

Proactive Release

2/10/2022

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

Title	Reference
<i>Cabinet Minute of Decision – Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Damien O'Connor</i>	CAB-23-MIN-0383
<i>Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Damien O'Connor</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; and
- 9(2)(b)(ii): to avoid prejudice to the commercial position of another party.



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 Damien O'Connor

Portfolio **Trade and Export Growth**

On 21 August 2023, Cabinet:

- 1 **authorised** the absence of Hon Damien O'Connor from New Zealand, subject to leave from Parliament being secured, from 26 August to 2 September 2023, to travel to India, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates for bilateral meetings;
- 2 **agreed** that he be accompanied by two members of staff;
- 3 **approved** the estimated expenditure of \$92,706 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 officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, whose costs will be met by their department;
- 5 **agreed** that during his absence:
 - 5.1 Hon Andrew Little act as Minister for Land Information;
 - 5.2 Hon Rino Tirikatene act as Minister for Trade and Export Growth;
 - 5.3 Hon Jo Luxton act as Minister of Agriculture and Minister for Biosecurity;
- 6 **noted** that leave from Parliament has been sought.

Rachel Hayward
Secretary of the Cabinet

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Office of the Minister for Trade and Export Growth

Chair, Cabinet

Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Damien O'Connor

- 1 I seek Cabinet approval to travel to India, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates from 26 August – 2 September.
- 2 The Prime Minister has approved the travel in-principle.

Purpose of Travel

- 3 The primary purpose of the visit to India is to sustain high-level political engagement with India, and work with my Ministerial counterparts towards a more broad-based economic partnership with India. In Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) I will discuss with my counterparts the New Zealand – Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Free Trade Agreement negotiations, and New Zealand's decision to enter exploratory discussions with the UAE towards a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA).
- 4 India's importance to New Zealand as a partner in the Indo-Pacific is growing. India is assuming a more prominent role in regional affairs and is current G20 Chair. We are enjoying new momentum in our relationship following recent Ministerial visits and the Prime Minister's recent bilateral with Prime Minister Modi in Port Moresby. My visit to India will help to strengthen India's understanding of New Zealand as a partner in the Indo-Pacific region and our economic value proposition across investment, services and agriculture cooperation.
- 5 In India I intend to engage with my counterparts: Commerce Minister Goyal; Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying Minister Rupala; and Agriculture Minister Tomar as part of our efforts to build our economic relationship in the absence of a Free Trade Agreement and lay the foundations for future trade opportunities. The key elements of this engagement will include:
 - proposals to develop more regular economic dialogues between our business communities to champion progress;
 - a major speech to the Indian business and government economic community at an event organised with the Confederation of Indian Industry setting out the government's commitment to the economic partnership with India;
 - s9(2)(b)(ii)

s9(2)(b)(ii)

- s9(2)(b)(ii)

- 6 During my visit I also intend to meet with Air India to discuss progress on non-stop air links between India and New Zealand, and progress air service agreement enhancements that will assist this.
- 7 In March 2022, FTA negotiations resumed between the Gulf Cooperation Council and New Zealand. It is clear that significant movement is still required from the GCC if a viable outcome is to be reached, both in goods market access and in the Trade for All elements (labour and environment). The GCC is also ^{s6(a)}
- 8 The UAE (a GCC member) has expressed interest in negotiating a bilateral CEPA, including during a May 2023 visit to New Zealand by Minister of State for International Cooperation, Reem Al Hashimy. While a CEPA would have less commercial value than a GCC FTA, it would likely provide a foothold for our trade architecture in an important region. ^{s6(a)}
- 9 Cabinet agreed in June that officials should begin exploratory discussions with the UAE on a CEPA, and that I should issue a media release to publicly announce that engagement. ^{s6(a)}
- 10 Following my travel to India, my intention is to travel to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia for one day to meet with the GCC Secretary-General Jassim Muhammad Al-Budaiwi and Saudi Minister of Commerce Majid bin Abdullah Al Qasabi ^{s6(a)}
- 11 I then intend to travel to Dubai, UAE for two days to meet with UAE Minister of State for Foreign Trade Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi and Minister of State for International Cooperation Reem Al Hashimy to formally notify them of our decision to enter exploratory discussions on a CEPA with the UAE, and to release related announcements.

- 12 I will be accompanied by two staff members from my office. Officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) will join as appropriate for elements of the India, Saudi Arabia and UAE visits. The costs of these officials' travel will be met by the agency.

Travel Costs

- 13 The estimated costs of my travel are:

Flights/Train	\$54,750
Accommodation	\$9,040
Ground transport	\$320
Hospitality/representation	\$9,125
Total per diem	\$1,920
Gifts	\$1,100
Facilitation	\$1,000
Interpretation	-
COVID-19 tests	-
Contingency of 20%	\$15,451
Total	\$92,706

Acting Ministers

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

- Agriculture and Biosecurity - Hon Jo Luxton
- Land Information - Hon Andrew Little
- Trade and Export Growth - Hon Rino Tirikatene

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 New Zealand, subject to leave from Parliament being secured, from 26 August – 2 September to travel to India, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates;
- 16.2 agree that I be accompanied by two staff members;
- 16.3 approve the estimated expenditure of \$92,706 for the travel expenses of the Ministerial party, as a charge to Vote: Internal Affairs [Members of the Executive – Travel];
- 16.4 note that officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) will be supporting me during these meetings, and officials' travel costs will be met from their departmental budgets;

16.5 agree that Hon Andrew Little (Land Information), Hon Rino Tirikatene (Trade and Export Growth); and Hon Jo Luxton (Agriculture, Biosecurity) will be Acting Ministers in my absence; and

16.6 note that leave from Parliament has been sought from the Party Whip.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Damien O'Connor

Minister for Trade and Export Growth

Proactively Released by the Minister for Trade and Export Growth