

Proactive Release

Date: 29 November 2022

The following Cabinet paper and related Cabinet minute have been proactively released by the Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs

Title	Reference
Minute of Decision: Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Aupito William Sio	CAB-22MIN-0444
Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Aupito William Sio	

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 Act). Where this is the case, the relevant sections of the Act 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 redaction codes:

- 6(a): to avoid prejudicing the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the New Zealand Government.



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: Hon Aupito William Sio

Portfolio Associate Foreign Affairs

On 17 October 2022, Cabinet:

- 1 **authorised** the absence of Hon Aupito William Sio from New Zealand, subject to leave from Parliament being secured, from 18 to 21 October 2022, to travel to Niue to represent New Zealand at its Constitution Day celebrations;
- 2 **agreed** that he be accompanied by one member of staff from his office;
- 3 **approved** the estimated expenditure of up to \$16,500 for the travel expenses of the ministerial party, with any additional cost relating to the provision of transportation by the Australian Government to be approved by the Prime Minister, as a charge to Vote: Internal Affairs (Members of the Executive – Travel);
- 4 **noted** that he will be accompanied by officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ministry for Pacific Peoples, and a Niue community representative, whose costs will be met by their agencies;
- 5 **agreed** that in his absence:
 - 5.1 Hon Kiri Allan act as Minister for Courts;
 - 5.2 Hon Carmel Sepuloni act as Minister for Pacific Peoples;
- 6 **noted** that leave from Parliament has been sought.

Rachel Hayward
Acting Secretary of the Cabinet

In Confidence

Office of the Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs
Chair, Cabinet

Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Aupito William Sio

- 1 I am seeking Cabinet approval for travel to Niue for their Constitution Day. The invitation was to the Prime Minister and I would like to travel to represent New Zealand.
- 2 The Prime Minister has approved the travel in-principle and House leave has been sought from the Party Whip. The dates of travel are from the 18 to the 21 October 2022.

Purpose of Travel

- 3 Niue is celebrating its Constitution Day on Thursday 20 October (19 October Niue time). Constitution Day is the most important date on the Niue political calendar, marking the 48th anniversary of self-government in free association with New Zealand.
- 4 If approved, a visit to Niue will have the objective of attending Niue's Constitution Day celebration alongside high-level officials from China, Japan and the US Ambassador. Australia's Foreign Minister Penny Wong is also tentatively confirmed to attend the celebrations. Acknowledging the importance of this day for Niue will demonstrate our commitment to our constitutional obligations and the vision reflected in the recently refreshed Statement of Partnership signed by Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and Premier Tagelagi in July this year.
- 5 A visit to Niue will also provide the opportunity to reiterate New Zealand's health and education support to Niue, including our ongoing commitment to support Niue navigate the COVID-19 pandemic. It reiterates and builds on the connections and support for Vagahau Niue and Taoga Niue, the Niuean language and culture, which is one of the key priorities expressed by the Niuean Premier in his July visit.

Specific objectives for the visit

- 6 Demonstrate New Zealand's special and enduring partnership with Niue through attending Constitution Day celebrations, as Niue is a Realm nation of Aotearoa New Zealand.
- 7 Reiterate New Zealand's support for improving health and education outcomes in Niue, including our ongoing commitment to support Niue navigate the impacts of COVID-19.
- 8 Continue to build on our shared interests, collaborative efforts and support for Vagahau and Taoga Niue, Niuean language and culture. The Vagahau Niue

Language Commission contributed to the recently launched Pacific Languages Strategy and the trip is an opportunity to gift a physical copy of the Strategy.

- 9 Consolidate the relationship gains we have made over the past two years of COVID-19, and through recent engagement by Prime Minister Ardern, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and myself with Niuean counterparts.

Outline of proposed visit

- 10 If travel is approved, the programme will include bilateral meetings with Premier Tagelagi and Niue's Minister of Health, a visit to Niue's hospital and community events with Niuean scholarship recipients.
- 11 The centrepiece of this visit will be attending the Constitution Day celebrations alongside Premier Tagelagi, Australia's Foreign Minister, the US Ambassador and high-level officials from China and Japan and other visiting dignitaries who are expected to attend. As the key constitutional partner, New Zealand should be represented at the celebrations.
- 12 A visit to Niue Fook Hospital will highlight our partnership with Niue to support improved health outcomes for Niueans. It will also provide the opportunity to reiterate our commitment to support Niue to navigate the impacts of COVID-19.
- 13 Engagements with the Vagahau Niue Language Commission, the Niue Youth Council as well as Taoga Niue Council and Arts will reaffirm and demonstrate our ongoing commitment to supporting the revitalisation and maintenance of Vagahau and Taoga Niue. The recent opening of the first Vagahau Niue Bilingual Unit in Favona, Mangere and addition of Vagahau Niue as an NCEA subject also provides an opportunity to meet with Niue education and school leaders to discuss and share experiences and lessons learned.
- 14 This visit is dependent on Australia providing return transport for myself from Niue. If Minister Wong's travel is approved my flight schedule is likely to be:
 - 14.1 Depart Auckland via Air New Zealand on Tuesday 18 October (NZT) and arrive into Niue.
 - 14.2 Depart Niue via an Australian Defence asset on Thursday 20 (NZT) October, travel via Noumea New Caledonia and then return to Australia (port of entry TBC). The movements and exact timing of the Australian Government aircraft has yet to be determined.
 - 14.3 On Saturday 22 October, I will fly to Sydney to take the connecting flight to Manila, Philippines to attend the World Health Organisation (WHO) 73rd Annual Western Pacific Regional Committee Meeting.

Ministerial Party

- 15 I will be accompanied by a Private Secretary from my office. One official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade will accompany me to Niue and their costs will be funded by their Department. One official from the Ministry for Pacific Peoples and a Niuean community representative will also be attending and their costs will be funded by their Department.

Travel Costs

- 16 Please note that the estimated costs provided to the Prime Minister that received in-principle approval will increase due to the uncertainty around Australia providing transportation support. The estimated costs below aims to cover off any unexpected costs in terms of flights/accommodation that usually occurs with last minute travel bookings and to ensure that I can meet my connecting flight on the 22 October to attend the World Health Organisation (WHO), 73rd Annual Western Pacific Regional Committee Meeting (RCM).
- 17 The estimated cost of this trip is \$16500. This will be charged to Vote: Internal Affairs: Members of the Executive – Travel, as follows:

Airfares	\$7000
s6(a)	
Accommodation	\$2600
Gifts	\$250
Other expenses, including meals	\$1000
Functions/hospitality	\$1500
Contingency (20%)	\$2750
Total	<u>\$16500</u>

Acting Ministers

- 18 For the period of my absence:
- 18.1 Hon Kiri Allan will be Acting Minister for Courts; and
- 18.2 Hon Carmel Sepuloni will be Acting Minister for Pacific Peoples.

Proactive release

- 19 I propose to proactively release this paper.

Recommendations

- 1 I recommend that Cabinet:
 - 1.1 Authorise my absence from New Zealand, from 18 October to 21 October 2022, subject to leave from Parliament being secured to travel to Niue for their Constitution Day;
 - 1.2 Agree that I be accompanied by one staff member from my office;
 - 1.3 Approve the estimated expenditure of \$16500 for the travel expenses of the Ministerial party; as a charge to Vote: Internal Affairs: [Members of the Executive – Travel];
 - 1.4 Note that I will be accompanied by officials from Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ministry for Pacific Peoples and a Niue community representative. Their travel costs will be met by their own departments;
 - 1.5 Agree that in my absence, Hon Kiri Allan will be Acting Minister for Courts and Hon Carmel Sepuloni will be Acting Minister for Pacific Peoples;
 - 1.6 Note that leave from Parliament has been sought from the Party Whip.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Aupito William Sio
Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs