



# Cabinet

## Minute of Decision

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### Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Aupito William Sio on behalf of Hon Nanaia Mahuta

Portfolio                      Foreign Affairs

On 4 July 2022, Cabinet:

- 1        **noted** Hon Nanaia Mahuta's proposal that Hon Aupito William Sio travel to Fiji to attend the Pacific Islands Forum Foreign Ministers' Meeting on her behalf;
- 2        **authorised** the absence of Hon Aupito William Sio from New Zealand, from 7 to 9 July 2022, to travel to Suva, Fiji to attend the Pacific Islands Forum Foreign Ministers' Meeting;
- 3        **agreed** that he be accompanied by one member of staff;
- 4        **approved** the estimated expenditure of up to \$12,765 for the travel expenses of the ministerial party as a charge to Vote Internal Affairs (Members of the Executive – Travel);
- 5        **noted** that he will also be accompanied by an official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade whose costs will be met by their department;
- 6        **agreed** that in his absence:
  - 6.1      Hon Kiri Allan act as Minister for Courts;
  - 6.2      Hon Carmel Sepuloni act as Minister for Pacific Peoples;
- 7        **noted** that the House is not sitting during his absence.

Rachel Hayward  
Acting Secretary of the Cabinet

[IN CONFIDENCE]

Office of the Minister for Foreign Affairs  
Chair, Cabinet

### **Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Nanaia Mahuta**

1 I seek Cabinet approval to travel to Fiji over 7 – 9 July to attend the Pacific Islands Forum Foreign Ministers' Meeting. The Prime Minister has approved the travel in-principle.

#### **Reasons for Travel**

2 My travel to Fiji, if approved, will be for the purpose of attending the Pacific Islands Forum Foreign Ministers Meeting, which will be held in Suva on 8 July. Given travel restrictions due to COVID-19, this will be the first in-person regional ministerial meeting since 2019.

3 While the meeting will be held in hybrid format, showing up will be important. There are a number of sensitive issues on the Pacific Islands Forum agenda that will benefit from frank *kanohi ki te kanohi* discussions. It will also allow me to connect with a range of counterpart Ministers, with whom I have built strong relationships with through virtual diplomacy and on the sidelines of other international meetings, most recently in Rwanda at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.

4 This meeting is part of the Forum architecture leading into the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' Meeting, which is scheduled for the following week in Suva (11-14 July 2022). Key issues include discussion on the implementation and commitments of the *Suva Agreement* – the deal struck to maintain the unity of the Pacific Islands Forum – and progressing the *2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent*. Other items on the agenda include a discussion on the global and regional security environment and addressing the threats of climate change-related sea-level rise.

5 My priorities for the Pacific Islands Forum Foreign Ministers' Meeting are to:

- Reinforce New Zealand's reputation as a country committed to the Pacific Islands Forum and the region more broadly;
- Support Pacific leadership and promote regional unity and solidarity on a range of issues;
- Ensure there is space for a broader discussion on regional security issues, following recent geopolitical developments in the Indo-Pacific region; and,
- Reinforce our Pacific-resilience based approach, particularly our work to deliver additional climate finance to the region.

#### **Outline of Proposed Visit**

6 I have prioritised attendance at the Pacific Islands Forum Foreign Ministers' meeting ahead of the Australia New Zealand Leaders' Forum, which is taking place at the same time

in Sydney. The day-long Pacific Islands Forum Foreign Ministers' Meeting will take place on Friday 8 July and I will take opportunities for informal bilaterals on the margins of the meeting.

### **Travel**

7 If my travel is approved, I will arrive in Suva on Thursday 7 July 2022. I will return to New Zealand on Saturday 9 July 2022. My travel will be by commercial means. Under the Reconnecting New Zealanders agreed policy settings, I would not be required to isolate upon my return to Aotearoa New Zealand.

### **Ministerial Party**

8 Should Cabinet approve my travel, my Private Secretary will accompany me, along with one official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, whose costs will be met by the budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

### **Estimated Costs**

9 The indicative costs of this travel are approximately \$12,765. This will be charged to Vote Internal Affairs, Members of the Executive – Travel.

10 An estimated breakdown of the costs are as follows:

<b>Flights</b>	\$8,300
<b>Accommodation</b>	\$2,000
<b>Transport</b>	\$200
<b>Gifts</b>	\$500
<b>COVID-19 testing</b>	\$100
<b>Subtotal</b>	\$11,100
<b>Contingency 15%</b>	\$1,665
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$12,765</b>

### **Acting Ministers**

11 If my travel is approved, I propose that Hon David Parker act as Minister for Foreign Affairs, and my Local Government portfolio be covered by Hon Kieran McAnulty.

12 My responsibilities as Associate Minister of Māori Development will revert to the primary Minister, Hon Willie Jackson.

### **Recommendations**

13 I recommend that Cabinet:

- Authorise my absence from New Zealand from 7 July to 9 July to travel to Fiji.
- Agree that I will be accompanied by my Private Secretary.

- Note that I will also be accompanied by one official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.
- Approve the expenditure of \$12,765 for the travel expenses of the ministerial party as a charge to Vote Internal Affairs, Members of the Executive – Travel.
- Agree that that Hon David Parker and Hon Kieran McNulty will be Acting Ministers in my absence.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Nanaia Mahuta

Minister of Foreign Affairs / Minita Take Aorere

PROACTIVELY RELEASED BY THE ASSOCIATE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS