



## Proactive Release

The following document has been proactively released by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, on behalf of Rt Hon Christopher Luxon, Prime Minister:

### **Report on Overseas Travel: Prime Minister, Hon Melissa Lee and Hon Nicola Grigg - September 2024**

The following documents have been included in this release:

**Title of paper:** Report on Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Christopher Luxon, Hon Melissa Lee and Hon Nicola Grigg - Malaysia and the Republic of Korea - 1-6 September 2024 (CAB-24-SUB-0422 refers)

**Title of minute:** Report on Overseas Travel: Prime Minister, Hon Melissa Lee and Hon Nicola Grigg - September 2024 (CAB-24-MIN-0422 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 section of the Act that would apply has been identified.

#### **Key to redaction code:**

- section 6(a), to protect the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the Government of New Zealand.

~~Restricted~~

Office of the Prime Minister

Chair, Cabinet

**Report on Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Christopher Luxon, Hon Melissa Lee and Hon Nicola Grigg – Malaysia and the Republic of Korea – 1-6 September 2024**

I recommend that Cabinet note this report on our travel to Malaysia and the Republic of Korea, with the three of us overseas between Sunday 1 September and Friday 6 September 2024.

**Report**

- 1 In our reset of New Zealand's foreign policy, we agreed to significantly increase our focus on, and resources applied to, Asia.
- 2 Visiting Malaysia and Korea were important goals in our first year in office, not least because there had not been a Prime Ministerial visit to either country since 2015. In both Kuala Lumpur and in Seoul, we were accompanied by a business delegation, which had an intensive programme understanding each market and enhancing their commercial connections.
- 3 Against that background, the objectives of this trip were achieved:
  - 3.1 *Relationship enhancement.* In formal Summit meetings with PM Anwar and President Yoon, the Prime Minister was able to inject new energy and urgency into both bilateral relationships. s6(a)  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] With President Yoon, the Prime Minister agreed to advance discussions to elevate our relationship to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2025. In both countries, the Prime Minister was deliberate about growing our constituency by meeting with a range of politicians, including senior Ministers, opposition representatives and Parliamentarians.
  - 3.2 *Growing trade and investment.* With Malaysia, we agreed to boost trade flows 50% by 2030. As a signalling device, s6(a)  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] The two leaders also agreed more needed to be done on education and tourism. With Korea, s6(a)  
[REDACTED] we should explore the possibility of upgrading our bilateral FTA as it reaches its tenth anniversary. s6(a)  
[REDACTED] the Koreans did, in the lead-up to the visit, progress market access for certain milk products and blueberries. Across the business

delegation 31 new deals were signed, and the Prime Minister's targeted investment meetings have resulted in several investors coming to New Zealand to explore opportunities.

3.3 *Emphasising defence and security.* With both Malaysia and Korea, we have a significant defence legacy: 4,000 New Zealanders served in the Malaya campaigns and 6,000 deployed during the Korean War. Defence featured large in Seoul, with the tripling in NZDF's commitment to UN Command on the Korean Peninsula and doubling in their DPRK sanctions monitoring efforts. We reaffirmed our Five Power Defence Arrangement bonds with Malaysia, s6(a)

3.4 *Strengthening people-to-people links.* It is evident we can do more to grow our education and tourism links with both countries, but this visit was an opportunity to lean into those connections that already exist: we s6(a) Malaysians and Koreans feel to New Zealand courtesy of their educational or other experiences. In this regard, we were well served by performances from a Malaysian-Kiwi singer and a kapa haka group.

4 While not an explicit objective, it is also worth noting the mission enabled us to promote New Zealand to the general public. In Malaysia, one social media engagement yielded over 14 million unique hits, while in Korea the Prime Minister featured on the main TV broadcaster and picked up 90 media reports.

#### **Four themes**

5 Four themes shone through in our visit to both capitals. First, in contrast to many of our competitors, we have yet to fully recover our education and tourism export markets. Both are economically important export sectors. Both also play an inter-generational role keeping New Zealand front-of-mind with people of influence. We need to be more attentive to boosting student and visitor flows.

6 Second, in promoting greater inwards foreign direct investment, we need to not just market the New Zealand business environment but also to convert interest into deals. That means having a pipeline of investable projects to point interested investors towards. While not an issue solely for one sector, the energy transition brings into sharp relief the focus both government and commercial entities have on opportunities for partnerships: there's scope for us to be doing more with both Malaysia and Korea in renewables investment.

7 A third theme was the nexus between security and prosperity. Nowhere in the world is this more evident than along the most heavily militarised border in the world between North and South Korea. By enforcing the armistice for over 70 years, peace and a fragile stability has been created, allowing the conditions for the Republic of Korea to thrive economically. The Demilitarised Zone serves as a healthy reminder of just what it takes to establish and maintain the security that we depend upon for our prosperity.

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s6(a)



### **Proactive release**

9 This paper will be proactively released as per Cabinet Office Circular CO (23) 04 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

Rt Hon Christopher Luxon

Prime Minister



# Cabinet

## Minute of Decision

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*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.*

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### Report on Overseas Travel: Prime Minister, Hon Melissa Lee and Hon Nicola Grigg - September 2024

**Portfolio**                      **Prime Minister**

On 4 November 2024, Cabinet **noted** the report from the Prime Minister under CAB-24-SUB-0422 on his travel, together with Hon Melissa Lee and Hon Nicola Grigg, from 1 to 6 September 2024, to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and Seoul, Republic of Korea for bilateral visits.

Rachel Hayward  
Secretary of the Cabinet

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