

Proactive Release

Published on or before: 14 July 2026

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

Title	Reference
<i>Cabinet Minute of Decision – Report on Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Winston Peters – 1-2 April 2026</i>	CAB-26-MIN-0180
<i>Report on Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Winston Peters – 1-2 April 2026</i>	



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: Rt Hon Winston Peters – 1-2 April 2026

Portfolio

Foreign Affairs

On 2 June 2026, Cabinet **noted** the report from the Rt Hon Winston Peters under CAB-26-SUB-0180 on his travel, from 1 to 2 April 2026, to Rarotonga, Cook Islands to sign a Declaration on Defence and Security between the Government of New Zealand and the Government of the Cook Islands.

Rachel Hayward
Secretary of the Cabinet

Proactively Released by the Minister of Foreign Affairs

Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs

Chair, Cabinet

Report on Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Winston Peters – 1-2 April 2026

This paper recommends that Cabinet note this report on travel to the Cook Islands from 1 to 2 April 2026.

Report

- 1 The primary purpose of this travel was to sign a Declaration on Defence and Security (the Declaration) between the Government of New Zealand and the Government of the Cook Islands.
- 2 Accompanied by the Chief of the Defence Force, we met with Cook Islands Prime Minister Brown prior to the Declaration signing. The meeting covered a range of topics of mutual interest and shared concern, including Transnational Serious Organised Crime (TSOC) in the Pacific and the need for a regional response; a discussion on the impact of the Middle East conflict and fuel crisis; and issues facing the Pacific Islands Forum and the need to attract new partners and funding to the region. We welcomed agreement on the Declaration and acknowledged the significance and timeliness of the signing.
- 3 The Declaration signing ceremony included senior members across Cook Islands society, including the private sector, cultural and religious leaders, Cabinet ministers and senior government officials. Following the signing, we participated in a joint press conference.
- 4 The visit was a significant and historic event, successfully drawing a line under an extremely difficult 18-month period in the bilateral relationship. The signing of the Declaration has enabled normalisation of our bilateral relationship with the Cook Islands, including the restoration of our paused development cooperation funding. The presence of the Chief of the Defence Force also visibly reinforced the constitutional responsibilities New Zealand has for the defence and security of the Realm, as affirmed in the Declaration.

Proactive release

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.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Cabinet note this report.

Authorised for lodgement

Rt Hon Winston Peters

Minister of Foreign Affairs