriers, as noted by The Post.

Defence discussions underscored the Joint Statement on Closer Defence Relations (CDR), signed in December 2024, to enhance interoperability and create a cohesive Anzac force, referencing the historic Australian New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC). Luxon stressed the importance of joint procurement to ensure cost-effective defence investments, per The Post. The leaders also addressed regional security, noting a Chinese naval exercise in the Tasman Sea in February 2025 that disrupted flights, as reported by 9News. Both reaffirmed their commitment to the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) and Pacific-led security initiatives.

The summit, held in a bunker-like venue built by Xero founder Rod Drury, concluded with a wreath-laying at Arrowtown War Memorial Park on August 10. Albanese, reflecting on his third visit to New Zealand as prime minister, called the bond "unbreakable," per the Australian Prime Minister's website. The talks set the stage for further trans-Tasman collaboration, with upcoming meetings planned in Canberra.