

Proactive Release

Date: 13 March 2020

The following Cabinet paper and related Cabinet minute have been proactively released by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs:

Report on Overseas Travel: Fletcher Tabuteau MP

(CAB-20-MIN-0035 refers)

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 Act). Where this is the case, the relevant sections of the Act 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 redaction codes:

- 6(a): to avoid prejudicing the international relations of the New Zealand Government; and
- 6(b): to protect the passing of information from another government on a confidential basis.



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: Fletcher Tabuteau MP

Portfolio **Foreign Affairs**

On 17 February 2020, Cabinet **noted** the report from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Fletcher Tabuteau MP) under CAB-20-SUB-0035 on his travel, from 20 to 24 October 2019, to:

- 1 Honiara, Solomon Islands to officially open the new New Zealand High Commission chancery and visit New Zealand development projects being implemented;
- 2 Vanuatu to visit New Zealand development projects being implemented.

Michael Webster
Secretary of the Cabinet

Hard-copy distribution:

Prime Minister
Deputy Prime Minister
Fletcher Tabuteau MP

Chair
Cabinet

OVERSEAS TRAVEL: UNDER-SECRETARY FLETCHER TABUTEAU: 20-24 OCTOBER 2019

I recommend that Cabinet note this report on my travel to Vanuatu and Solomon Islands from 20-24 October 2019.

2 New Zealand's objectives for the visit were:

- Officially open the (new) New Zealand High Commission chancery in Honiara, Solomon Islands.
- As part of the Pacific Reset, advance New Zealand's focus on building mature political partnerships with Pacific Island countries, by engaging with key political, business and community stakeholders.
- Visit New Zealand development projects being implemented in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, which are targeted at building state capability, enhancing economic opportunities and improving human development.
- Reinforce New Zealand's commitment to Pacific regionalism and advancing collective solutions to regional issues.
- Reiterate New Zealand's commitment to PACER Plus as a key enabler of economic development in Pacific countries.
- Build on the visits to both countries in 2019 as part of the Pacific Mission, by reinforcing relationships with key stakeholders.

3. In **Solomon Islands**, I formally inaugurated the New Zealand Embassy at a well-attended launch event and pursued New Zealand interests in discussions with senior contacts in government, business and other priority sectors. s6(a), s6(b)

s6(a), s6(b)

During his speech at the launch event, Prime Minister Sogavare spoke positively about the bilateral relationship noting the longevity and genuine closeness of the ties, saying “New Zealand has been, is, and always will be a friend to Solomon Islands.”

4. Other high-level engagements included a lunch hosted by the supervising Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Communications and Aviation, Hon. Peter Shanel Agovaka. This provided an opportunity to exchange views on topics of interest to New Zealand including, aviation, connectivity and third country relations.

5. As part of New Zealand’s support for Solomon Islands’ fisheries sector, I visited the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources and the Director-General of the Forum Fisheries Agency. While there I signed a Grant Funding Arrangement for New Zealand’s new tranche of support to the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources for NZ \$7m over the next five years. I took the opportunity to register New Zealand’s commitment to regional solidarity, in areas like fisheries, in order to maximise economic benefits and mitigate risks.

6. The visit also provided the opportunity to profile and assess the progress of New Zealand funded development projects. This included a site tour of the Honiara Multi-Purpose Hall facilities (a safe space for Solomon Islands’ youth), which New Zealand is partnering with the Honiara City Council to upgrade, and a visit to the New Zealand funded Fred Hollows Regional Eye Clinic.

7. The visit to **Vanuatu** featured a bilateral meeting and dinner with Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hon. Ralph Regenvanu. This afforded an opportunity to register New Zealand’s ongoing commitment to PACER Plus (and support for Vanuatu to ratify the agreement) and New Zealand’s commitment to labour mobility through the Recognised Seasonal Employers Scheme. s6(a), s6(b)

§6(a),
§6(b)

Minister Regenvanu applauded New Zealand for the Pacific Reset noting that since it had been announced, New Zealand's engagement in Vanuatu had changed positively.

8. Breakfast with Vanuatu's Deputy Prime Minister and Tourism Minister, Hon. Jotham Napat, enabled a wide-ranging discussion on Vanuatu's strategy for growing its tourism sector, including how Vanuatu could learn from New Zealand.

9. The rest of the visit focused on assessing the progress of New Zealand supported development initiatives in Vanuatu. Highlights included a visit to the Electoral Office to assess New Zealand's support to Vanuatu as it prepares for the 2020 General Elections and a field visit to see how New Zealand has supported Vanuatu to eradicate a destructive species of the coconut rhinoceros beetle.

Proactive Release

10. I plan to release this paper in part within 30 business days. All redactions will be made in line with the Official Information Act 1982.

Recommendation

11. I recommend that Cabinet **note** this report.

Approved for lodgement by

Fletcher Tabuteau MP

Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs and Disarmament

Under-Secretary for Regional Economic Development