

Proactive Release

Date: 11 May 2023

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

Title	Reference
Minute of Decision: Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Nanaia Mahuta	CAB-23-MIN-0100
Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Nanaia Mahuta	

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.

Proactively Released by the Minister of Foreign Affairs



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 27 March 2023, Cabinet:

- 1 **authorised** the absence of Hon Nanaia Mahuta from New Zealand, subject to leave from Parliament being secured, from 29 to 31 March 2023, to travel to Vanuatu for a bilateral visit;
- 2 **agreed** that she be accompanied by one member of staff;
- 3 **approved** the estimated expenditure of up to \$5,808 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 officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, whose costs will be met by their department, and a small media contingent;
- 5 **noted** that the New Zealand Defence Force will facilitate transport to and from Vanuatu;
- 6 **agreed** that in her absence Hon David Parker act as Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control;
- 7 **noted** that leave from Parliament has been sought.

Rachel Hayward
Secretary of the Cabinet

Office of the Minister for Foreign Affairs
Chair, Cabinet

Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Nanaia Mahuta

1. I seek Cabinet approval to travel to Vanuatu from 29 March – 31 March 2023 (inclusive) to undertake a bilateral visit.
2. The Prime Minister has approved the travel in-principle, and House leave has been sought from the Party Whip.

Reasons for Travel

3. If approved, this will be my first visit to Vanuatu and first kanohi ki te kanohi engagement with key figures from Vanuatu's recently-elected coalition government. It will also be New Zealand's first ministerial engagement with Vanuatu since former Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs' visit to Port Vila in November 2022.
4. This visit would come in the wake of Aotearoa New Zealand's response to Tropical Cyclones Judy and Kevin, which struck Vanuatu 1-4 March. Aotearoa New Zealand's support so far has been deeply appreciated by Vanuatu, and the Government of Vanuatu welcomes the possibility of a ministerial visit at this time.
5. The disaster recovery context provides a unique opportunity to add profile to Aotearoa New Zealand as an effective and responsive partner, one that shows up for our Pacific neighbours when needed. If travel is approved, officials will combine this visit with our response, including transporting further relief supplies. Officials are also exploring bringing a small delegation to support the relief work.
6. Aotearoa New Zealand and Vanuatu share a close and warm relationship, shaped by our long-standing people-to-people links, from the first New Zealand missionaries to Vanuatu in the 1960s, through to our education and labour mobility connections today. My first visit to Vanuatu provides a key opportunity to connect in person and discuss how we can strengthen our partnership, work together to advance our shared ambitions, and respond to our shared challenges in the Pacific region. I will advance the bilateral relationship by signing a Statement of Partnership with Vanuatu.
7. As evidenced by the recent cyclones, Vanuatu is one of the most disaster-prone nations in the world, and has clearly and repeatedly stated that climate change is its top security concern. We work closely with Vanuatu to advocate for climate action in multilateral fora. This visit would provide an opportunity to celebrate our shared successes, highlight Aotearoa New Zealand's resilience approach and add profile to our efforts to improve social and economic outcomes for ni-Vanuatu. Alongside signing a Statement of Partnership, I will also announce a package of Aotearoa New Zealand development support.

8. s6(a)

9. Vanuatu looks to key partners such as Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia to provide it with friendship and support, including for its security priorities. ^{s6(a)}

10. It is against this background that I consider it timely for me to strengthen my connections with the Vanuatu Government, and to demonstrate Aotearoa New Zealand's commitment to the bilateral relationship.

11. The Key Objectives of my visit will be to:
 - Develop and deepen personal relationships with key political figures in Vanuatu and establish Aotearoa New Zealand as a unique and highly trusted partner;
 - Highlight Aotearoa New Zealand as an engaged and active development partner for Vanuatu and deepen cooperation in support of Vanuatu's priorities, particularly economic recovery and reforms, and human security, including climate change and disaster response; and
 - Reinforce understanding of Aotearoa New Zealand's geopolitical concerns and forge a common perspective on how our two countries can work to strengthen regional security and sovereignty.

Outline of Proposed Visit

12. A portion of my visit will be spent undertaking bilateral engagements with high-level elected officials from the Government of Vanuatu, including the Deputy Prime Minister Sato Kilman and Minister of Foreign Affairs Jotham Napat. During my meeting with Minister Napat, I will sign the Statement of Partnership.

13. I will also engage with communities and undertake site visits to highlight the impact of Aotearoa New Zealand's development partnerships and labour mobility programme.

Travel

14. If travel is approved, I will depart Aotearoa New Zealand for Vanuatu on 29 March. Officials have confirmed the availability of an NZDF asset to facilitate this travel. The asset will transport further relief supplies and a small delegation to assist with the response to Tropical Cyclones Judy and Kevin. I will also be accompanied by a small contingent of New Zealand media.

Ministerial Party

15. Should Cabinet approve my travel, my Private Secretary will accompany me, along with officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, whose costs will be met by the budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Estimated Cost

16. The estimated cost for this travel is:

Flights	Nil.
Accommodation	\$1,500
Other expenses, including meals	\$1,200
Transport (incl. Charter flight to outer island)	\$1,350
Gifts	\$1000
Subtotal	\$5,050
Contingency 15%	\$758
TOTAL	\$5,808

Acting Ministers

17. If my travel is approved, I propose that Hon Parker act as Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control.
18. My responsibilities as Associate Minister of Māori Development will revert to the Primary Minister, Hon Willie Jackson.

Recommendations

19. I recommend that Cabinet:
- Authorise my absence from New Zealand from 29 March to 31 March 2023 to travel to Vanuatu.
 - Agree that I will be accompanied by my Private Secretary.
 - Note that I will also be accompanied by officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.
 - Approve the expenditure of \$5,808 for the travel expenses of the ministerial party as a charge to Vote Internal Affairs, Members of the Executive – Travel.
 - Agree that in my absence Hon Parker act as Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control.

– Authorised for lodgement –

Hon Nanaia Mahuta

Minita Take Aorere / Minister of Foreign Affairs