

Proactive Release

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The following Cabinet papers and related Cabinet minutes have been proactively released by the Minister for Trade and Investment

Title	Reference
<i>Cabinet Minute - Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Todd McClay – March 2026</i>	CAB-26-Min-0057
<i>Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Todd McClay – March 2026</i>	

Proactively released by the
Minister for Trade and Investment



Cabinet

Minute of Decision

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Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Todd McClay – March 2026

Portfolio Trade and Investment

On 2 March 2026, Cabinet:

- 1 **authorised** the absence of Hon Todd McClay from New Zealand, subject to leave from Parliament being secured, from 22 March to 1 April 2026, to travel to Yaoundé, Cameroon to attend the World Trade Organisation 14th Ministerial Conference and undertake bilateral engagements;
- 2 **agreed** that he be accompanied by one member of staff and the Labour Party's Trade Spokesperson, Hon Damien O'Connor;
- 3 **approved** the estimated expenditure of up to \$76,666 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 Nicola Grigg act as Minister of Agriculture and Minister for Trade and Investment;
 - 5.2 Hon Tama Potaka act as Minister of Forestry;
- 6 **noted** that leave from Parliament has been sought.

Rachel Hayward
Secretary of the Cabinet

~~IN CONFIDENCE~~

Office of the Minister for Trade and Investment

Chair, Cabinet

Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Todd McClay – March 2026

- 1 I seek Cabinet approval to travel to Yaoundé, Cameroon from 22 March to 1 April 2026.
- 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 purpose of my travel is to attend the World Trade Organisation (WTO) 14th Ministerial Conference (MC14), hosted by Cameroon.
- 4 The WTO remains central to New Zealand's trade and economic interests. The WTO's rules-based trading architecture has delivered certainty for our exporters and businesses and has the potential to deliver further gains. The 2026 MC14 takes place against the backdrop of existential challenge for the multilateral trading system with global turbulence bringing uncertainty to the long-defended principle of non-discrimination, and the predictable rules-based global trading system.
- 5 MC14 will be a test of the ability of the WTO Membership to defend, strengthen, and modernise the rules-based trading system by delivering outcomes on plurilateral agreements and agriculture subsidies while navigating the calls from members for institutional reform.
- 6 All aspects of the negotiation agenda will require significant further effort and input by Ministers at MC14, although officials continue to work to reduce the number of outstanding issues in the text to the extent possible. I have accepted an invitation from the WTO Secretary General to play a leading role as Vice Chair of MC14. I expect to attend and be influential in the key small groups as final deals are being negotiated.
- 7 In addition to the negotiations and the plenary sessions, the programme will include a number of side events that align with New Zealand's trade and investment objectives. Beyond this, MC14 provides an invaluable opportunity to meet bilaterally with counterparts from across the WTO membership. These meetings support our broader trade and economic objectives and will be critical as also we look to find landing zones in the negotiations.

Ministerial Party

- 8 I will be accompanied by one member of staff from my office. I have also invited the Labour Party's Spokesperson for Trade Hon Damien O'Connor to join my delegation. Officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) will also support my travel. All costs for MFAT staff will be covered from within the Ministry's baseline budget.

Travel Costs

- 9 List the estimated costs of the travel (all costs for three pax):

Airfares:	\$63,495
Accommodation/Meals	\$9,520
Gifts:	\$0
Contingency (5%)	\$3,651

Total: \$ 76,666

Acting Ministers

- 10 If my travel is approved. I propose that the following colleagues act in my portfolios. This is subject to final confirmation.
- 11 Hon Nicola Grigg – Agriculture and Trade and Investment.
- 12 Hon Tama Potaka – Forestry.

Proactive release

- 13 This paper will be proactively released within 30 business days of decisions being confirmed by Cabinet.

Recommendations

- 1 I recommend that Cabinet:
- 2 authorise my absence from New Zealand, subject to leave from Parliament being secured, from 22 March to 1 April travel to Yaoundé, Cameroon to attend the WTO 14th Ministerial Conference;
- 2.1 agree that I be accompanied by one member of staff and the Labour Party's Trade Spokesperson Hon Damien O'Connor;
- 3 approve the estimated expenditure of \$76,666 for the travel expenses of the Ministerial party, as a charge to Vote: Internal Affairs [Members of the Executive – Travel];
- 3.1 note that I will be accompanied by officials from MFAT, whose travel costs will be met by the Ministry;

3.2 agree that in my absence:

3.2.1 Hon Nicola Grigg will act as Minister for Agriculture and Trade and Investment;

3.2.2 Hon Tama Potaka will act as Minister of Forestry;

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

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Todd McClay

Minister for Trade and Investment

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Minister for Trade and Investment