

Proactive Release

Published on or before: 17 July 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 – Report on Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Winston Peters, Hon Dr Shane Reti and Hon Simon Watts - May 2024</i>	CAB-24-MIN-0197
<i>Report on Travel: Visit to Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, and Tuvalu: 12-17 May 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;
- 6(b)(i): to protect the passing of information from another government on a confidential basis;
- 9(2)(f)(iv): to protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials; and
- 9(2)(g)(i): to protect the free and frank expression of opinions by departments.



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.

Report on Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Winston Peters, Hon Dr Shane Reti and Hon Simon Watts - May 2024

Portfolios Foreign Affairs / Health / Pacific Peoples / Climate Change

On 4 June 2024, Cabinet **noted** the report from the Rt Hon Winston Peters under CAB-24-SUB-0197 on his travel, together with Hon Dr Shane Reti and Hon Simon Watts, to the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and Tuvalu from 12 to 17 May 2024 to attend a number of bilateral meetings.

Rachel Hayward
Secretary of the Cabinet

Proactively released by the Minister of Foreign Affairs

~~[Restricted]~~

Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs

Chair, Cabinet

REPORT ON TRAVEL: VISIT TO SOLOMON ISLANDS, PAPUA NEW GUINEA, VANUATU, AND TUVALU: 12–17 MAY 2024

We recommend that Cabinet note this report on travel to Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, and Tuvalu 12 – 17 May 2024. Due to civil unrest in New Caledonia, our planned travel to Noumea had to be cancelled.

2. The three overarching objectives were to: 1) build New Zealand's relationship with Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, and Tuvalu; 2) reinforce our shared focus on addressing Pacific priorities; and 3) highlight New Zealand as a key partner.

3. The New Zealand delegation included the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Pacific Peoples & Health, and Climate Change; the chair of the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Select Committee; the Opposition Foreign Affairs Spokesperson; and media. All seemed pleased with how the five days unfolded.

Visit to Solomon Islands

4. We travelled to Honiara 12 May en route to Papua New Guinea. We were on the ground for two hours and took the opportunity to meet newly elected Prime Minister Jeremiah Manele and members of his Cabinet. Our primary focus was to reconnect early with the incoming government. ^{s9(2)(f)(iv)}
_{s9(2)(f)(iv)}

5. Our meeting with PM Manele and his Cabinet was positive. PM Manele appreciated our efforts to see the new government so soon after its swearing in ^{s6(a)}
_{s6(a)}

New Zealand's recent support to Solomon Islands election was acknowledged.

6. With only a short period on the ground, we focused our discussion on PM Manele's political priorities ^{s6(b)(i)}
_{s6(b)(i)}

s6(a)

7. On development assistance more broadly, PM Manele asked that New Zealand work with Solomon Islands to conclude a refreshed Statement of Partnership, s9(2)(f)(iv)

s9(2)(f)(iv)

s6(b)(i)

Visit to Papua New Guinea

8. We travelled to Port Moresby 12–14 May and met with: Foreign Minister Tkatchenko; Deputy Prime Minister Rosso; had a courtesy call on PM Marape; visited both the Fred Hollows Eye Clinic and PNG's Green Finance Centre; and delivered a speech at the Kumul Leadership Centre. I also met with the Autonomous Bougainville Government President Ishmael Toroama and, separately, leader of the PNG opposition Douglas Tomuriesa and his colleague Ricky Morris.

9. s6(a)

10. s6(a)

11. We took the opportunity to outline New Zealand's existing support, including on infrastructure, trade and economic matters, labour mobility, and climate change and energy security. While in Port Moresby we announced: an \$18.9 million contribution to the construction of a Centre of Excellence in Eye Health; a \$17 million contribution to a joint Australia-New Zealand Electricity Grid Solar Upgrade project in Bougainville; and a \$9 million contribution to supporting peace and development in the Papua New Guinea highlands. All of the Ministers with whom we discussed New Zealand's assistance reaffirmed that New Zealand's contribution was valued.

12. We discussed the situation in Bougainville with Ministerial counterparts, members of the Opposition, as well as the Bougainvillian representatives. s6(a)
s6(a)

s6(a)

s6(a)

13. My speech to the Kumul Leadership Centre was an opportunity to engage with and put on record New Zealand views of the set of geostrategic circumstances facing the Pacific. s6(a)

Visit to Vanuatu

14. We travelled to Port Vila 14 – 16 May. s6(a)
s6(a)

We met with Head of State President Nikenike Vurobaravu, Prime Minister Charlot Salwai, Leader of the Opposition Gracia Shadrack, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Matai Seremaiah, all of whom were warm and generous with their time. As well as our calls on counterparts, we visited the infrastructure project of South Paray wharf. An extra day in Port Vila (due to the cancelled visit to Noumea) allowed us to attend the formal Opening of the First Ordinary Sitting of Parliament for 2024.

15. Our meetings in Vanuatu, s6(a) were underpinned by warm and strong personal connections. The Prime Minister, DPM and Minister of Climate Change were consistent on Vanuatu's priority concern with climate change, and development priority on resilient infrastructure to support economic development while adapting to climate change. We visited the s6(a) development project in South Paray Wharf, which is on track for completion by 2025. Our announcement of NZ\$8 million for climate flexible finance was well received and reinforced the delegation's message that New Zealand understood the seriousness of climate impacts s6(a)

16. During the visit, we took the opportunity to highlight the importance of small states, and to use our engagements to listen and build trust. s6(a)
s6(a)

s6(a)

Cancelled visit to Noumea

17. Due to civil unrest in New Caledonia, our planned two-day visit to Noumea had to be cancelled. We have, subsequently, engaged extensively with both the New Caledonian authorities and the French government in the context of seeking permission to assist with the departure of New Zealanders caught up in the unrest. All who wished to depart have had the opportunity to depart.

Visit to Tuvalu

18. For the final leg we visited Tuvalu 16 – 17 May. We met: Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Panapasi Nelesone; Minister of Foreign Affairs, Labour, and Trade Paulson Panapa; Minister of Home Affairs, Climate Change, and Environment Dr Maina Talia; the Minister for Health, and Social Welfare Tuafafa Latasi; and attended a State Dinner hosted for us by the Government of Tuvalu.

19. s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

Tuvalu is composed of three reef islands and six atolls. With a population of around 11,000 it's the second-least populated country in the world after the Vatican City. Access is limited to boat or turboprop aircraft (we flew in and out on a C-130 defence asset). s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

That the Tuvaluan government showed us such generosity and support hosting of us – particularly after we arrived a day early – is a sign of the sense of goodwill between our countries.

20. s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

21. s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

Comment

22. s6(a)

Proactive release

23. This paper will be proactively released per Cabinet Office Circular CO (18) 4 on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade's website. The paper will be subject to redaction as appropriate on the grounds under the Official Information Act 1982.

Recommendation

24. I recommend that Cabinet note this report.

Authorised for lodgement
Rt. Hon Winston Peters
Minister of Foreign Affairs

Proactively released by the Minister of Foreign Affairs