

Proactive Release

Published on or before: 31 March 2025

The following Cabinet papers and related Cabinet minutes have been proactively released by the Minister of Foreign Affairs

Title	Reference
<i>Cabinet Minute of Decision – Proposed Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Winston Peters - February/March 2025</i>	CAB-25-MIN-0029
<i>Proposed Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Winston Peters – 20 February to 2 March 2025</i>	

Some parts of this information release would not be appropriate to release and, if requested, would be withheld under the Official Information Act 1982 (the OIA). Where this is the case, the relevant sections of the OIA that would apply have been identified. Where information has been withheld, no public interest has been identified that would outweigh the reasons for withholding it.

Key to OIA redaction codes:

- 6(a): to avoid prejudicing the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the New Zealand Government; and
- 9(2)(g)(i): to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinion between Ministers and officials.



Cabinet

Minute of Decision

This document contains information for the New Zealand Cabinet. It must be treated in confidence and handled in accordance with any security classification, or other endorsement. The information can only be released, including under the Official Information Act 1982, by persons with the appropriate authority.

Proposed Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Winston Peters - February/March 2025

Portfolio **Foreign Affairs**

On 17 February 2025, Cabinet:

- 1 **authorised** the absence of the Rt Hon Winston Peters from New Zealand, from 20 February to 2 March 2025, to travel to Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, China, Mongolia, and the Republic of Korea, to undertake bilateral visits;
- 2 **agreed** that he be accompanied by two members of staff, his Specialist Ministerial Adviser for the entire trip and his Senior Press Secretary during his time in the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia;
- 3 **approved** the estimated expenditure of up to \$79,826.25 for the travel expenses of the ministerial party, as a charge to Vote Internal Affairs (Members of the Executive – Travel);
- 4 **noted** that he will be also accompanied by officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, whose costs will be met by their agency;
- 5 **agreed** that during his absence:
 - 5.1 Hon Todd McClay act as Minister of Foreign Affairs;
 - 5.2 Hon Andrew Bayly act as Minister for Racing;
 - 5.3 Hon Chris Bishop act as Minister for Rail;
- 6 **noted** that the House is not sitting during his absence.

Rachel Hayward
Secretary of the Cabinet

Restricted

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs
Chair, Cabinet

Proposed Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Winston Peters – 20 February to 2 March 2025

- 1 Cabinet approval is sought to travel to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the People's Republic of China, the Mongolian People's Republic, and the Republic of Korea from Thursday 20 February to Sunday 2 March 2025 (inclusive).
- 2 The Prime Minister's Office has approved the travel in-principle.

Purpose of travel

Gulf States

- 3 The Middle East, particularly the Gulf, is a region of considerable consequence and opportunity for New Zealand. Chief among the Gulf states are Saudi Arabia and the UAE, the region's two economic and political heavyweights.
- 4 The timing of this trip was elected to coincide with Joseph Parker's boxing bout on the evening of 22 February 2025. The nexus of the boxing match with the Saudi Cup racing event will enable interaction with a range of important Saudi Arabian stakeholders in informal settings on topics of importance to Saudi Arabia. In the development of the visit, we have worked closely with the racing and boxing organisers to ensure that New Zealand is well showcased to ensure that connections will be made for Saudi Arabian attendees that align with our interests.
- 5 In the current term, the Government has worked at pace to shore up New Zealand's trade and economic relations with the Gulf by concluding and signing the New Zealand-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement and the New Zealand-UAE Agreement on the Protection and Promotion of Investments, and by concluding the New Zealand-Gulf Cooperation Council Free Trade Agreement.
- 6 With these Government priorities now on a pathway to entry-into-force, it is important to maintain broader engagement with the Gulf through high-level political, security, and foreign policy discussions. Saudi Arabia and the UAE are valuable interlocutors for this engagement given their proximity to and influence over the Middle East's many challenges and crises of global consequence. These include Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, Iran, Yemen, the Red Sea, s6(a)

s6(a)

- 7 Both countries are establishing themselves in the Pacific, where the UAE has co-funded with New Zealand a renewable energy development project in Fiji s6(a)
- For its part, Saudi Arabia has donated US\$50 million into the Pacific Islands Forum's Pacific Resilience Facility s6(a)
- 8 Both countries ratified the Antarctic Treaty last year, and the UAE is seeking a Memorandum of Arrangement with New Zealand on Antarctic Cooperation, which we expect to see signed during the visit s6(a)

North Asia

- 9 It is then proposed that we travel to North Asia to visit China, Mongolia, and the Republic of Korea.

China

- 10 China is our largest trading partner, largest source of students, and third-largest source of visitors. New Zealand and China cooperate closely on priority trade, economic, climate change, and environment issues. China is and will remain a prominent actor in our region and on the world stage, and solutions to global problems will require its continued engagement.

- 11 s6(a)

- 12 This visit to China would reciprocate visits to New Zealand in 2024 by China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Premier Li Qiang, and would be the first visit to China by a New Zealand Foreign Minister since March 2023. It would lay the foundations for the Prime Minister to undertake a comprehensive visit to China later in the year.

Mongolia

- 13 The visit to China also presents an opportunity to conduct a short visit to Mongolia to engage with his counterpart Foreign Minister Batmunkh and Prime Minister Oyun-Erdene on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the bilateral diplomatic relations between New Zealand and Mongolia. This would

be the first visit to Mongolia by a New Zealand Foreign Minister since 2016 (when Mongolia hosted the Asia-Europe Meeting Summit).

Republic of Korea

- 14 New Zealand and the Republic of Korea are working toward the announcement of a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership during APEC Leaders' Week in late 2025. s6(a) the visit would provide an opportunity to advocate for the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership s6(a)

There are a range of regional issues of mutual strategic interest to be discussed. The Republic of Korea is home to a number of ship building companies. As Minister for Rail, responsible for developing timely solutions to the Interislander ferry issue, s9(2)(g)(i)

Outline of Proposed Visit

- 15 We intend to undertake the following key engagements:
- 16 Saudi Arabia and the UAE:
- 16.1 Meetings with senior Saudi leaders, s6(a) Prince Faisal bin Farhan, Minister of Foreign Affairs;
- 16.2 Meetings with senior UAE leaders, including s6(a) Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed, Minister of Foreign Affairs;
- 16.3 Attendance at Saudi Founding Day celebrations and concurrent sporting events, including the Saudi Cup and International Boxing Federation Heavyweight Championship Match featuring New Zealander Joseph Parker; and
- 16.4 Visits to Abu Dhabi racing facilities s6(a)
- 17 China and Mongolia:
- 17.1 Meeting and lunch/dinner engagement with Foreign Minister Wang Yi;
- 17.2 Meeting with Minister of International Department of the Communist Party of China Liu Jianchao;
- 17.3 Courtesy call on a Senior Chinese Leader (likely one of China's Vice Premiers); and
- 17.4 In Mongolia, bilateral engagements with Foreign Minister Batmunkh and Prime Minister Oyun-Erdene.

18 Republic of Korea:

18.1 Bilateral meeting with Foreign Minister Cho; and

18.2 Engagement as Minister for Rail s9(2)(g)(i)

19 Programmes in each country will include additional engagements with relevant stakeholders of close interest to New Zealand, including Pacific representatives, members of the New Zealand community, and student alumni.

Ministerial Party

20 This paper proposes that the delegation include Specialist Ministerial Adviser throughout the entire visit. The Senior Press Secretary will accompany the delegation to the UAE and Saudi Arabia only because of the media elements.

21 Travel costs for the delegation (Deputy Prime Minister, Specialist Ministerial Adviser, Senior Press Secretary) would be a charge to Vote Internal Affairs: Members of the Executive – Travel.

22 This paper proposes that officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade travel in support of the visit objectives. Their costs would be covered by the Ministry.

Travel Costs

23 The estimated cost for the three-person delegation in Saudi Arabia and the United Emirates, and for the two-person delegation in China, Mongolia, and the Republic of Korea is:

ITEM	COST (NZD)
Flights	50,205.00
Saudi Arabia	
Accommodation	5,940.00
Transport	Nil
Facilitation	950.00
Hospitality/representation costs	Nil
Meals	1,800.00
Gifts	1430.00
<i>Saudi Arabia subtotal</i>	10,120
United Arab Emirates	
Accommodation	1,290.00
Transport	500.00
Meals	700.00

Hospitality/representation costs	Nil
Gifts	1,160.00
<i>UAE subtotal</i>	3,650.00
China	
Accommodation	Nil
Transport	Nil
Meals	500.00
Hospitality/representation costs	500.00
Gifts	750.00
<i>China subtotal</i>	1,750.00
Mongolia	
Accommodation	Nil
Transport	Nil
Meals	500.00
Hospitality/representation costs	1,250.00
Interpretation costs	2,200.00
Gifts	1,000.00
<i>Mongolia subtotal</i>	4,950.00
Republic of Korea	
Accommodation	1,000.00
Transport	250.00
Meals	250.00
Hospitality/representation costs	2,000
Interpretation costs	1,600.00
Gifts	250.00
<i>Republic of Korea subtotal</i>	5,350.00
Overall subtotal	76,025.00
Contingency 5%	3,801.25
TOTAL	79,826.25

Acting Ministers

- 24 If travel is approved, Hon McClay will cover the foreign affairs portfolio, Hon Bayly will cover the racing portfolio, and Hon Bishop will cover the rail portfolio.

Proactive release

- 25 This Cabinet paper would be proactively released as per Cabinet Office Circular CO(18) 4, on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade's website. Proactive release is subject to redaction as appropriate under the Official Information Act 1982.

Recommendations

- 1 This paper recommends that Cabinet:
- 2 authorise absence from New Zealand from 20 February to 2 March 2025 to travel to Saudi Arabia, the UAE, China, Mongolia, and the Republic of Korea, to undertake bilateral visits;
- 3 agree that the delegation includes two members of staff (Specialist Ministerial Adviser for whole trip and Senior Press Secretary for Gulf legs);
- 4 approve estimated expenditure of \$79,826.25 for the travel expenses of the Ministerial party, as a charge to Vote: Internal Affairs [Members of the Executive - Travel].
- 5 note that the delegation would include officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, whose travel costs would be met by the Ministry;
- 6 agree that during this period:
 - 6.1.1 Hon McClay would act as Minister of Foreign Affairs;
 - 6.1.2 Hon Bayly would act as Minister for Racing; and
 - 6.1.3 Hon Bishop would act as Minister for Rail
- 6.2 Note that the House is not sitting during my absence.

Authorised for lodgement

Rt Hon Winston Peters

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs