

Proactive Release

Date: 24 October 2019

The following Cabinet paper and related Cabinet minute have been proactively released by the Minister for Trade and Export Growth:

Report on Overseas Travel MTEG Singapore RCEP:

(CAB-19-MIN-0082 refers)

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 international relations of the New Zealand Government; and
- 9(2)(j): to avoid prejudice to negotiations.

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Cabinet

Minute of Decision

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Report on Overseas Travel: Hon David Parker

Portfolio **Trade and Export Growth**

On 25 March 2019, Cabinet **noted** the report from Hon David Parker under CAB-19-SUB-0082 on his travel, on behalf of Hon Damien O'Connor, from 12 to 14 October 2018, to Singapore to attend the Ministerial meeting of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and to hold bilateral meetings.

Michael Webster
Secretary of the Cabinet

Hard-copy distribution:

Prime Minister
Deputy Prime Minister
Hon David Parker

Office of the Minister for Trade and Export Growth

Chair, Cabinet

Report on Overseas Travel: Hon David Parker

I recommend that Cabinet note this report on my travel to Singapore from 12 – 14 October 2018.

Report

- 1 I travelled to Singapore on 12 – 14 October 2018 to attend a Ministerial meeting of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) free trade agreement, on behalf of Hon Damien O'Connor who, at short notice, was unable to travel. In addition to this meeting, I was able to meet bilaterally with my counterparts from Japan, Singapore and India.
- 2 The RCEP negotiations at this meeting formed part of a series of Ministerial meetings scheduled in the second half of 2018. Throughout the meeting Singapore (as the Chair of ASEAN), China and others continued pushing strongly for RCEP to be “substantially concluded” this year. This meeting allowed countries to take stock of progress towards this goal – with a focus on market access in goods, services and investment, some rules (on sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures and technical barriers to trade) and a forward work plan towards the next series of Ministerial meetings and the Leaders' Summit on RCEP in the margins of the East Asia Summit.
- 3 s9(2)(j)

I was also able to reiterate the need for countries to provide greater responsiveness to requests in goods negotiations, but also in services and investment market access negotiations. New Zealand was also active in debate on issues relating to the chapters on SPS issues and on standards, technical relations and conformity assessment procedures (technical barriers to trade), ^{s9(2)(i)}
- 4 The meeting also discussed at length the forward work plan for RCEP for the remainder of 2018. It was decided that Ministers would meet again on 12 November in the margins of the East Asia Summit meetings to make a determination on a range of ‘political issues’ (discussed at officials' level throughout late October and early November), and pave the way for a possible Summit by RCEP Leaders that same week.

- 5 In my bilateral meetings, in addition to discussing RCEP-related issues I was able to raise issues relating to CPTPP and the global trading system with my counterparts from Japan, Singapore and India. It was clear in these meetings that Japan and Singapore were looking forward to CPTPP entering into force, s6(a)
- with countries keen to work with New Zealand to reinforce global rules.

Proactive release

- 6 This paper will be proactively released as 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 set out under the Official Information Act 1982.

Recommendation

I recommend that Cabinet note this report.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon David Parker

Minister for Trade and Export Growth