

Proactive Release

Date: 14 February 2024

The following Cabinet paper has been proactively released by the Minister of Climate Change

Title	Reference
Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Simon Watts	CAB-23-MIN-0467
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Cabinet

Minute of Decision

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Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Simon Watts

Portfolio **Climate Change**

On 4 December 2023, Cabinet:

- 1 **authorised** the absence of Hon Simon Watts from New Zealand, subject to leave from Parliament being secured, from 7 to 14 December 2023, to travel to Dubai, United Arab Emirates to lead the New Zealand delegation at the 28th annual United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 28);
- 2 **agreed** that he be accompanied by one member of staff and an opposition spokesperson for Climate Change;
- 3 **approved** the estimated expenditure of up to \$70,000 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 also be accompanied by:
 - 4.1 officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ministry for the Environment, and Ministry for Primary Industries, whose travel costs will be met by their respective departments;
 - 4.2 four representatives of the Government of Tokelau, whose costs will be met by Tokelau;
 - 4.3 iwi Māori representatives, whose costs will be partially met by agencies;
- 5 **agreed** that in his absence Hon Nicola Willis act as Minister of Climate Change and Minister of Revenue;
- 6 **noted** that leave from Parliament will be sought.

Rachel Hayward
Secretary of the Cabinet

~~In Confidence~~

Office of the Minister of Climate Change

Chair, Cabinet

Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Simon Watts

- 1 I seek Cabinet approval to travel to Dubai, United Arab Emirates from 7 December to 13 December to attend United Nations Climate Change Conference 2023 (COP28).
- 2 The Prime Minister has approved the travel in-principle, and House leave will be sought from the Party Whip.

Purpose of Travel

- 3 The United Arab Emirates will host the 28th annual United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) in Dubai from 30 November to 12 December 2023. I intend to attend for the second week of the conference, which this year is 8-12 December, to participate in Ministerial-level negotiations. If negotiations run over, I may delay my departure by the required number of days.
- 4 International climate negotiations at COP are where the world takes decisions and sends signals on the global response to the climate crisis, including the implementation of the Paris Agreement. World leaders and ministers attend COPs to build political collaboration as well as to hold countries, including major emitters, to account on their climate action.
- 5 COP28 is expected to be the largest COP to date, with over 80,000 delegates including national leaders, ministers, negotiators, and a significant civil society and business presence. New Zealand will have a strong presence of around 100 attendees outside the official delegation including business and civil society.
- 6 By attending COP28, I will be positioned to support New Zealand businesses make the connections they need to effectively contribute to the delivery of New Zealand's net zero target, including by accessing new technology and exchanging know-how on agricultural emissions reductions and renewable energy generation.
- 7 COP28 is also an important opportunity to signal to our international partners New Zealand's intention to play our part in an effective global response to the climate crisis; and that we continue to stand with the Pacific as a region highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.
- 8 The value of ministerial attendance for the full duration of COP28 is to:

- 8.1 Support and amplify the participation of New Zealand stakeholders attending the conference;
 - 8.2 Improve the access and influence of New Zealand's negotiating delegation;
 - 8.3 Listen to the issues which are of most interest to international counterparts;
 - 8.4 Deepen relationships with regional and international counterparts, and continue to position New Zealand as a credible and valued partner.
- 9 Effective global action on climate change is in New Zealand's national interest. COP28 is a key moment to push for course correction, as it will include the first five-yearly 'Global Stocktake' of the implementation of the Paris Agreement. Attendance at the conference will send an important signal to the international community of New Zealand's continued commitment to the global climate response.

Bilateral Meetings and Events

- 10 There are likely to be opportunities for bilateral meetings with a range of countries at senior level. I will also host a policy roundtable with other Pacific ministers. I will ensure alignment with the Government's trade goals.
- 11 There are a number of high-level ministerial events I will also attend. I will deliver New Zealand's national statement and participate in elements of the New Zealand-sponsored Moana Pacific COP 28 Pavilion.

Ministerial Party

- 12 Subject to necessary approvals, I intend to lead a New Zealand delegation that will likely comprise:
 - 12.1 Officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) [10]; Ministry for the Environment [4], and Ministry for Primary Industries [2]. Their costs will be met by their respective departments.
 - 12.2 Four [4] representatives of the Government of Tokelau, including Ulu-o-Tokelau, the head of government of Tokelau.
 - 12.3 One [1] non-accredited expert non-official representing iwi Māori.
 - 12.4 One support staff from my office [1].
 - 12.5 Opposition spokesperson for climate change [1].
- 13 I seek Cabinet approval of funding for myself, one Opposition spokesperson and one member of my staff.

Travel Costs

14 The estimated costs of travel are as follows:

Airfares:	\$ 36,920
Accommodation: (pre-booked, \$7360pp)	\$ 22,080
Hospitality:	\$ 3,000
Other Expenses:	\$ 3,000
Contingency	\$ 5,000
Total:	<u>\$70,000</u>

Acting Ministers

15 Hon. Nicola Willis will act as Minister of Climate Change and Minister of Revenue.

Proactive release

16 I propose to release this paper proactively in whole or part, subject to redaction as appropriate under the Official Information Act 1982.

Recommendations

1 I recommend that Cabinet:

- 1.1 **authorise** my absence from New Zealand, subject to leave from Parliament being secured, from 7 December to 13 December to travel to Dubai, United Arab Emirates to attend COP28, with flexibility to delay my return if needed;
- 1.2 **agree** that I be accompanied by one member of staff from my office and one opposition spokesperson;
- 1.3 **approve** the estimated expenditure of \$70,000 for the travel expenses of the Ministerial party, as a charge to Vote: Internal Affairs [Members of the Executive – Travel];
- 1.4 **note** that the delegation will include officials from Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ministry of Primary Industries, and Ministry for the Environment, whose travel costs will be a charge to their respective departments;
- 1.5 **note** that I will be accompanied by four representatives of the Government of Tokelau, whose costs will be met by Tokelau;

- 1.6 **note** that the broader New Zealand delegation will include representatives of iwi. Partial costs of iwi Māori will be met by agencies.
- 1.7 **agree** that in my absence Hon. Nicola Willis will act as both Minister of Climate Change and Minister of revenue.
- 1.8 **note** that leave from Parliament will be sought from the Party Whip.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Simon Watts

Minister of Climate Change