

# Proactive Release

Date: 30 March 2022

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

<b>Title</b>	<b>Reference</b>
<i>Minute of Decision – Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Nanaia Mahuta, 19 February-2 March 2022</i>	CAB-21-MIN-0025
<i>Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Nanaia Mahuta, 19 February-2 March 2022</i>	Cabinet paper

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 international relations of the New Zealand Government;
- 9(2)(g)(i): to protect the free and frank expression of opinions by departments; and
- 9(2)(f)(iv): the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown 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: Hon Nanaia Mahuta

Portfolio                      Foreign Affairs

On 14 February 2022, Cabinet:

- 1        **authorised** the absence of Hon Nanaia Mahuta from Aotearoa New Zealand, subject to leave from Parliament being secured, from 19 February to 2 March 2022 to travel to:
  - 1.1      Paris, France, to participate in the Indo-Pacific Forum;
  - 1.2      London, the United Kingdom, for bilateral discussions;
  - 1.3      Geneva, Switzerland, for bilateral discussions;
- 2        **agreed** that she be accompanied by one member of staff from her office;
- 3        **approved** the expenditure of up to \$112,663 for the travel expenses of the Ministerial party, as a charge to Vote Internal Affairs (Members of the Executive – Travel);
- 4        **noted** that she will be accompanied by one senior official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, whose travel costs will be met by the department;
- 5        **agreed** that in her absence:
  - 5.1      Hon David Parker act as Minister of Foreign Affairs;
  - 5.2      Hon Kiri Allan act as Minister of Local Government;
  - 5.3      Hon Grant Robertson act as Minister of Local Government (Three Waters Reforms);
- 6        **noted** that she and her official delegation will comply with the COVID-19 isolation requirements on return to New Zealand;
- 7        **noted** that leave from Parliament has been sought from the Party Whip.

Michael Webster  
Secretary of the Cabinet

[RESTRICTED]

Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Chair, Cabinet

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

1 I seek Cabinet approval to travel to Paris (France), London (United Kingdom) and Geneva (Switzerland) from 19 February-2 March 2022.

2 The Prime Minister has approved the travel in-principle and House leave has been sought from the Party Whip.

### **Purpose of Travel**

3 The primary purpose of this travel is to travel to **Paris** to accept the invitation to participate in the Indo-Pacific Forum. The forum is the initiative of France, in its capacity as current rotating President of the Council of the European Union (EU). Participation would be a valuable, timely way to reinforce the breadth of our strategic partnership with the EU and its Member States. This is a key priority, including as we seek to advance the EU-New Zealand FTA and reinforce Aotearoa New Zealand's value as a like-minded, close partner for the EU.

4 The Indo-Pacific Forum is seen by France and the EU as a key forum this year for deepening the EU's engagement with the Indo-Pacific. As well as senior EU representatives from Brussels, all of the 27 EU Member States have been invited at foreign minister level. A similar number of countries from the Indo-Pacific have been invited. It is in Aotearoa New Zealand's interests to deepen engagement and cooperation with like-minded European partners on the Indo-Pacific s6(a)

5 As well as profiling our role and priorities in the Indo-Pacific, participation in the Forum will enable me to meet a number of EU and Indo-Pacific Foreign Ministers – many for the first time in-person – over a short duration. Meetings with EU and other Foreign Ministers present would provide a timely opportunity to engage counterparts on significant international issues, including: Russia-Ukraine, COVID-19 response, Afghanistan, and climate change – to ensure that Aotearoa New Zealand's voice and interests are registered.

6 As well as Paris, I would propose to undertake a short working visit to the **United Kingdom (London)**. The UK is a key regional and global player, including in the Pacific, and one of Aotearoa New Zealand's closest bilateral partners. This leg will be important to undertake s6(a)

A visit to London would usefully reinforce the significance we attach to the broad and weighty relationship with the UK, beyond the UK-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement.

7 I would propose that a visit to London take place after the Indo-Pacific Forum (on 23-24 February); I would be seeking calls with relevant UK counterparts, notably Foreign Secretary Liz Truss.

8 Geneva is the centre of multilateral dialogue, debate and negotiation on issues of

RESTRICTED

core interests to Aotearoa New Zealand's foreign policy across the human rights, health, humanitarian and disarmament fields (as well as trade). A visit to Geneva on 25-28 February (including over a weekend) would allow me to engage on a number of key multilateral issues of importance to Aotearoa New Zealand.

9 My participation in the UN Human Rights Council High-Level Segment would demonstrate Aotearoa New Zealand's commitment to protecting international human rights standards and shoring up global governance at a time of increasing geopolitical challenge and s9(2)(f)(iv)

Currently there are 55 Deputy Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers planning to attend in-person. There may be opportunities for bilaterals with Foreign Ministers including from s6(a) to complement those I will be meeting from Europe and the Indo-Pacific earlier in the programme.

10 I would seek bilateral meetings (depending on availability) with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet; the President of the Human Rights Council, Argentine Ambassador Federico Villegas; the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Peter Maurer; the Director General of the World Health Organisation Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus; and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Felippo Grandi.

11 If time allowed I could also engage with civil society (for example those dealing with human rights, including the rights of women, indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities and/or humanitarian crises such as in Afghanistan). There may also be opportunities to meet with representatives s9(2)(g)(i)

### **Travel during COVID-19**

12 Given the surge of Omicron globally there is currently a significantly elevated (compared to Aotearoa New Zealand) COVID-related health and travel disruption risk in the proposed travel to the Europe.

13 It is possible the COVID situation at each destination could shift for the better, or worse, over the next two-four weeks. Monitoring COVID risk and ensuring appropriate mitigations are in place for this ministerial travel would be a priority as part of the visit planning process. Given the changing global situation with respect to COVID-19, I will continue to monitor developments in each host country and adapt my travel plans if necessary.

14 I acknowledge the significance of travel during this time given COVID-19 restrictions. I consider it is timely for me to cement in-person some key bilateral relationships which have been forged virtually. It is also critical that Aotearoa New Zealand continues to be seen as an active and engaged player in international diplomacy, despite the challenges of COVID.

15 Furthermore, it should be noted that some of the countries I am proposing to visit are no longer following strict COVID controls or mitigation measures, so the risk of contracting and/or spreading COVID is a real one. For the official delegation, closely observing COVID protocols and adopting appropriate risk mitigation measures will also be important throughout my travel. The Minister for Trade and Export Growth, Hon Damien O'Connor, will also likely be travelling in Europe during this period, including to Geneva from 3-6 March (i.e. after my scheduled departure).

RESTRICTED

16 I, along with my official delegation, will undertake the requisite time in MIQ on return to New Zealand.

### Ministerial Party

17 If approved, I would be accompanied throughout the travel by one staff member from my office. One Senior Official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade would also accompany me during the visit. Their costs will be met from the departmental budget.

### Travel Costs

18 The estimated costs of my travel are:

	Minister	Staff
Flights	\$15,370	\$15,370
Other transport	\$3,811	\$3,811
Accommodation	\$9,681	\$9,681
Per diems	\$3,705	\$3,705
Facilitation	\$16,268	\$5,695
Representation	\$2,000	
Gifts	\$4,000	
MIQ	\$1,610	\$1,610
Covid-19 tests	\$825	\$825
Subtotal	\$57,270	\$40,697
Contingency (15%)	\$8,591	\$6,105
Total	\$65,861	\$46,802 <b>Total: \$112,663</b>

\*France will likely cover two nights of accommodation for the Minister.

### Acting Ministers

19 In my absence, Acting Ministers in my portfolios would be:

Foreign Affairs: Hon David Parker

Local Government: Hon Kiri Allan, Hon Grant Robertson (Three Waters Reforms)

### Proactive Release

20 This paper will 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

21 I recommend that Cabinet:

- 21.1 authorise my absence from Aotearoa New Zealand, subject to leave from Parliament being secured, from 19 February – 2 March 2022 to travel to Paris, London and Geneva;
- 21.2 agree that I be accompanied by one staff member;
- 21.3 approve the estimated expenditure of \$112,663 for the travel expenses of the Ministerial party, as a charge to Vote: Internal Affairs [Members of the Executive – Travel];
- 21.4 note that I will be accompanied by one senior official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, whose travel costs will be met by the department;
- 21.5 agree that Hon Kiritapu Allan, Hon Grant Robertson and Hon David Parker will be Acting Ministers in my absence;

RESTRICTED

21.6 note that leave from Parliament has been sought from the Party Whip.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Nanaia Mahuta  
Minister of Foreign Affairs

Proactively Released  
by the Minister of Foreign Affairs

RESTRICTED