

## Proactive Release

Date: 25 July 2022

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

Title	Reference
Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Nanaia Mahuta 19-28 June 2022, Rwanda	
Minute of Decision – Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Nanaia Mahuta	CAB-22-MIN-0228

Proactively Released  
by the Minister of Foreign Affairs



# Cabinet

## Minute of Decision

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### Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Nanaia Mahuta

**Portfolio**                      **Foreign Affairs**

On 13 June 2022, Cabinet:

- 1        **authorised** the absence of Hon Nanaia Mahuta from Aotearoa New Zealand, subject to leave from Parliament being secured, from 19 to 28 June 2022 to travel to Kigali, Rwanda to participate in the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting;
- 2        **agreed** that she be accompanied by one member of staff;
- 3        **approved** the estimated expenditure of up to \$61,873.35 for the travel expenses of the Ministerial party as a charge to Vote: Internal Affairs (Members of the Executive – Travel);
- 4        **noted** that she will also be accompanied by a delegation of eight officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, whose travel costs will be met by their department;
- 5        **agreed** that in her absence:
  - 5.1      Hon David Parker act as Minister of Foreign Affairs from 19 to 25 June 2022 inclusive;
  - 5.2      Hon Andrew Little act as Minister of Foreign Affairs from 26 to 28 June 2022;
  - 5.3      Hon Kiri Allan act as Minister for Local Government;
  - 5.4      Hon Grant Robertson act as Minister of Local Government for matters relating to Three Waters Reform;
- 6        **noted** that leave from Parliament has been sought from the Party Whip.

Michael Webster  
Secretary of the Cabinet

Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Chair, Cabinet

### **Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Nanaia Mahuta**

- 1 I seek Cabinet approval to travel to Kigali (Rwanda) from 19 June -28 June 2022.
- 2 The Prime Minister has asked me to represent her at CHOGM. She has approved the travel in-principle and House leave has been sought from the Party Whip.

### **Purpose of Travel**

3 The primary purpose of this travel is to travel to **Kigali** to participate in the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting (CHOGM). This biennial meeting is the most important event in the Commonwealth calendar and sets the scope of the organisation's work. This will be the first CHOGM held in four years – as the 2020 CHOGM has been postponed twice due to the COVID-19 pandemic. CHOGM presents an important opportunity to connect with leaders and foreign ministers from across the 54 members of the Commonwealth. The last CHOGM in 2018 was attended by Prime Minister Ardern and then Foreign Minister Peters.

4 Participation in CHOGM and the Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers Meeting will allow me to deepen bilateral links across the Commonwealth membership; engage in sessions for leaders that cover New Zealand's core interests (climate change, biodiversity, Russia/Ukraine); encourage the Commonwealth Secretariat to focus on areas where it has a unique or niche advantage over other organisations in order to be more effective (promoting human rights, the rule of law, election monitoring and strengthening democratic institutions); seek an outcome on the appointment (or reappointment) of the Commonwealth Secretary-General that will leave the Commonwealth better governed; and ensure that New Zealand is seen as a constructive member of the Commonwealth.

5 I would prioritise bilateral meetings with counterparts from Africa and the Caribbean and with the UK Secretary of State Elizabeth Truss; the President of Rwanda Paul Kagame, and Foreign Minister Dr Vincent Biruta; and engagement with Pacific Island Ministers and Heads in attendance.

### **Travel during COVID-19**

6 Given the surge of Omicron globally there is a COVID-related health and travel disruption risk in the proposed travel to Africa.

7 It is possible the COVID situation at each destination could shift for the better, or worse, over the next two-four weeks. Monitoring COVID risk and ensuring appropriate mitigations are in place for this ministerial travel would be a priority as part of the visit planning process. Given the changing global situation with respect to COVID-19, I will continue to monitor developments and adapt my travel plans if necessary.

8 Furthermore, it should be noted that some of the countries I am proposing to visit/transit are no longer following strict COVID controls or mitigation measures, so the risk of contracting and/or spreading COVID is a real one. For the official delegation, closely observing COVID protocols and adopting appropriate risk mitigation measures

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will also be important throughout my travel. I acknowledge the significance of travel during this time given COVID-19 restrictions. I consider it is timely for me to cement in-person some key bilateral relationships which have been forged online, and create new links with a broader range of Commonwealth partners. It is also critical that Aotearoa New Zealand continues to be seen as an active and engaged player in international diplomacy, despite the challenges of COVID.

### Ministerial Party

9 If approved, I would be accompanied throughout the travel by one staff member from my office. A delegation of eight officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade would also accompany me during the visit (this includes diplomats based in Addis Ababa and London). Their costs will be met from the departmental budget.

### Travel Costs

10 The estimated costs of my travel are:

	Minister	Staff
Flights	\$20,694	\$20,694
Accommodation	\$550*	\$8,569
Per diems	\$340	\$340
Gifts	\$2,000	N/A
Covid-19 tests	\$308	\$308
Subtotal	\$23,892	\$29,911
Contingency (15%)	\$3,583.80	\$4,486.55
Total	\$27,475.80	\$34,397.55
<b>Combined total</b>	<b>\$61,873.35</b>	

\*Accommodation for the Minister will be provided by the Government of Rwanda.

### Acting Ministers

11 In my absence, Acting Ministers in my portfolios would be:

Foreign Affairs: Hon David Parker (19-26 June) and Hon Andrew Little (26-28 June)

Local Government: Hon Kiri Allan (19-28 June)

Local Government (Three Waters): Hon Grant Robertson (19-28 June)

### Proactive Release

12 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

13 I recommend that Cabinet:

- 13.1 authorise my absence from Aotearoa New Zealand, subject to leave from Parliament being secured, from 19 June – 28 June 2022 to travel to Kigali, Rwanda;

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- 13.2 agree that I be accompanied by one staff member;
- 13.3 approve the estimated expenditure of \$61,873.35 for the travel expenses of the Ministerial party, as a charge to Vote: Internal Affairs [Members of the Executive – Travel];
- 13.4 note that I will be accompanied by a delegation of eight officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, whose travel costs will be met by the department;
- 13.5 agree that Hon David Parker, Hon Andrew Little, Hon Kiri Allan and Hon Grant Robertson will be Acting Ministers in my absence;
- 13.6 note that leave from Parliament has been sought from the Party Whip.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Nanaia Mahuta  
Minister of Foreign Affairs

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by the Minister of Foreign Affairs

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