

Proactive Release

15 August 2023

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

Title	Reference
<i>Cabinet Minute of Decision – Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Carmel Sepuloni</i>	CAB-23-MIN-0293
<i>Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Carmel Sepuloni</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(b)(i): to protect the passing of information from another government on a confidential basis.



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.

Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Carmel Sepuloni

Portfolio **Associate Foreign Affairs**

On 3 July 2023, Cabinet **noted** the report from Hon Carmel Sepuloni under CAB-23-SUB-0293 on her travel, from 30 May to 2 June 2023, to Samoa to represent Aotearoa New Zealand at the 61st Anniversary of Samoan Independence celebrations.

Diana Hawker
Acting Secretary of the Cabinet

Proactively Released by the Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs

~~In Confidence~~

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

Chair, Cabinet

Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Carmel Sepuloni

- 1 I recommend that Cabinet note this report on my travel to Samoa from 30 May to 2 June 2023.

Report

- 2 I travelled to Samoa to represent Aotearoa New Zealand at the 61st Independence Day Celebrations and to mark the conclusion of the 60th anniversary year of diplomatic relations.
- 3 Aotearoa has a close and multi-faceted relationship with Samoa, built on a foundation of our shared history and whanaungatanga. This 60th anniversary year has been a particularly important year in our relationship. Building on visits to Samoa by the Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern, the Rt Hon Dame Cindy Kiro and Hon Nanaia Mahuta, my attendance underscored the importance of the bilateral relationship.

Uō mamae - lifelong friends

- 4 My visit began with a reception hosted at the New Zealand Residence to commemorate the end of the 60th anniversary year of Aotearoa New Zealand's diplomatic relations with Samoa, under the theme of 'Uō mamae' – lifelong friends. Both my and Prime Minister Fiame's speeches spoke to the close, warm and enduring relationship between our two countries.
- 5 The reception was well attended by members of cabinet, the council of deputies, the judiciary, and other guests from the diplomatic corps and local community. The Deputy Prime Minister of the Cook Islands and the Ulu of Tokelau also attended as they were present in Samoa for the celebrations of independence.

Meetings with Prime Minister Fiame Naomi Mata'afa, and with the Head of State and Masi'ifo

- 6 My meeting with Prime Minister Fiame Naomi Mata'afa was warm and productive. I took the opportunity to underline the strength of our relationship with Samoa, and my appreciation for being able to share in and acknowledge 61 years of independence.

7 s6(b)(i)

8 s6(b)(i)

9 I paid a courtesy call on O le Ao o le Malo/Head of State, His Highness Tuimaleali'ifano Va'aleto'a Sualauvi II, and his Good Lady Masiofo Faamausili Leinafo Tuimaleali'ifano. I took the opportunity to reiterate Hon Nanaia Mahuta's invitation for the Head of State to visit New Zealand after the General Election.

61st Independence Day Celebrations

10 I joined the Prime Minister of Fiji, Deputy Prime Minister of Tonga, Deputy Prime Minister of Cook Islands, Ulu of Tokelau, and Governor of American Samoa as Samoa's guests to celebrate the 61st Anniversary of Samoan independence.

11 The official programme for the 61st Independence Day celebrations began on the afternoon of 31 May with a thanksgiving service for the end of the 60th anniversary, including hymns, the conferral of national honours and awards, and the lowering of the flag.

12 Thousands gathered for the official celebrations on 1 June, which were the first to be held since 2019 due to COVID-19. A huge diversity of organisations took the opportunity to celebrate, including schools from Savaii, sports teams, ministries, a visiting contingent from the Royal New Zealand Navy, RSE workers from Poutasi village, and the New Zealand High Commission participating in the 'march past' of the newly raised flag.

13 I also attended the official luncheon, an afternoon of cultural performances and a private dinner, hosted by Prime Minister Fiame, with other visiting dignitaries.

Visit to the National University of Samoa

14 Alongside the official independence programme, I visited the National University of Samoa in support of my delegations as Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs (Pacific Region) on Pacific arts, culture and heritage, and education in the Pacific.

15 The University's first female Vice Chancellor, Tuifuisa'a Associate Professor Patila Amosa hosted me at the Centre for Samoan Studies, where the National University of Samoa gave a presentation on the New Zealand funded project to document and preserve Vaimea Prison, one of the last remaining colonial

buildings in Samoa where members of both the Mau a Pule and Mau o Samoa movements were imprisoned during the Samoan struggle for independence.

- 16 My visit to the National University of Samoa also provided an opportunity to highlight and discuss planned support by Creative New Zealand in Samoa, and celebrate the newly agreed Bachelor of Health Science programme that New Zealand is funding.

Proactive release

- 17 I propose to proactively release this paper within 30 business days with redactions made in accordance with the Official Information Act 1982.

Recommendation

I recommend that Cabinet note this report.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Carmel Sepuloni

Deputy Prime Minister

Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs (Pacific Region)

Proactively Released by the Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs