

Proactive Release

Date: 15 April 2019

The following Cabinet papers and related Cabinet minutes have been proactively released by the Minister of State for Trade and Export Growth:

Title of papers:

Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Damien O'Connor (CAB-19-SUB-0024 refers)

***Report on Overseas Travel: Michael Wood MP on behalf of
Hon Damien O'Connor (CAB-19-SUB-0116 refers)***

Title of minutes:

Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Damien O'Connor (CAB-19-MIN-0024 refers)

***Report on Overseas Travel: Michael Wood MP on behalf of
Hon Damien O'Connor (CAB-19-MIN-0116 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;
- 6(b): to protect the passing of information from another government on a confidential basis;
- 6(e)(vi) to avoid damage to the New Zealand economy by the premature disclosure of decisions relating to entering into of overseas trade agreements; and
- 9(2)(j): to avoid prejudice to negotiations.



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 Damien O'Connor

Portfolio **Trade and Export Growth**

On 11 February 2019, Cabinet:

- 1 **authorised** the absence of Hon Damien O'Connor from New Zealand, from 28 February to 4 March 2019 to travel to Siem Reap, Cambodia to attend a Ministerial negotiating meeting of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) free trade agreement;
- 2 **agreed** that he be accompanied by one member of staff;
- 3 **approved** the estimated expenditure of up to \$31,900 for the travel expenses of the Ministerial party, as a charge to Vote: Internal Affairs (Members of the Executive – Travel);
- 4 **noted** that he will be accompanied by officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, whose travel costs will be met by the Ministry;
- 5 **agreed** that in his absence Hon Stuart Nash act as Minister of Agriculture, Minister for Biosecurity, Minister for Food Safety and Minister for Rural Communities;
- 6 **noted** that the House is not sitting during his absence.

Michael Webster
Secretary of the Cabinet

Hard-copy distribution:

Prime Minister
Deputy Prime Minister
Hon Damien O'Connor

Chair, Cabinet

Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Damien O'Connor

- 1 I seek Cabinet approval to travel to Siem Reap, Cambodia from 28 February to 4 March 2019, to represent New Zealand at a Ministerial negotiating meeting of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) free trade agreement.
- 2 The Prime Minister has approved the travel in-principle.

Purpose of Travel

- 3 s6(a) s9(2)(j)
s6(a); s9(2)(j)
RCEP, which covers over three billion people, 27% of world GDP s9(2)(j)
. RCEP is s9(2)(j)
also, at present, our best opportunity to s9(2)(j)
, and improve access for our services exporters and investors into key ASEAN economies.
- 4 RCEP negotiations advanced substantially in 2018, with conclusion of a further five chapters, and market access negotiations in goods, services and investment moving towards their final stages. At the RCEP Summit in Singapore in November (which the Prime Minister attended), Leaders pledged that countries were “determined to conclude a modern, comprehensive, high-quality and mutually beneficial RCEP in 2019”. s6(a); s6(b)

It will be important to continue to show a strong political-level commitment to RCEP, and also ASEAN's goal, at this meeting s6(a); s9(2)(j)

- 5 This meeting is the first RCEP Ministerial-level meeting scheduled for 2019, and is being hosted by Cambodia to show its (and other ASEAN LDCs') political support and commitment to the ongoing RCEP negotiating process, and to set the scene for the year ahead. It is likely that ASEAN will use this meeting to discuss a range of issues relating to market access and rules, seeking to maintain political pressure to demonstrate progress to Leaders.

6 I will be attending this RCEP meeting in my capacity as Minister of State for Trade and Export Growth. s9(2)(j)

7 s6(e)(v)(i)

I will take the opportunity to meet bilaterally with these countries at this meeting to continue to prosecute New Zealand's requests, defend our core needs, and seek beneficial market access outcomes.

8 I will also take the opportunity to further strengthen my relationships with my Trade Ministerial counterparts from like-minded countries, to ensure that New Zealand's interests are advanced and protected in the negotiation.

Ministerial Party

9 I will be accompanied by one staff member, my Private Secretary (Trade and Export Growth).

10 Officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade will also attend this meeting; their travel costs will be met by the departmental budget.

Travel Costs

11 The estimated cost of travel is **\$31,900** and broken down as follows:

Airfares:	\$ 24,000
Accommodation:	\$ 2,500
Meals, incidentals and communications	\$ 1,500
Ground transport	\$ 500
Ministerial gifts	\$ 500
Contingency (10%)	\$ 2,900

Total: \$ 31,900

Acting Minister

12 If my travel is approved, Hon Stuart Nash will act in my Agriculture, Biosecurity, Food Safety and Rural Communities portfolios.

13 My travel would largely occur during a recess week and over a weekend.

Proactive release

- 14 This 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

- 15 I recommend that Cabinet:
- 1.1 authorise my absence from New Zealand, from 28 February to 4 March 2019 to travel to Siem Reap, Cambodia to attend a Ministerial negotiating meeting of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) free trade agreement;
 - 1.2 agree that I be accompanied by one member of staff;
 - 1.3 approve the estimated expenditure of **\$31,900** 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 officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, whose travel costs will be met by the Ministry;
 - 1.5 agree that in my absence, Hon Stuart Nash will act in my Agriculture, Biosecurity, Food Safety and Rural Communities portfolios;
 - 1.6 note that the House is not sitting during my absence.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Damien O'Connor

Minister of State for Trade and Export Growth

Office of the Minister of State for Trade and Export Growth

Chair, Cabinet

Report on Overseas Travel: Michael Wood MP on behalf of Hon Damien O'Connor

I recommend that Cabinet note this report on Parliamentary Under-Secretary Michael Wood's travel to Siem Reap, Cambodia from 28 February to 4 March 2019 to attend a Ministerial meeting of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) free trade agreement.

Report

- 1 The RCEP meeting was the first Ministerial-level meeting of 2019, and the first to be held following the RCEP Summit in Singapore in November 2018 (which the Prime Minister attended). New Zealand's objectives for the meeting – to signal political support for RCEP's conclusion this year, and to draw attention to outstanding work in goods, services and investment market access negotiations – were met.
- 2 There was a clear collective desire among other participating countries for RCEP negotiations to be brought to a conclusion this year (reinforcing instructions from Leaders at the Summit), highlighting the momentum from 2018, with all attendees expressing a political commitment to drive forward negotiations towards this goal. In that regard, New Zealand's clear commitment to the RCEP process was registered with our negotiating partners.
- 3 s6(e)(v)(i); s6(b)

Under-Secretary Wood was also able to clearly register New Zealand's key message that a final RCEP agreement should deliver meaningful high-quality outcomes, and that negotiating partners needed to focus further attention on market access negotiations (in goods, services and investment) to ensure this outcome.

- 4 s6(b)

s6(b)

- 5 Under-Secretary Wood was also able to hold formal bilateral meetings with Ministers in attendance from Singapore, the Philippines and Thailand.
s6(a); s9(2)(j)

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Recommendation

I recommend that Cabinet note this report.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Damien O'Connor

Minister of State for Trade and Export Growth



Cabinet

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Report on Overseas Travel: Michael Wood MP on behalf of Hon Damien O'Connor

Portfolio **Trade and Export Growth**

On 25 March 2019, Cabinet **noted** the report from Hon Damien O'Connor under CAB-19-SUB-0116 on Michael Wood's travel, from 28 February to 4 March 2019, to Siem Reap, Cambodia, to attend a Ministerial meeting of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partners (RCEP) free trade agreement, and undertake bilateral meetings.

Michael Webster
Secretary of the Cabinet

Hard-copy distribution:

Prime Minister
Deputy Prime Minister
Hon Damien O'Connor

Office of the Minister of State for Trade and Export Growth

Chair, Cabinet

Report on Overseas Travel: Michael Wood MP on behalf of Hon Damien O'Connor

I recommend that Cabinet note this report on Parliamentary Under-Secretary Michael Wood's travel to Siem Reap, Cambodia from 28 February to 4 March 2019 to attend a Ministerial meeting of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) free trade agreement.

Report

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- 3 s6(b); s6(e)(v)(i)

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Recommendation

I recommend that Cabinet note this report.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Damien O'Connor

Minister of State for Trade and Export Growth