

Proactive Release

Published on or before: 23 February 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 – Proposed Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Winston Peters – January 2026</i>	CAB-25-MIN-0463
<i>Proposed Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Winston Peters – January 2026</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(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: Rt Hon Winston Peters – January 2026

Portfolio Foreign Affairs

On 15 December 2025, Cabinet:

- 1 **authorised** the absence of the Rt Hon Winston Peters from New Zealand, from 18 to 22 January 2026, to travel to the Republic of Kiribati, Palau and Fiji to undertake bilateral visits;
- 2 **agreed** that he be accompanied by three members of staff from his office, one of whose costs will be met by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade;
- 3 **approved** the estimated expenditure of up to \$22,943 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 Judith Collins KC act as Minister of Foreign Affairs;
 - 5.2 Hon Shane Jones act as Minister for Rail;
 - 5.3 Hon Simeon Brown act as Minister for Racing;
- 6 **noted** that the House is not sitting during his absence.

Diana Hawker
for Secretary of the Cabinet

Restricted

Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs

Chair, Cabinet

Proposed Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Winston Peters – January 2026

- 1 Cabinet approval is sought to travel to the Republic of Kiribati, Palau and Fiji from Sunday 18 to Thursday 22 January 2026 (inclusive).
- 2 The Prime Minister's Office has approved the travel in-principle.

Purpose of Travel

- 3 New Zealand has a non-discretionary stake in a peaceful, stable and resilient Pacific region and it is important for New Zealand to take opportunities to reaffirm our commitment to the Pacific.
- 4 Visiting Kiribati at the invitation of President and Foreign Minister Taneti Maamau is the culmination of months of diplomatic effort to reset our bilateral relationship. It builds on President Maamau's meeting with us and Prime Minister Luxon at Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Leaders Meeting in Honiara at the UN General Assembly in New York, and will be the first visit to Kiribati by a New Zealand Minister since 2019. Kiribati is the final of the 17 PIF member countries that we pledged to visit during the Government's current term.
- 5 Objectives for the visit are to set the strategic direction for our bilateral relationship through the adoption of a high-level Statement of Partnership and discussions on strategic issues, and to raise visibility of the development assistance provided by New Zealand in support of Kiribati's prosperity and resilience.
- 6 Mid-next year, New Zealand will join the PIF Troika with Palau, a high-level political consultative mechanism comprised of the Forum's outgoing, current and incoming Chairs. Visiting Palau prior to this provides a timely opportunity for early coordination on our successive hosting years in 2026 and 2027 and identification of shared regional priorities to advance during this period. s6(a)
- 7 The visit to Palau also provides an opportunity to continue building positive momentum in the bilateral relationship. s6(a)
- 8 Given the need for a refuelling stop on the return from Palau to New Zealand, we will seek two engagements in Nadi, Fiji. s6(a)

s6(a)

A meeting will also be sought with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretary General Baron Waqa to discuss a range of PIF issues, including New Zealand's hosting in 2027.

Outline of proposed visit

9 During this short visit we intend to undertake the following key engagements:

- s6(a)
- A formal bilateral meeting with Kiribati Vice President and Minister of Finance and Economic Development Hon Dr. Teaua Toatu;
- A formal bilateral meeting with President of Palau, His Excellency Surangel Whipps Jr.;
- A formal bilateral meeting with Palau Minister of State (Foreign Affairs equivalent), Hon. Gustav Aitaro;
- s6(a)
- A formal meeting with Pacific Islands Forum Secretary General, Baron Waqa; and
- Visiting New Zealand-funded development projects.

Ministerial Party

- 10 The Senior Ministerial Adviser and Senior Press Secretary are proposed to join the delegation. Travel costs for the delegation would be a charge to Vote Internal Affairs: Members of the Executive – Travel.
- 11 This paper proposes that officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade travel in support of the visit objectives. Their costs would be covered by the Ministry.
- 12 The delegation would depart for Kiribati on Sunday 18 January via NZDF Boeing 757. The delegation would then travel to Palau and Fiji, returning to New Zealand on Thursday 22 January.

Travel Costs

13 The estimated cost for the delegation is:

ITEM	COST (NZD)
RNZAF flights	-
Kiribati	
Accommodation (three people for two nights)	\$1,080
Ground transportation	\$1,800
Gift for s6(a) Vice President Dr. Teuea Toatu and Speaker Tokataake	s6(a)

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ITEM	COST (NZD)
Hospitality / Representation (contribution to Vice President lunch)	s6(a)
Meals and other expenses, including incidentals and telecommunications (three people for two days)	\$1,200
Kiribati Total	\$5,380
Palau	
Accommodation (three people for one night)	\$2,670
Ground transportation	\$2,400
Gift for Palau President Surangel Whipps Jr., and Minister of State Hon. Gustav Aitaro	s6(a)
Hospitality / Representation (contribution to State Dinner)	s6(a)
<i>Cost to be split with Partner Government (25/75)</i>	
Meals and other expenses, including incidentals and telecommunications (three people for one and a half days)	\$1,350
Palau Total	\$10,920
Fiji	
Accommodation (three people for one night)	\$2,100
Ground transportation	\$1,600
Gift for s6(a) Pacific Islands Forum Secretary General Baron Waqa	s6(a)
Meals and other expenses, including incidentals and telecommunications (three people for one and a half days)	\$1,350
Fiji Total	\$5,550
Subtotal	\$21,850
Contingency 5% (rounded)	\$1,093
Overall travel total	\$22,943

Acting Ministers

- 14 If travel is approved, Hon Judith Collins would cover the Foreign Affairs portfolio; Hon Shane Jones would cover the Rail portfolio; and Hon Simeon Brown would cover the Racing portfolio in our absence.

Proactive release

- 15 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:

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- 1.1 authorise our absence from New Zealand, from 18-22 January 2026 to travel to the Republic of Kiribati and Palau to undertake a bilateral visits;
- 1.2 agree that Specialist Minister Adviser and Senior Press Secretary accompany the trip;
- 1.3 approve the estimated expenditure of \$22,943 for the travel expenses of the above Ministerial party, as a charge to Vote: Internal Affairs [Members of the Executive – Travel];
- 1.4 note that Senior Foreign Affairs Adviser and a small number of officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade would also accompany in support of the visit objectives, whose costs would be met by the Ministry;
- 1.5 agree that in my absence:
 - 1.5.1 Hon Judith Collins would act as Minister of Foreign Affairs;
 - 1.5.2 Hon Shane Jones would act as Minister for Rail;
 - 1.5.3 Hon Simeon Brown would act as Minister for Racing;
- 1.6 note that the House is not sitting during our absence.

Authorised for lodgement

Rt Hon Winston Peters

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Proactively Released by the Minister of Foreign Affairs