

Proactive Release

Published on or before: 16 June 2026

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

Title	Reference
<i>Cabinet Minute of Decision – Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Todd McClay – March 2026</i>	CAB-26-MIN-0153
<i>Report on 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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Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Todd McClay – March 2026

Portfolio **Trade and Investment**

On 4 May 2026, Cabinet:

- 1 **noted** the report from Hon Todd McClay under CAB-26-SUB-0153 on his travel, from 22 to 31 March 2026, to Yaoundé, Cameroon to attend the World Trade Organisation 14th Ministerial Conference and undertake bilateral engagements;
- 2 **noted** that the Ministerial party's flights had to be rebooked at short notice due to the conflict in the Middle East interfering with flight paths;
- 3 **retrospectively approved** the cost increase from \$76,666 to up to \$138,130.57 for the travel expenses of the Ministerial party as a charge to Vote Internal Affairs (Members of the Executive – Travel).

Rachel Hayward
Secretary of the Cabinet

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~~In Confidence~~

Office of the Minister for Trade and Investment

Chair, Cabinet

Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Todd McClay – March 2026

I recommend that Cabinet note this report on my travel to Yaoundé, Cameroon, from 22-31 March, in my capacity as Minister for Trade and Investment.

Report

- 1 The purpose of travel to Cameroon was to represent New Zealand at the 14th Ministerial Conference (MC14) of the World Trade Organisation (WTO).
- 2 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. MC14 took 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.
- 3 Disappointingly, MC14 concluded with no agreement on key decisions relating to WTO reform and the extension of the moratorium on customs duties imposed on electronic transmissions (the e-commerce moratorium). Decisions on these matters will now be picked up again in Geneva.
- 4 Members did manage to adopt a declaratory statement to continue negotiations on fisheries subsidies; a work programme on small economies was agreed; and a decision made to investigate potential improvements to special and differential treatment provided in the Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures and Technical Barriers to Trade agreements. However, these outcomes fall well short of the results the organisation, already under significant strain, needed to convincingly signal its relevance.
- 5 A significant step in a new direction was made with the 66 Members of the Electronic Commerce Agreement (ECA) announcing their interim implementation of the agreement outside of the WTO, until full incorporation can be agreed. The parties to the agreement account for some 70% of global trade and could unlock approximately US\$159 billion in trade. This new approach represents an important way forward to achieve results while the formal WTO rulemaking function remains blocked.

- 6 Notwithstanding its disappointing outcome, MC14 provided an opportunity to meet with many of my international trade counterparts. I met with Heads of Delegation from 17 WTO Members including United States Trade Representative Greer and India's Minister Goyal. Several meetings had a serious focus on New Zealand's fuel situation, where I sought and received assurances on continued fuel supply.
- 7 I was also able to progress the now published New Zealand-led Future of Investment and Trade (FIT) Partnership statement on Maintaining Open and Resilient Supply Chains; and I met with fellow FIT Partnership founding members Singapore, Switzerland and the United Arab Emirates to agree outcomes planned for the New Zealand-hosted FIT Partnership Ministerial Meeting in Auckland in July 2026.
- 8 As a practical demonstration of New Zealand's bipartisan approach to trade policy, the Labour Party's Spokesperson for Trade Hon Damien O'Connor joined my delegation to MC14.

Proactive release

- 9 I propose to release this paper proactively in part.

Recommendation

- 10 I recommend that Cabinet:
- 11 note that costs increased from \$76,666 to \$138,130.57 due to the need to rebook flights at short notice because of the conflict in Iran interfering with flight paths, leading to significant cost increases in excess of the originally approved flight budget;
- 12 note that this increase was approved by the Prime Minister's office;
- 13 approve the travel cost increase from \$76,666 to \$138.130.57
- 14 note this report.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Todd McClay

Minister for Trade and Investment