

Proactive Release

Published on or before: 19 October 2026

The following Cabinet papers and related Cabinet minutes have been proactively released by the Minister of Climate Change

Title	Reference
<i>Cabinet Minute of Decision – Proposed Overseas Travel : Hon simon Watts – September 2026</i>	CAB-26-MIN-0294
<i>Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Simon Watts - 9 - 12 September 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: Hon Simon Watts – September 2026

Portfolio Climate Change

On 7 September 2026, Cabinet:

- 1 **authorised** the absence of Hon Simon Watts from New Zealand, from 9 to 12 September 2026, to travel to Beijing, China to attend the 16th APEC Energy Ministerial Meeting;
- 2 **agreed** that he be accompanied by one member of staff;
- 3 **approved** the estimated expenditure of up to \$22,954 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 an official from the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment, whose travel costs will be met by their agency;
- 5 **agreed** that in his absence:
 - 5.1 Hon Simeon Brown act as Minister of Local Government and Minister for Auckland;
 - 5.2 Hon Nicola Grigg act as Minister of Climate Change;
 - 5.3 Hon Cameron Brewer act as Minister for Building and Construction and Minister of Revenue;
- 6 **noted** that the House is not sitting during his absence.

Rachel Hayward
Secretary of the Cabinet

~~In Confidence~~

Office of the Minister of Climate Change

Chair, Cabinet

Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Simon Watts – 9 – 12 September 2026

1. I seek Cabinet approval to travel to Beijing, China from 9 to 12 September 2026 to attend the 16th Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Energy Ministerial Meeting on behalf of the Minister for Energy, both to support New Zealand's regional engagement on fuel and energy supply and resilience issues and to support the bilateral relationship with China as APEC host.
2. The Prime Minister has approved the travel in-principle, and House leave has been sought from the Party Whip.

Purpose of Travel

3. Representation at the APEC Energy Ministerial Meeting will support New Zealand's energy objectives, by making sure New Zealand has a voice at the table on the region's approach to energy resilience and supply chains co-operation. The visit will also support the bilateral relationship with China by demonstrating New Zealand's support for China's APEC host year through Minister-level participation.
4. APEC is an international forum with members from economies throughout the Asia-Pacific region. APEC was established in 1989 to promote free trade, and it exerts significant global influence. APEC is a key forum for New Zealand to pursue trade and economic priorities in the region and support the broader rules-based order.
5. The APEC Energy Ministerial Meeting is becoming one of the key meetings in the APEC calendar because of the strong relationship between energy and the green transition to other regional and global issues, such as climate change, supply chains, security and inflation. Ministers from APEC member economies come together to discuss energy issues and policy direction, and make joint declarations and action plans to support transition to a low-carbon economy.
6. China's theme for APEC 2026 is "Building an Asia-Pacific Community to Prosper Together." Openness is China's stated priority for APEC, with a particular focus on creating a stable and open economic environment, deepening connectivity, and strengthening industrial and supply chain resilience. s6(a)

I will be participating in discussions on building

sustainable energy supply chains that can respond to external shocks, such as climate change, at a time of increasing global uncertainty.

7. Participating in the APEC Energy Ministerial Meeting will be an opportunity to pursue the following specific objectives.

- 7.1. *Reinforce and build on the 'Aotearoa Plan of Action'*: New Zealand used its host year in 2021 to support the multilateral trading system and World Trade Organisation, embed sustainability and inclusion on APEC's agenda, and bring a new focus to climate change and the region's decarbonisation challenge. We also introduced structures for monitoring implementation of APEC's key guiding document, the *Putrajaya Vision 2040*. These are captured in our key legacy outcome, APEC's 20-year strategy document, the 'Aotearoa Plan of Action'. This year, New Zealand and China are co-convening a five-yearly review of the Plan, designed to ensure its continuous relevance across all APEC workstreams. s6(a)

- 7.2. *Share New Zealand's experience in its renewable energy growth*: My participation in the Energy Ministerial Meeting will be an opportunity to demonstrate New Zealand's policy development and opportunities in the energy sector and share how New Zealand addresses the challenges of a highly intermittent energy system, which other countries will face in the future as they also increase their renewable energy share. It will also ensure New Zealand is considered an active contributor and thought leader in APEC.

- 7.3. *Reinforce publicly New Zealand's commitment to APEC and our support for the rules-based multilateral system which is currently facing an unprecedented disruption*. The APEC Energy Ministerial Meeting comes at a time of increasing global uncertainty, with rising geopolitical tensions, disruptions to supply chain and trade flows, and strains on international economic relationships. So, the APEC Energy Ministerial Meeting will be an opportunity to reinforce our support for the rules-based environment that enables trade, investment and innovation to thrive.

Bilateral relationship support during my travel to China

8. New Zealand's relationship with China is one of our most significant and complex. s6(a)

Attendance at the APEC meeting will include an opportunity to interact with China's host Minister.

9. In addition to participation in the APEC meeting, I intend to undertake the additional activities to support the broader bilateral relationship. These might include:

- 9.1. Site visit to a Chinese manufacturing facility – such as Xiaomi's EV factory – to gain firsthand knowledge about China's investment in advanced green manufacturing;
- 9.2. Programme elements related to my Construction and Building, or Climate Change, portfolios.

Ministerial Party

10. I will be accompanied by one member of staff from my office. Travel costs for this delegation would be a charge to Vote Internal Affairs: Members of the Executive – Travel.
11. One senior official from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) will support my travel. All costs for MBIE staff will be covered from within the Ministry's baseline budget.

Travel Costs

12. Indicative costs two people (myself and one Ministerial staffer) are:

Airfares:	\$19,021
Accommodation:	\$1,360
Visa for China:	\$280
Hospitality:	\$500
Per diems:	\$500
Gifts:	\$200
Ground transport	(Nil – Embassy vehicle)
Contingency (5%):	\$1093
Total:	\$22,954

Acting Ministers

13. If my travel is approved, I propose that the following colleagues act in my portfolios.
14. Minister Brown – Auckland
15. Minister Brewer – Building and Construction
16. Minister Grigg – Climate Change
17. Minister Brown – Local Government
18. Minister Brewer – Revenue

Proactive release

19. I propose to release the paper proactively in part within 30 business days of decisions being confirmed by Cabinet. All redactions will be made in line with the *Official Information Act 1982*.

Recommendations

20. I recommend that Cabinet:

- 1 authorise my absence from New Zealand from 9 September to 12 September to travel to Beijing, China to attend the 16th APEC Energy Ministerial Meeting;
- 2 agree that I be accompanied by one member of staff;
- 3 approve the estimated expenditure of \$22,954 for the travel expenses of the Ministerial party, as a charge to Vote: Internal Affairs [Members of the Executive – Travel];
- 4 note that I will be accompanied by an official from MBIE, whose travel costs will be met by the Ministry.
- 5 agree that in my absence:
 - 5.1.1 Hon Simeon Brown will act as Minister for Auckland.
 - 5.1.2 Hon Cam Brewer will act as Minister for Building and Construction
 - 5.1.3 Hon Nicola Grigg will act as Minister of Climate Change
 - 5.1.4 Hon Simeon Brown will act as Minister of Local Government.
 - 5.1.5 Hon Cam Brewer will act as Minister of Revenue
- 6 note that the House is not sitting during my absence;
- 7 note that leave from Parliament has been sought from the Party Whip.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Simon Watts

Minister of Climate Change