

Proactive Release

Published on or before: 1 July 2025

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

<i>Title of Paper(s):</i>	<i>Reference</i>
Proposed Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Winston Peters – 23 May-31 May 2025	
Cabinet Minute of Decision: Proposed Overseas Travel: RT Hon Winston Peters – May 2025	CAB-25-MIN-0164

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Key to redaction codes:

- 6(a): to avoid prejudicing the international relations of the New Zealand Government, and
- 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.

Proposed Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Winston Peters - May 2025

Portfolio Foreign Affairs

On 19 May 2025, Cabinet:

- 1 **authorised** the absence of the Rt Hon Winston Peters from New Zealand, from 23 to 31 May 2025, to travel to Australia, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and India to undertake bilateral visits;
- 2 **agreed** that he be accompanied by one member of staff;
- 3 **approved** the estimated expenditure of up to \$51,121 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 officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, whose travel costs will be met by their agency;
- 5 **agreed** that in his absence:
 - 5.1 Hon Todd McClay act as Minister of Foreign Affairs from 23 to 27 May 2025;
 - 5.2 Hon Shane Jones act as Ministers of Foreign Affairs from 28 to 31 May 2025;
 - 5.3 Hon Chris Bishop act as Minister for Rail;
 - 5.4 Hon Mark Patterson act as Minister for Racing;
- 6 **noted** the House is not sitting during his absence.

Diana Hawker
for Secretary of the Cabinet

~~Restricted~~

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs
Chair, Cabinet

Proposed Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Winston Peters – 23 May – 31 May 2025

- 1 Cabinet approval is sought to travel to Australia, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and India from Friday 23 May to Saturday 31 May 2025 (inclusive).
- 2 The Prime Minister's Office has approved in-principle the South Asia leg of the travel.

Purpose of Travel

- 3 The six-monthly Australia-New Zealand Foreign Ministers' Consultations (FMC) will be hosted by the Australian Foreign Minister, Senator Penny Wong, in Adelaide, on Friday 23 May. The purpose of these consultations is to promote New Zealand's priority interests in our bilateral relationship with Australia and enhance our coordination in support of shared international goals such as Pacific development and security. Coming soon after the recent Australian general election, the visit also provides an early opportunity to engage with the re-elected Australian Government at a senior level.
- 4 South Asia, a region of around two billion people, is of considerable consequence and opportunity for New Zealand. New Zealand's relationships in South Asia serve to protect and diversify New Zealand's trade interests, s6(a)
- 5 This visit is an important opportunity to maintain the positive momentum on New Zealand's relationship with India, strengthen the long-standing relationship with Sri Lanka, and reaffirm and sustain New Zealand's relationship with Nepal.
- 6 New Zealand is committed to building a broad-based relationship with India. s6(a)
- 7 Prime Minister Luxon completed a successful mission to India in March, which included the launch of Free Trade Agreement negotiations. s6(a)

8 New Zealand is strengthening its long-term relationship with Sri Lanka. New Zealand established a High Commission in Colombo in 2022 and Sri Lanka reciprocated by opening a resident High Commission in Wellington in February this year.

9 s6(a)

In addition, s6(a), Sri Lanka is the first country to seek accession to the RCEP trade agreement s6(a)

10 The proposed visit would be the first visit of a New Zealand Foreign Minister to Sri Lanka since 2013.

11 New Zealand has a s6(a) friendly relationship with Nepal arising from the Hillary/Norgay summit of Mt Everest and maintained through the Hillary-founded Himalayan Trust and New Zealand's long-standing development programme. s6(a)

New Zealand has hosted two visits of a Nepali foreign minister but has not yet made an official visit to Nepal. s6(b)(i)

12 The visit, timed to coincide with the anniversary of the ascent of Mt Everest, would emphasise our warm and long-standing relationship and register New Zealand's interest in South Asia. s6(a)

Outline of proposed visit

13 We intend to undertake the following key engagements:

13.1 Australia

- Australia-New Zealand Foreign Ministers' Consultations with Foreign Minister Penny Wong.

13.2 Sri Lanka

- Bilateral meeting with Foreign Minister Vijitha Herath;
- Call on Prime Minister Harini Amarasuriya;
- Call on President Anura Kumara Dissanayake.

13.3 Nepal

- Bilateral meeting with Nepalese Foreign Minister Rana Deuba;
- Call on Prime Minister K P Sharma;
- Call on President Ramchandra Paudel.

13.4 India

- Bilateral meeting with External Relations Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar;
- s6(b)(i)

- 14 The South Asia programme will also include engagements relevant to New Zealand's development projects and education and sporting connections, to highlight long-standing people to people connections. Education and commercial engagements will profile trade connections.

Ministerial Party

- 15 This paper proposes that the delegation include Specialist Ministerial Adviser. Travel costs for the delegation would be a charge to Vote Internal Affairs: Members of the Executive – Travel.
- 16 The delegation will be accompanied by officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Their costs would be covered by the Ministry.

Travel Costs

- 17 The estimated cost for the two-person delegation is:

Item	NZ\$
Flights	32,000
Adelaide, Australia	
Accommodation <i>Two rooms for one night</i>	900
Transportation (vehicle and driver)	250
Other expenses, including incidentals <i>1 day, meals and other sundry expenses</i>	300
Australia total	1,450
Colombo, Sri Lanka	
Accommodation <i>Two rooms for three nights</i>	2,880
Transportation (vehicle and driver)	980
Hospitality	720
Gifts	450
Other expenses, including incidentals	460
<i>3 days (meals and other sundry expenses)</i>	560
<i>Facilitation</i>	170

6,180	5,360
Kathmandu, Nepal	
Accommodation <i>Two rooms for one night</i>	700
Transportation (1 x VIP transport)	450
<i>Helicopter flight</i>	3,200
Gifts	1,292
Other expenses, including incidentals <i>1 day (meals and other sundry expenses)</i>	240
Kathmandu total	5,882
New Delhi, India	
Accommodation <i>Two rooms for one night, one room for two nights</i>	1,125
Transportation (1 x vehicle hire and driver)	400
Gifts	1,250
Other expenses, including incidentals <i>2 days (meals and other sundry expenses)</i>	400
New Delhi total	3,175
Contingency 5%	2,429
Total	51,121

Acting Ministers

- 18 If travel is approved, the Hon Todd McClay and Hon Shane Jones will cover the foreign affairs portfolio (23-27 May and 28 May – 31 May respectively), Hon Chris Bishop will cover the rail portfolio, and Hon Mark Patterson will cover the racing portfolio.

Proactive release

- 19 This Cabinet paper would 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

- 1 This paper recommends that Cabinet:
 - 1.1 authorise absence from New Zealand, from 23 May to 1 June 2025 to travel to Australia, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and India to undertake bilateral visits and the Australia-New Zealand Foreign Ministers' Consultations;
 - 1.2 agree that the delegation includes one member of staff (Specialist Ministerial Adviser).
 - 1.3 approve the estimated expenditure of \$51,121 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 would include officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, whose travel costs would be met by the Ministry;
 - 1.5 agree that in our absence:
 - 1.5.1 Hon Todd McClay and Hon Shane Jones would act as Ministers for Foreign Affairs (23-27 May and 28-31 May respectively);
 - 1.5.2 Hon Chris Bishop would act as Minister for Rail; and
 - 1.5.3 Hon Mark Patterson would act as Minister of Racing.
 - 1.6 note that the House is not sitting during our absence.

Authorised for lodgement

Rt Hon Winston Peters

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs