

# Proactive Release

Date: 22 November 2019

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

***Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Damien O'Connor***

***CAB-19-MIN-0551 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 Damien O'Connor

**Portfolio**                      **Trade and Export Growth**

On 21 October 2019, Cabinet **noted** the report from Hon Damien O'Connor under CAB-19-SUB-0551 on his travel, from 7 to 13 September 2019, to Bangkok, Thailand, to participate in a Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership negotiating Ministerial meeting and undertake bilateral meetings.

Michael Webster  
Secretary of the Cabinet

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**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: Hon Damien O'Connor**

I recommend that Cabinet note this report on my travel to Bangkok from 7 to 13 September 2019, where I represented New Zealand at a Ministerial-level negotiating meeting of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) free trade agreement and undertook bilateral calls in Thailand.

#### **Report**

##### *RCEP*

- 1 Once again, the RCEP Ministerial Meeting focussed on delivering progress on the pledge made by Leaders at the RCEP Summit in November 2018 - that countries were “determined to conclude a modern, comprehensive, high-quality and mutually beneficial RCEP in 2019.”
- 2 s6(a), s9(2)(j)
- 3 s9(2)(j)
- 4 Ministers also agreed to hold a further Ministerial Meeting 11-12 October, s9(2)(j)
- 5 I had a number of bilateral meetings in the margins of the Ministerial, but the most notable meeting was with India’s Trade Minister Piyush Goyal. s6(a), s9(2)(j)  
s6(a), s9(2)(j)

##### *Bilateral programme*

- 6 My visit provided a timely, useful opportunity to meet with my Thai Ministerial counterparts in the newly elected government, including Deputy Prime

Minister for Economic Affairs Somkid Jatusripitak and Agriculture Minister Chalermchai Sri-on. I also met with newly-elected Members of Parliament from across the political spectrum, with an interest in agriculture and/or economic issues.

- 7 In these meetings I underscored the importance that New Zealand places on regional and international architecture, including the conclusion of RCEP and s6(a) During my visit I highlighted opportunities for dairy and agricultural cooperation, including in the context of New Zealand's Comprehensive Economic Partnership (CEP) with Thailand. s6(a) s6(a)

As such, the New Zealand agriculture sector, particularly dairy, should not be viewed as a threat, but as a partner that can help Thai farmers to lift their capabilities.

- 8 The programme also included a site visit to Green Spot, a factory producing soy milk-based drinks that use dairy inputs from Fonterra, while Beca was also the engineering consultant for the development of the plant itself, an example of trade and service partnerships adding value in Thailand. I also attended the Taste of New Zealand Launch Event with partner Central Food Retail, a high-quality food retailer that supports premium New Zealand food and wine brands.

#### **Proactive release**

- 9 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](#).

#### **Recommendation**

I recommend that Cabinet note this report.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Damien O'Connor

Minister of State for Trade and Export Growth