

Proactive Release

Date: 10 December 2021

The following Cabinet paper and related Cabinet minute have been proactively released by the Minister of Foreign Affairs:

Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Nanaia Mahuta

CAB-21-MIN-0449

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 security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the New Zealand Government;

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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 Nanaia Mahuta

Portfolio **Foreign Affairs**

On 1 November 2021, Cabinet:

- 1 **authorised** the absence of Hon Nanaia Mahuta from Aotearoa New Zealand, subject to leave from Parliament being secured, from 11 to 28 November 2021 to travel to:
 - 1.1 the United Arab Emirates to host Te Aratini (Festival of Indigenous and Tribal Ideas) as part of Expo 2020, and to attend bilateral meetings;
 - 1.2 Australia, Indonesia, the United States of America, and Canada to undertake a range of bilateral visits;
- 2 **agreed** that she be accompanied by one staff member;
- 3 **approved** the estimated expenditure of \$95,250 for the travel expenses of the Ministerial party, as a charge to Vote Internal Affairs;
- 4 **noted** that she will be accompanied by one senior official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, whose travel costs will be met by the department;
- 5 **agreed** that in her absence:
 - 5.1 Hon David Parker act as Minister of Foreign Affairs;
 - 5.2 Hon Kiri Allan act as Minister of Local Government;
 - 5.3 Hon Grant Robertson act as Minister of Local Government (Three Waters Reforms);
- 6 **noted** that leave from Parliament has been sought from the Party Whip.

Michael Webster
Secretary of the Cabinet

[RESTRICTED]

Office of the Minister for Foreign Affairs
Chair, Cabinet

Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Nanaia Mahuta

1 I seek Cabinet approval to travel to Australia, Indonesia, the United Arab Emirates, the United States of America and Canada from 11 – 28 November 2021.

2 The Prime Minister has approved the travel in-principle and House leave has been sought from the Party Whip.

Purpose of Travel

3 My overseas travel, if approved, would be my first as Foreign Minister since my appointment in November due to the constraints of travel during the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result, this trip carries additional significance demonstrating the importance that this Government places on our international relationships.

4 The primary purpose of the visit is to travel to the **United Arab Emirates** to host Te Aratini (Festival of Indigenous and Tribal Ideas) from 17-19 November, Aotearoa New Zealand's single most important event at Expo 2020 and a significant platform to demonstrate Aotearoa New Zealand's values on the world stage. Ministerial presence would enhance the prestige and mana of the event itself and support and profile Aotearoa New Zealand's participation at Expo 2020 more broadly.

5 Expo 2020 represents a \$63 million investment by the Government, and is intended to support the Government's economic recovery from Covid-19. Our investment in Expo2020 strongly aligns with our broader ambition of diversifying our trade into new regions, particularly in growing Middle Eastern markets such as the UAE that offer high-value alternatives to our exporters. The UAE, in of itself, is an increasingly important partner for Aotearoa New Zealand: our 10th largest trading partner, critical for our connectivity and supply chains (through Emirates Airlines) and important to our broader objectives in the region (for example, in their generous support to our Afghanistan evacuation operation). I therefore plan to undertake bilateral meetings with key UAE leaders including with the Foreign Minister, HH Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed, and the Minister of International Development and Managing Director of Dubai 2020, Reem El Hashimy. Given the huge convening power of Expo 2020, I will also be looking to take the opportunity to engage with Ministerial counterparts who may be visiting Dubai at that time.

6 Additionally, travel to the Expo would give me the opportunity to undertake a range of bilateral visits, en route to and on return from Dubai. This would include our most important bilateral partner, **Australia**. I will travel via Sydney where I will hold the next six-monthly Foreign Minister Consultations with Foreign Minister Marise Payne. These

Consultations would be followed by a detailed Press Conference which would offer the opportunity to publically reiterate the importance of the Aotearoa New Zealand-Australia relationship after borders have been shut between our two countries for an extended period due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Given the limited flight connections and COVID-19 requirements, officials are continuing to work through the logistical arrangements for this visit.

7 From Australia, I plan to travel to **Jakarta, Indonesia**. Indonesia is a key relationship for Aotearoa New Zealand, the world's third largest democracy, a significant trading partner, and a key player in both ASEAN and the wider Indo-Pacific. Our aid programme to Indonesia is also New Zealand's largest bilateral programme outside the Pacific. An in-person visit would be warmly received by Foreign Minister Marsudi and enable us to hold formal Joint Ministerial Consultations, the cornerstone of the bilateral architecture. As the headquarters for the ASEAN Secretariat, an in-person visit would also be an opportunity for a meeting with the ASEAN Secretary-General to highlight Aotearoa New Zealand's strong relationship with ASEAN. Engagement with ASEAN Representatives, to exchange views on Indo-Pacific issues, would be a priority, including a possible speech or roundtable discussion.

8 During a stopover in **Singapore**, I plan to briefly meet with Foreign Minister Balakrishnan. An in-person meeting would acknowledge the importance of Singapore as ^{s6(a)} and be an opportunity to thank the Minister for the valuable ongoing dialogue with Singapore on COVID-19 management. It would also give us the opportunity to emphasise the ongoing interest New Zealand ^{s6(a)} including through increased collaboration on 'green economy' initiatives.

9 Following Expo, I would travel to the **United States of America** and **Canada**, two of our closest partners. There are a range of issues which would benefit from face to face discussions with both countries, including geopolitical developments in the Indo-Pacific region and advocating for attention to the needs of Pacific countries as they recover from COVID-19 and meet the challenges of climate change. It is important that Aotearoa New Zealand's perspectives are shared in particular with the US, whose actions have such influence over our region and the maintenance of the international rules-based system. A visit at Foreign Minister's level ^{s6(a)}

by confirming areas of common interest. In Washington, I will seek meetings with Secretary of State Blinken, as well as influential members of the National Security Council. In Ottawa, I will meet the new Canadian Foreign Minister Melanie Joly, as well as Ministers responsible for indigenous policies and international development. This would come just weeks after appointment of Cabinet Ministers, following the Canadian election on 21 September.

10 I am also exploring the option of travelling to Doha, Qatar to meet with my Qatari counterpart, Sheikh Al-Thani, to thank him for Qatar's support to New Zealand's Afghan evacuation response. This will be contingent on his availability over the Arab weekend.

Travel during COVID-19

11 Given the changing global situation with respect to COVID-19, I will continue to monitor developments in each host country and adapt my travel plans if necessary. I note that my delegation and I have sought places in Managed Isolation and Quarantine (MIQ) upon our return to Aotearoa New Zealand.

Ministerial Party

12 I would be accompanied throughout the travel by one staff member from my office. One Senior Official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade will accompany me during the visit. Their costs will be met from the departmental budget.

Travel Costs

13 The estimated costs of my travel are:

	Minister	Staff
Flights	\$24,000	\$24,000
Other transport	\$1,311	
Accommodation	\$8,006	\$5,894
Per diems	\$2,481	\$2,481
Facilitation	\$0	\$0
Representation	\$1,800	
Gifts	\$2,600	
MIQ and Covid-19 tests	\$5,126	\$5,126
Subtotal	\$45,324	\$37,501
Contingency (15%)	\$6,800	\$5,625
Total	\$52,124	\$43,126

Acting Ministers

14 In my absence, Acting Ministers in my portfolios will be:

Foreign Affairs: Hon David Parker

Local Government: Hon Kiri Allan, Hon Grant Robertson (Three Waters Reforms)

Proactive Release

15 This paper will 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

16 I recommend that Cabinet:

- 16.1 authorise my absence from Aotearoa New Zealand, subject to leave from Parliament being secured, from 11-28 November to travel to Australia, Indonesia, the United Arab Emirates, the United States of America and Canada;
- 16.2 agree that I be accompanied by one staff member;
- 16.3 approve the estimated expenditure of \$95,250 for the travel expenses of the Ministerial party, as a charge to Vote: Internal Affairs [Members of the Executive – Travel];
- 16.4 note that I will be accompanied by one senior official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, whose travel costs will be met by the department;
- 16.5 agree that Hon David Parker (Foreign Affairs) and Hon Kiri Allan (Local Government) will be Acting Ministers in my absence;
- 16.6 note that leave from Parliament has been sought from the Party Whip.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Nanaia Mahuta
Minister of Foreign Affairs