

# Vanuatu Bible Translation



Project: 102850  
Tax-Deductible

## Vanuatu

### Overview

Bible Society Australia is supporting Bible Society in the South Pacific to advance translation in several heart languages of Vanuatu, one of the world's most linguistically dense nations, so that people can hear and read God's Word clearly in their mother tongue. In 2026, their Bible translation and revision project will progress in languages, Ahamb (Luke), Lelepa (James, Philippians), Futuna (Mark), and Nguna (Four Gospels), alongside digitisation work, training and community engagement. Local churches are central partners, ensuring Scripture is used in worship and everyday discipleship.



### The Need

Vanuatu is home to around 138 indigenous Oceanic languages. While 80–90% of ni-Vanuatu identify as Christian, many communities still lack Scripture in their own language or struggle to use other languages meaningfully in worship. Reading the Bible in one's heart language leads to deeper understanding, stronger discipleship and cultural preservation. Local churches have expressed a need for Bible translation, including the revision of older missionary-era texts so communities can access accurate, digital and printable Scriptures that serve both church and family life.

- **~138** indigenous languages for ~300,000 people (≈1,760 speakers per language)
- **80-90%** of the ni-Vanuatu population identify as Christians

### Goals

The goal of this project is to produce four new translations of the New Testament (Ahamb, Lelepa, Mele, and Aneityum), revise three existing Scripture translations (Nguna, Futuna, Erromango) and digitise three Bible translations, so that the speakers of these languages understand the Scriptures better, and are more equipped and encouraged to apply God's Word in their lives. Training workshops to educate people on the new Scripture products being produced will also be a critical part of this project.

In 2026 the project will:

- finalise Ahamb Luke through community review, consultant check, typesetting and printing;
- complete checking and typesetting for Lelepa (James, Philippians) and prepare for mass printing;
- carry out consultancy checks for Futuna (Mark) and move to printing;
- typeset, print and launch for Nguna (Four Gospels);
- continue Mele and Erromango work as consultant time allows

## Impact

The expected long-term impact of this project is stronger discipleship and church life as Scriptures become available in heart languages, with local ownership and regular use in services and small groups.

By the end of 2025, the Gospel of Mark in Lelepa was launched on 26 October 2025 and consultant checks were completed on the book of James and Philipians in Lelepa.

Final proofreading of the Gospel of Mark in Futuna; and ongoing checks of the Gospel of Luke in Ahamb were also accomplished. Churches report the powerful effect of hearing Scripture read in their own language, with young people listening attentively as the Gospel of Mark in Lelepa is read each Sunday. In 2026, the team will build on this momentum toward further launches and increased usage, while continuing revision and digitisation for wider access.

## Impact in Numbers

# 500

copies of the Gospel of Mark (Lelepa) printed and launched on 26 Oct 2025

# 4

Scripture portions produced in 2025 (Gospel of Mark in Mele and Erromango; book of James and Philipians in Lelepa)

### Testimony

"It is powerful because it is our own language and preachers use the language every Sunday. The young people are listening to their language being read in church for the first time. They're used to hearing the Bislama and English being read to them."

— a Lelepa Elder shares how the Gospel of Mark in Lelepa is being used in his church

## How Your Support Helps

### \$30

will help print and distribute five Gospel booklets in a local language.

### \$250

will help cover materials, local travel and venue support for a community review or checking session.

### \$1,800

will help print 300 copies of a Gospel in one language (e.g., Mark), moving a team from checking to church use.

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." — **John 10:10, ESV**