

# Proactive Release

Date: 24 September 2019

The following Cabinet paper/s and related Cabinet minute/s have been proactively released by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade:

***Title of paper:***

***Report on Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Winston Peters: Fiji 25-27 July 2019***

***Title of minute:***

***Report on Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Winston Peters (CAB-19-MIN-0411 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;



# Cabinet

## Minute of Decision

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### Report on Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Winston Peters

**Portfolio**                      **Foreign Affairs**

On 19 August 2019, Cabinet **noted** the report from the Rt Hon Winston Peters under CAB-19-SUB-0411 on his travel, from 25 to 27 July 2019, to Fiji, to attend the 2019 Pacific Islands Forum Foreign Ministers Meeting.

Michael Webster  
Secretary of the Cabinet

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**Hard-copy distribution:**  
Prime Minister  
Minister of Foreign Affairs

Chair

Cabinet

**REPORT ON OVERSEAS TRAVEL: RT HON WINSTON PETERS: FIJI, 25–27 JULY 2019**

I recommend that Cabinet note this report on my travel to Fiji from 25 – 27 July 2019.

**Report**

2 We travelled to Fiji to attend the Pacific Islands Forum Foreign Ministers Meeting (FFMM) in Suva on 26 July. The primary purpose of the meeting was to prepare the ground for Leaders, who were due to attend the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting in Tuvalu in mid-August.

3 Ministers agreed to the development of a **2050 Blue Pacific Strategy** to guide regional decision-making within the context of a shared long-term vision. In introducing this item, Pacific Islands Forum Secretary General Dame Meg Taylor referenced the intensifying geostrategic competition in the region, s6(a)

A number of Ministers reinforced the need for collective action, to ensure that engagement by external actors was in line with Pacific priorities and on the Pacific's terms.

4 **Responding to climate change** was a major focus of the meeting, including preparing a statement from Leaders to be issued in Tuvalu. The following priorities were agreed for the Leaders' statement: a focus on mitigation and nationally determined contributions; adaptation and resilience; loss and damage; climate finance; climate science; and the climate-ocean nexus.

5 Effective regional collaboration on **fisheries** remains a high priority for Pacific Island countries, with a number of Ministers referencing the cross-cutting importance of fisheries in terms of food security, economic prosperity, and protection of the region's most valuable resource. There was general agreement that fisheries continues to be a best practice example of effective regional action. Foreign

Ministers agreed to the establishment of an annual Regional Fisheries Ministers' Meeting, emphasising the importance of regional coordination to increase the economic returns and ensure the sustainable management of fisheries.

6 The Forum Secretariat was tasked to design and develop a new **Pacific Security Dialogue** to promote space for regional security discussion. Australia's initiative for a **Pacific Fusion Centre** to support improved security information sharing in the Pacific <sup>s6(a)</sup> This agenda item was presented within the context of a growing concern in the region regarding the prospect of nuclear contamination, including the prospect of seepage of Nuclear waste contained in the (increasingly deteriorating) Runit Dome in the Marshall Islands.

7 Ministers agreed to task the Forum Secretariat to compile all available scientific assessments on the impact of **nuclear testing activities in the Pacific**. Pacific Ministers also noted the legacy effects of other items such as unexploded ordnances (UXOs) and other World War Two remnants (e.g. shipwrecks). Following requests from Palau and the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Secretariat will consider options for a stocktake to quantify the scale of the clearance and destruction task remaining.

8 Ministers encourage each other to conclude negotiations on **maritime boundary claims**, endorsing the importance of persevering members' existing rights from their maritime zones, and committing to a collective effort to develop international law which would ensure Forum Members' maritime zones cannot change, regardless of sea level rise.

9 **Papua** <sup>s6(a)</sup>

in the final outcomes document. This read: "strongly encouraged both sides [Indonesia and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights] to finalise the timing of the visit and make every endeavour to provide a report on the situation before the next PIF meeting in 2020".

10 <sup>s6(a)</sup>

11 s6(a)

12 Vanuatu advised Ministers of its plan to schedule the **2020 Pacific Islands Forum** in Port Vila to align with Vanuatu's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Independence (Thursday 30 July 2020). The Leaders' Week would follow immediately after the Independence celebrations. Fiji conveyed a formal bid to host the Forum in 2021. While Ministers referred the decision to Leaders in Tuvalu, there was a positive reaction. New Zealand supports Fiji's hosting bid, s6(a)

13 Ministers agreed to refer to Leaders a proposal by the Solomon Islands to develop a **regional mechanism to deal with oil spills** in the region. s6(a)

14 We highlighted Dr Penny Ridings' candidature for the International Law Commission for the 2022–2026 term. Dr Ridings is well known to a number of Pacific states, as a result of her current work on Pacific fisheries, and we received positive feedback from a number of delegations in the margins.

15 We also took the opportunity to have a bilateral meeting with the Fijian Foreign Minister, Inia Batikoto Seruiratu. This enabled us to discuss the strength of the New Zealand-Fiji relationship, especially in the political and security spheres.

s6(a)

### **Proactive Release**

16 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**

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

### **Approved for lodgement**

Rt Hon Winston Peters  
Minister of Foreign Affairs