

Proactive Release

Published on or before: 30/07/2024

The following Cabinet papers and related Cabinet minutes have been proactively released by the Minister of Foreign Affairs

Title	Reference
<i>Cabinet Minute of Decision – Proposed Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Winston Peters</i>	CAB-24-MIN-0213
<i>Proposed Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Winston Peters – July 2024</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.



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: Rt Hon Winston Peters – July 2024

Portfolio Foreign Affairs

On 17 June 2024, Cabinet:

- 1 **authorised** the absence of the Rt Hon Winston Peters from New Zealand, from 24 to 28 July 2024, to travel to Vientiane, Lao PDR to attend a series of ASEAN Ministerial Meetings and bilateral meetings;
- 2 **agreed** that he be accompanied by two staff members, one of whose costs will be met by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT);
- 3 **approved** the estimated expenditure of up to \$32,450 for the travel expenses of the ministerial party as a charge to Vote Internal Affairs (Members of the Executive – Travel);
- 4 **noted** that his accommodation costs in Vientiane will be met by ASEAN;
- 5 **noted** that he will also be accompanied by MFAT officials, whose costs will be met by MFAT;
- 6 **agreed** that in his absence:
 - 6.1 Hon Todd McClay act as Minister of Foreign Affairs;
 - 6.2 Hon Andrew Bayly act as Minister for Racing;
- 7 **noted** that the House is sitting during his absence.

Rachel Hayward
Secretary of the Cabinet

~~Restricted~~

Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs

Chair, Cabinet

Proposed Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Winston Peters – July 2024

- 1 I seek Cabinet approval to travel to Vientiane, Lao PDR from Wednesday 24 July to Sunday 28 July 2024.
- 2 The Prime Minister's Office has approved the travel in-principle.

Purpose of Travel

- 3 Lao PDR, as 2024 Chair of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), will host ASEAN Foreign Ministers in late July for their annual suite of consultations with Dialogue Partners. If approved, I propose to travel to Vientiane, Lao PDR to the series of Ministerial meetings.
- 4 This series of Ministerial-led meetings include the ASEAN-New Zealand Ministerial Meeting on 26 July (known as the PMC+1), and the East Asia Summit (EAS) and ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Foreign Ministers' Meetings on 27 July. Bilateral meetings with my Foreign Minister counterparts in the margins of the formal engagements will further important relationships with both ASEAN Member States and wider partners.
- 5 Our visit to Lao PDR supports the government's plan to increase focus and resources in our important relationships with ASEAN and with South East Asia, a region critical to New Zealand's prosperity and security. New Zealand is an engaged and constructive partner to ASEAN, with an interest in its strength and success. New Zealand has cultivated a reputation based on respect, reliability and our support for ASEAN's centrality in the region. Our relationship with ASEAN plays a mutually reinforcing role in our bilateral engagement with individual ASEAN Member States.
- 6 We will use the opportunity of these meetings to pursue several objectives:
 - Advance New Zealand's ambition to establish a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership with ASEAN, ^{s6(a)}
 - Reassert New Zealand's profile and influence in a competitive environment, ^{s6(a)}
 - Register New Zealand's positions on the core issues affecting the rules-based order and strategic environment in our region, articulating

the Government's foreign policy reset and in the interests of an Indo-Pacific order underpinned by the principles, rules and norms which protect and advance the interests of all states.

- 7 These objectives seek to ensure we are positioning ourselves in the Indo-Pacific in a manner which reflects the importance of the region to our security and prosperity, and which recognises that many of the most critical strategic threats facing New Zealand emanate from this region. Ensuring we retain an active and credible seat at the regional decision-making table remains fundamental to our national interests.

Deliverables

- 8 During the visit we expect to:
- s6(a)
 - Progress the path towards establishing Comprehensive Strategic Partnership with ASEAN;
 - Reinvigorate New Zealand senior level engagement in ASEAN-connected architecture.

Outline of Proposed Visit

- 9 During our visit to Lao PDR, we intend to travel to Vientiane and undertake the following engagements:
- Bilateral meetings with key counterparts (subject to scheduling) including ASEAN Foreign Ministers, dialogue partners (e.g. Australia, India, ROK, UK, EU, Canada, US), ASEAN Special Envoy on Myanmar, and other representatives present;
 - ASEAN - New Zealand Ministerial Meeting (known as the Post Ministerial Conference +1 or "PMC+1");
 - Gala Dinner hosted by H.E. Saleumxay Kommasith, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Lao PDR;
 - Group courtesy call on H.E. Sonexay Siphandone, Prime Minister of the Lao PDR;
 - 14th East Asia Summit (EAS) Foreign Ministers' Meeting;
 - 31st ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Foreign Ministers' Meeting; and
 - If time allows, engagement with Lao PDR Manaaki Scholarships Alumni.
- 10 If travel is approved, we will depart for Vientiane on Wednesday 24 July, and return to New Zealand on Sunday 28 July.

Ministerial Party

- 11 If my travel is approved, I will be accompanied by my Specialist Ministerial Adviser and our costs will be charged to Vote Internal Affairs: Members of the Executive – Travel. I will also be accompanied by my Private Secretary (Foreign Affairs), seconded to my office from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), whose costs will be covered by the Ministry.
- 12 MFAT officials will also join me, including Deputy Secretary Americas and Asia and Asia Regional Divisional Manager. Their costs will also be covered by the Ministry.

Travel Costs

- 13 The estimated cost for this travel is:

ITEM	COST (NZD)
Flights	Estimates (2pax)
WLG – VTE (via Sydney and Bangkok) return	\$26,000
Other logistical costs	Estimates
Accommodation (<i>Minister's accom. covered by ASEAN</i>)	\$750
Airport facilitation (<i>costs covered by ASEAN</i>)	Nil
Transport (<i>costs covered by ASEAN</i>)	Nil
Gifts	\$1,250
Meals	\$1,000
Hospitality/representation costs	\$500
Overall subtotal	\$29,500
Contingency 10%	\$2,950
TOTAL	\$32,450

Acting Ministers

- 14 If travel is approved, in my absence Hon Todd McClay will cover my foreign affairs portfolio, and Hon Andrew Bayly will cover my racing portfolio.

Proactive release

- 15 This Cabinet 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

- 1 I recommend that Cabinet:
- 1.1 authorise my absence from New Zealand, from Wednesday 24 July to Sunday 28 July, for travel to Lao PDR;

- 1.2 agree that I will be accompanied by my Specialist Ministerial Adviser and our costs will be charged to Vote Internal Affairs – Members of the Executive – Travel;
- 1.3 approve the estimated expenditure of \$32,450 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 my Private Secretary (Foreign Affairs) who is seconded from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade to my office, and the Deputy Secretary Americas and Asia and Asia Regional Division Manager whose travel costs will be met by the Ministry;
- 1.5 agree that in my absence:
 - 1.5.1 Hon Todd McClay will cover my foreign affairs portfolio; and
 - 1.5.2 Hon Andrew Bayly will cover my racing portfolio.

Authorised for lodgement

Rt Hon Winston Peters

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Proactively Released by the Minister of Foreign Affairs