

# Proactive Release

Date: 19 December 2022

The following Cabinet paper has been proactively released by the Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs

Title	Reference
Cabinet: Minute of Decision: Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Aupito William Sio	CAB-22-MIN-0489
Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Aupito William Sio	

Proactively released by the Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs



# Cabinet

## Minute of Decision

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### Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Aupito William Sio

**Portfolio**                      **Foreign Affairs**

On 7 November 2022, Cabinet:

- 1        **authorised** the absence of Hon Aupito William Sio from New Zealand, subject to leave from Parliament being secured, from 22 to 26 November 2022, to travel to Vanuatu to attend the Pacific Community's biennial Ministerial meetings;
- 2        **agreed** that he be accompanied by one staff member from his office;
- 3        **approved** the estimated expenditure of up to \$13,260 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 be accompanied by an official from Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade whose costs will be met by their department;
- 5        **agreed** that in his absence:
  - 5.1      Hon Kiri Allan act as Minister for Courts;
  - 5.2      Hon Carmel Sepuloni act as Minister for Pacific Peoples;
- 6        **noted** that House leave from Parliament has been sought from the Party Whip.

Rachel Hayward  
Secretary of the Cabinet

In Confidence

Office of the Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Chair, Cabinet

### **Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Aupito William Sio**

- 1 I am seeking Cabinet approval to travel to Vanuatu to represent Aotearoa New Zealand at the Pacific Community's biennial Ministerial meetings.
- 2 The Prime Minister has approved the travel in-principle and House leave has been sought from the Party Whip. The dates of travel are from the 22 to the 26 November 2022.

### **Purpose of Travel**

- 3 The Pacific Community (SPC), the region's leading science and technical agency, is holding its biennial Ministerial Conference hosted by current Chair, Vanuatu. This is an important governance engagement for Aotearoa New Zealand given SPC is a priority Pacific partner, and we make a significant financial investment in the agency's work.
- 4 This year's Conference is important because it is the first one to be hosted by a member country in some years (usually they are in New Caledonia where SPC is headquartered), and because it is SPC's 75th birthday year.
- 5 Senior Ministers from across the Pacific will attend the meeting, including from Micronesia. I have attended two previous Conferences (one face-to-face and one virtually), and I am familiar with the work and performance of SPC having been in contact with them virtually over the last two years.
5. MFAT has also recommended a two-day bilateral programme preceding the Conference. It would be the first Ministerial visit to Vanuatu since borders closed in early 2020 and is therefore an important opportunity to reconnect with Vanuatu and to establish relationships with the new Administration, following a snap election in October.

### *Specific objectives for the visit*

- 6 Show New Zealand's strong governance support for SPC as a key regional partner, and engage with senior Ministers from across the Pacific.
- 7 Highlight New Zealand's enduring relationship with Vanuatu, our partner-led development programme, our strong advocacy for climate action in the Pacific, and to discuss the increasingly complex geostrategic environment.

### *Outline of proposed visit*

8 If travel is approved, the bilateral programme will include:

- Bi-lateral meetings with the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs;
- A courtesy call on Vanuatu's President;
- An evening reception with Ministers, senior officials, and New Zealand Manaaki scholarships alumni;
- Visits to development projects, to include (if possible) a visit to a site in the home province of the new Vanuatu Foreign Minister;
- A media engagement to highlight the importance of transparency and media freedoms.

### **Ministerial Party**

9 I propose to be accompanied by one private secretary. An official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade will also be travelling from Wellington and will be paid by the Ministry.

### **Travel Costs**

10 The estimated cost of for this travel is: \$13260.00. This will be charged to Vote: Internal Affairs: Members of the Executive – Travel, as follows:

Airfares	\$5500.00
Accommodation	\$2400.00
Gifts	\$450.00
Other expenses, including meals	\$1200.00
Functions/hospitality	\$1500.00
Contingency (20%)	\$2210.00
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>\$13260.00</u></b>

### **Acting Ministers**

11 For the period of my absence:

11.1 Hon Kiri Allan will be Acting Minister for Courts; and

11.2 Hon Carmel Sepuloni will be Acting Minister for Pacific Peoples.

### **Proactive release**

12 I propose to proactively release this paper.

## Recommendations

- 1 I recommend that Cabinet:
  - 1.1 Authorise my absence from New Zealand, from the 22 to 26 November 2022, subject to leave from Parliament being secured to travel to Vanuatu;
  - 1.2 Agree that I be accompanied by one staff member from my office;
  - 1.3 Approve the estimated expenditure of \$13260.00 for the travel expenses of the Ministerial party; as a charge to Vote: Internal Affairs: [Members of the Executive – Travel];
  - 1.4 Note that I will be accompanied by an official from Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Their travel costs will be met by their own department;
  - 1.5 Agree that in my absence, Hon Kiri Allan will be Acting Minister for Courts and Hon Carmel Sepuloni will be Acting Minister for Pacific Peoples;
  - 1.6 Note that House leave from Parliament has been sought from the Party Whip.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Aupito William Sio  
**Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs**