



## 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 and Deputy Prime Minister - October 2024**

The following documents have been included in this release:

**Title of paper:** Report on Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Christopher Luxon and Rt Hon Winston Peters - Samoa, 24 - 26 October 2024 (CAB-24-SUB-0429 refers)

**Title of minute:** Report on Overseas Travel: Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister - October 2024 (CAB-24-MIN-0429 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

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs

Chair, Cabinet

**Report on Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Christopher Luxon and Rt Hon Winston Peters – Samoa, 24 – 26 October 2024**

We recommend Cabinet note this report on our travel to Samoa for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings (CHOGM), between Thursday 24 and Saturday 26 October 2024.

**Report**

1 Samoa hosted the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) 2024. As the first Pacific Islands country to host CHOGM, it was an historic moment for them. It was also an opportunity for Samoa to advance Pacific issues on the global stage, like oceans and climate change. Against that background our visit achieved the following objectives:

- 1.1 *Supporting Samoa to host an effective CHOGM.* With more than 400 New Zealand personnel deployed and \$15 million invested, our partnership helped Samoa ensure a successful summit, with attendance by Their Majesties, 22 Heads of Government and 38 Ministers. The Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister acknowledged the contribution made by a wide range of agencies, including the New Zealand Defence Force, Police and others by meeting with them.
- 1.2 *Support an institution committed to democracy, the rule of law and human rights.* Commonwealth Leaders reached agreement on their Communiqué, navigating some tricky issues around reparatory justice in relation to the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Samoa was successful in advancing an Ocean declaration, a major priority for the Pacific region. Leaders also selected a new Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, Ms Shirley Botchwey (currently Foreign Minister of Ghana).
- 1.3 *Undertake bilateral engagements.* The Prime Minister met with his British and Singaporean counterparts, as well as having a series of informal engagements focused on Pacific colleagues, while also touching in with African and Caribbean counterparts who the Prime Minister would not otherwise meet. The Deputy Prime Minister met officially with counterparts from Pakistan, Rwanda, Trinidad and Tobago, and Guyana, and had informal engagements with Foreign Ministers from the Solomon Islands, Australia, Papua New Guinea, Singapore, and Malta.

- 2 As well as the foreign policy business conducted, this was the Prime Minister's first opportunity for an audience with The King (with His Majesty placing special weight on being at the Commonwealth despite his health battles).
- 3 While not one of the objectives we set ourselves when this travel was approved, it was also important the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister both engaged with the Samoan Government and New Zealand's Defence-led inter-agency team deployed to respond to the sinking of the *HMNZS Manawanui*. As well as acknowledging the role of Samoan first responders in saving lives, we were able to reassure ourselves that everything possible is being done to minimise the risk of environmental harm as a result of this incident.
- 4 With the Prime Minister having discussed *HMNZS Manawanui* with his Samoan counterpart several times, the Deputy Prime Minister met with Toeolesulusulu Cedric Salesa Schuster, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, and Olo fiti Afoa Vaai, the Minister of Works, Transport and Infrastructure. This was an opportunity to open additional communications channels to ensure New Zealand is hearing directly from the Samoan leadership on the response.
- 5 With a range of Pacific Police forces deploying to support their Samoan counterparts, the opportunity also presented to profile the "family first" approach to regional policing, particularly through the Pacific Policing Initiative.

***Our engagement with the Commonwealth***

- 6 With 56 members from across the world, ranging from our close partners like Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia, to large developing countries such as India, South Africa, and Nigeria, and many Small Islands Developing States, this is a forum with a diverse membership. We can use the Commonwealth for several purposes.
  - 6.1 To promote democracy, good governance, the rule of law, and human rights at a time of rising authoritarianism and autocracy. The Commonwealth is the only large international grouping with an explicit focus on democracy, and it has been willing and able up to this point to suspend members that flout democratic norms.
  - 6.2 At a time when the world risks fracturing into blocs, the Commonwealth is an opportunity to listen, to understand, and to engage with the Global South.
  - 6.3 With its convening power, the Commonwealth provides a vehicle for New Zealand to meet with a large number of countries that we do not regularly get the opportunity to.

7 s6(a) [Redacted]

s6(a) [REDACTED] We should be focused on ensuring it sticks to the handful of areas where it can make a difference, primarily around good governance and rule of law, alongside targeted capability building and provision of technical assistance.

### ***Bilateral meetings***

- 8 Our bilateral engagements were also additive. The Prime Minister met for the first time with the United Kingdom's Sir Keir Starmer, an opportunity to canvas the trade, people and security aspects of our oldest relationship. The Prime Minister also met privately with the Singaporean Prime Minister, with his key objective to encourage Prime Minister Wong to visit New Zealand in 2025 as the opportunity to announce the elevation of our Enhanced Partnership to its next level.
- 9 The Deputy Prime Minister met with counterparts from Pakistan, Rwanda, Trinidad and Tobago, and Guyana. This was an opportunity to hear about the challenges and opportunities faced by Caribbean small states, Pakistan's security challenges, and Rwanda's ongoing social and economic transformation 30 years after its genocide. The Deputy Prime Minister used his bilaterals to raise awareness of New Zealand's candidacy for the United Nations Security Council for the 2039-2040 term.

### **Proactive release**

- 10 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**

We recommend that Cabinet note this report.

Authorised for lodgement  
Rt Hon Christopher Luxon  
Prime Minister

Rt Hon Winston Peters  
Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs



# 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 and Deputy Prime Minister - October 2024

**Portfolios**                      **Prime Minister / Foreign Affairs**

On 11 November 2024, Cabinet **noted** the report from the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister under CAB-24-SUB-0429 on their travel, from 24 to 26 October 2024, to Samoa to attend the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, and undertake bilateral meetings.

Rachel Hayward  
Secretary of the Cabinet

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