

24 June 2024

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proactive release

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OIA 29368

Tēnā koe

I refer to your email of 16 May 2024 in which you request the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

*please supply all written advice, briefings, notes, aides-memoire and reports, produced for and arising from, a "five-stop Pacific tour" undertaken by "broad political delegation" from New Zealand during 12-18 May 2024.*

On 17 May 2024 we notified you that your request, as currently framed, would require review of a significant amount of information, to locate information potentially in scope. As such it would likely be refused under section 18(f) of the OIA.

On 21 May 2024 you agreed to refine your request to:

- 1. Overall visit objectives for the Minister of Foreign Affairs travel in the Pacific, 12-18 May 2024*
- 2. Individual country briefs for the four countries visited, provided to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in advance of his travel in the Pacific, 12-18 May 2024*

On 19 June 2024, the timeframes for responding to your request were extended by an additional 14 working days because responding to your request necessitated the review of a large quantity of information, and due to the consultations necessary to make a decision on your request (section 15A(1) of the OIA refers).

The information relevant to your request is attached. We have withheld some information under the following sections of the OIA:

- 6(a): to avoid prejudicing the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the New Zealand Government;
- 6(b)(i): to protect the passing of information from another government on a confidential basis; and
- 9(2)(g)(i): to protect the free and frank expression of opinions by departments.


Where the information has been withheld under section 9 of the OIA, we have identified no public interest in releasing the information that would override the reasons for withholding it.

An individual country brief was not produced for the visit to Solomon Islands. Therefore, we refuse this part of your request under section 18(e) of the OIA, as the information requested does not exist.

Please note that it is our policy to proactively release our responses to official information requests where possible. Therefore, our response to your request (with your personal information removed) may be published on the Ministry website: [www.mfat.govt.nz/en/about-us/contact-us/official-information-act-responses/](http://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/about-us/contact-us/official-information-act-responses/)

If you have any questions about this decision, you can contact us by email at: [DM-ESD@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:DM-ESD@mfat.govt.nz). You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision by contacting [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'SC', written in a cursive style.

Sarah Corbett  
for Acting Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade

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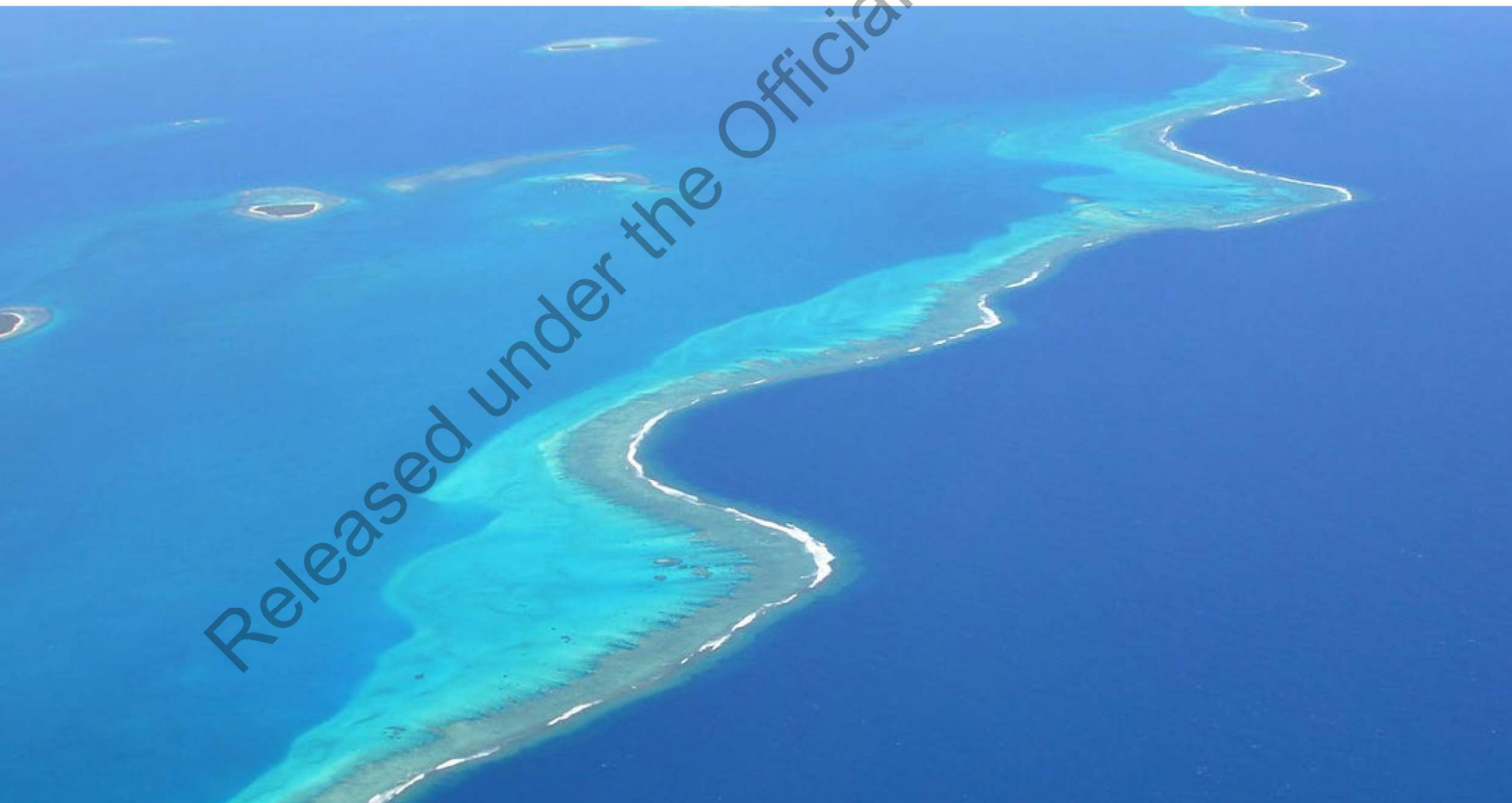


NEW ZEALAND  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS & TRADE  
Manatū Aorere

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER  
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
RT HON WINSTON PETERS

SOLOMON ISLANDS, PAPUA NEW GUINEA,  
VANUATU, NEW CALEDONIA, TUVALU

12 - 18 May 2024



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**OVERALL VISIT OBJECTIVES**

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## Overall objectives for the visit

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You will lead a delegation of New Zealand political leaders to Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, New Caledonia and Tuvalu, from Sunday 12 May to Saturday 18 May.

2. Your chosen destinations are critical Pacific partners. <sup>s6(a)</sup>

3. <sup>s6(a)</sup>

This travel is an opportunity to understand <sup>s6(a)</sup>

4. At a high level, this visit is an opportunity to:

- Build New Zealand's relationship with key government counterparts; <sup>s6(a)</sup>
- Highlight our shared focus on addressing Pacific priorities, particularly the threats posed by climate change <sup>s6(a)</sup>
- Reinforce New Zealand as a key partner for Pacific colleagues on common international challenges; and discuss pressing issues related to the Pacific Islands Forum and more broadly within the Indo-Pacific region.
- Highlight the important role the New Zealand International Development Cooperation programme plays in supporting Pacific governments to deliver on their long-term development goals.

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**PAPUA NEW GUINEA**

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## Papua New Guinea overview

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Papua New Guinea represents the second leg of your travel. Your visit will be New Zealand's first high-level visit to Papua New Guinea since former Prime Minister, Rt Hon Chris Hipkins visited in May 2023 for the US/Pacific Dialogue.

### Visit objectives

2. Your objectives for this leg of travel are to:

- Build relationships with key leaders, including Prime Minister James Marape, Foreign Minister Justin Tkatchenko, Deputy Prime Minister John Rosso and Opposition figures Douglas Tomuriesa and Ricky Morris.
- s6(a)
- Reaffirm New Zealand's continued commitment to Papua New Guinea's development, including announcing a New Zealand \$18.9 million investment to construct a centre for eye health at Port Moresby General Hospital, in partnership with Fred Hollows Foundation New Zealand.
- Reinforce New Zealand's interest in a mutually agreed and well-managed post-referendum process that upholds the Bougainville Peace Agreement.

### Papua New Guinea Developments

*Political and economic*

3. s6(a)

4. s6(a)

s6(a)

5. s6(a)

6. s6(a)



s6(a)

*New Zealand relationship and development cooperation*

7. New Zealand's development programme in Papua New Guinea is one of our largest, with NZ\$112 million forecast to be spent in the 2021- 24 triennium. It aligns with Papua New Guinea's Medium Term Development Plan, with investments in energy, agriculture, policing, gender, climate change and health. A joint Statement of Partnership was signed by Prime Ministers Ardern and Marape in July 2021.

8. New Zealand's partnership with Fred Hollows and investment in a new centre for eye health in Port Moresby is a tangible example of our development cooperation: you will be able to announce New Zealand's NZ\$18.9 million commitment to supporting the construction of the Port Moresby Centre for Eye Health; NZ\$9 million for peacebuilding in the Highlands; and NZ\$17 million for construction of a solar energy plant in Bougainville.

9. New Zealand has a long-standing defence partnership and supports the Papua New Guinea Defence Force through the Pacific Leader Development programme. We also provide policing support in Bougainville through the deployment of New Zealand Police.

s6(a)

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**VANUATU**

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## Vanuatu overview

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Your second destination is Vanuatu. s6(a)

There is warmth and cultural affinity from our broad people-to-people connections, including through the Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme. s6(a)

### *Objectives for the Vanuatu leg*

2. Your visit is our first political level engagement with Vanuatu's new government, which came to power following a motion of no confidence in former Prime Minister Kilman in late 2023. We recommend your objectives for the Vanuatu leg of the visit be to:

- Build trusting relationships with Vanuatu's political leadership s6(a)
- s6(a)

### *A sensitive, but important, moment in Vanuatu Politics*

3. You are visiting at a sensitive but important moment in Vanuatu politics, with the country preparing for its first national referendum. On 29 May, ni-Vanuatu will vote on Constitutional amendments that are designed to strengthen the political party system and reduce the floor-crossing that has contributed to successive motions of no confidence. There have been four motions of no confidence, two of them successful, in the last eight months.

4. s6(a)

s6(a)

5. s6(a)

6. s6(a)

7. Internationally, Vanuatu is playing a leading role on pushing for ambitious climate and environmental action. s6(a)

*Economic and development picture and New Zealand development assistance*

8. 2023 saw three significant cyclones hit Vanuatu. There is a growing infrastructure recovery deficit, extending back to cyclones in 2015. Vanuatu's economy is slowly recovering post-COVID, s6(a)

In response to these climate and economic-development challenges, the Government's priorities centre around infrastructure.

9. New Zealand's development assistance to Vanuatu this triennium (2021-24) is NZ\$103 million. It is a broad programme, including energy and water, tourism, education, security and governance. s9(2)(g)(i)

There are strong and valued connections with several New Zealand agencies, drawing on areas where New Zealand has particular expertise (including the Ministry for Primary Industries, Manaaki Whenua Landcare, New Zealand Police and Department of Corrections).

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**TUVALU**

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## Tuvalu overview

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Your final destination on this travel is Tuvalu. The last time a New Zealand Minister of Foreign Affairs visited Tuvalu was your visit in 2019.

2. This return visit, early in your term, will serve as a strong signal of New Zealand's ongoing commitment to the bilateral relationship and will be well-received by a Government that has been in place since February, following a national election. While the new Prime Minister of Tuvalu will be out of the country to attend Taiwan's Presidential Inauguration, you will meet the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Minister for Transport (who was Minister of Foreign Affairs under the previous government).

### Visit objectives

3. We recommend your objectives for the Tuvalu leg of this visit be to:

- Reconnect and build relationships with leaders, including the Deputy Prime Minister (and Minister of Finance) Panapasi Nelesone, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Paulson Panapa, and Minister of Transport, Communication and Innovation Simon Kofe.
- Reaffirm New Zealand's ongoing commitment to supporting a resilient Tuvalu, alongside other partners, including Australia.
- Underscore this commitment by announcing New Zealand's contribution to Tuvalu's Coastal Adaptation Project, the <sup>s6(b)(i)</sup> Pacific Connect under-sea cable, repair of Tuvalu's ferry and fisheries vessels, and water security related projects.

### *New Zealand – Tuvalu relationship*

4. The new Government of Tuvalu's foremost political priority is to address the significant and existential challenges of climate change. You can expect climate change, and New Zealand's support to Tuvalu, to be a significant feature of your visit. New Zealand's non-resident High Commissioner met the new Government in Funafuti in March when Tuvalu reaffirmed the strength of the relationship and the value it places on New Zealand's support bilaterally, regionally, and globally. New Zealand is home to the largest Tuvaluan diaspora. There are over 4,000 Tuvaluans resident in New Zealand. There are also 149 Tuvaluans participating in the RSE scheme and 18 Manaaki scholars.

### *New Zealand's development cooperation*

5. The total country aid flow to Tuvalu across the 2021 – 2024 triennium is NZ\$60.1 million. Our contribution places New Zealand as the third largest development partner, behind Australia and Japan. Our support to Tuvalu is focused on providing economic support (budget support), fisheries, maritime, and the health sector. Digital connectivity is one of the highest development priorities for Tuvalu as it seeks to unlock greater opportunities for its people. At the request of the Government of Tuvalu, New Zealand will contribute funds towards the <sup>s6(b)(i)</sup> Pacific Connect undersea cable alongside Australia (which will contribute majority funding), the United States, Japan, and Taiwan. <sup>s6(a)</sup>

s6(a)

6. s6(a)

Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong is scheduled to visit Tuvalu the week before you.

7. s6(a)

8. Tuvalu is at a critical juncture, facing existential challenges by climate change. Your visit provides a timely opportunity to reinforce New Zealand's commitment to Tuvalu <sup>s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)</sup>

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