



## Proactive Release

The following Cabinet paper and related Cabinet minute have been proactively released by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, on behalf of Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern, Prime Minister:

Report on Overseas Travel: Prime Minister

The following documents have been included in this release:

***Title of paper: Report on Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern  
(CAB-20-SUB-0162 refers)***

***Title of minute: Report on Overseas Travel: Prime Minister  
(CAB-20-MIN-0162 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. Where information has been withheld, no public interest has been identified that would outweigh the reasons for withholding it.

### Key to redaction code:

- 6(a): to avoid prejudicing the international relations of the New Zealand Government.



Office of the Prime Minister  
Chair, Cabinet

**Report on Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern**

I recommend that Cabinet note this report on my travel to Suva and Nadi, Fiji 24 – 27 February to advance New Zealand’s bilateral relationship with Fiji, and my visit to Sydney, Australia on 28 February to attend the annual Australia New Zealand Leaders’ Meeting.

**Report**

*Fiji*

- 1 I visited Fiji 24 – 27 February, with a view to cementing in improvements to New Zealand’s bilateral relationship with Fiji, which is a natural strategic partner in the region, and is taking increasing responsibility for being the voice of the Pacific internationally. My partner Clarke accompanied me for the formal engagements on the programme. My visit began with formal ceremonial elements, being an inspection of the Republic of Fiji Military Forces Guard of Honour, a traditional Sevusevu welcome ceremony, and laying a wreath at the National War Memorial.
- 2 A central element of my visit was engagement with Prime Minister Bainimarama. We met on a number of occasions, the most substantive being our formal bilateral meeting and lunch. We discussed a broad range of issues, and agreed that there was strengthened collaboration occurring or planned in many areas of the bilateral relationship.
- 3 6(a) 
- 4 New Zealand and Fiji’s shared interests in promoting the security of our region was highlighted, in particular the defence partnership, and the new policing programme with its focus on combatting transnational crime, which I officially announced during the visit. 6(a) 

- 5 6(a)
- 6 Prime Minister Bainimarama highlighted the strength of our trade and economic relationship, and expressed a wish to work together on a Double Taxation Agreement. He referred to the work being done by officials to access the impact PACER Plus would have on Fiji's economy. 6(a)
- 7 I invited Prime Minister Bainimarama to visit New Zealand at a mutually convenient time.
- 8 The bilateral meeting was followed by a press conference, during which Prime Minister Bainimarama commented that "our partnership sits at unparalleled strength". We released a joint statement, renewing our commitment to continue to strengthen Fiji-New Zealand relations, and committed to issuing a new Fiji-New Zealand Statement of Partnership. Later that evening, Prime Minister Bainimarama hosted a State Dinner as part of the visit. During his opening remarks he again heralded the new chapter in the bilateral relationship, and the underscoring friendship and shared values between our countries.
- 9 I made a courtesy call on President Konrote, and together we participated in the '30 million trees' programme by planting a tree in the garden of his official residence. I met the Secretary General of the Pacific Island Forum, Dame Meg Taylor, to discuss regional issues, 6(a)
- I also met with members of the Opposition and discussed what policies they would adopt if they were in power, 6(a)
- 10 In addition I attended a number of events that served to demonstrate New Zealand's commitment to community wellbeing, gender empowerment and combating climate change in Fiji. In order to further bolster New Zealand's work in empowering women in the region I hosted a Women's Leadership lunch at the New Zealand Residence, attended by all 10 women MPs, and women leaders across public and private sector, civil society and student advocates.
- 11 I also opened the Nadi Branch of the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, accompanied by Fiji's Minister for Women. The Centre delivers counselling and outreach advisory services to vulnerable women and communities, and has been supported by New Zealand and Australian development assistance for many years (New Zealand since the 1990s). In addition I visited the Tamavua-i-Wa settlement; one of six informal settlements at which the New Zealand Aid Programme has partnered with Monash University to support water and sanitation upgrades, to improve human and environmental health outcomes.

- 12 I also delivered a speech at the University of the South Pacific on New Zealand's views and vision for the region to students, staff, and alumni. During the speech I announced New Zealand's support for a climate change relocation project in Fiji, which may prove to be a model for the region.
- 13 On my last day in Fiji, I attended a memorial service at Lautoka Mosque to pay my respects to the three Fijians who lost their lives during the 15 March terror attacks in Christchurch, including the late Imam Hafiz Musa Patel. I spoke about tolerance, inclusion and diversity during the memorial service, and shared morning tea with members of the community and families of the bereaved.

*Australia- New Zealand Leaders' Meeting*

14 I visited Sydney on 28 February. The central element of my visit was the annual Australia New Zealand Leaders' Meeting and extended working lunch, with Prime Minister Morrison, although I also called on New South Wales Premier Gladys Berejiklian, and the Governor-General David Hurley.

15 The opportunity to meet Prime Minister Morrison was timely as we reflected on how our two countries had worked together in response to unprecedented events in the past year, including the March 15 terror attacks, the Whakaari/White Island eruption, the Australia bush fires, and COVID-19.

16 On the COVID-19 outbreak, we acknowledged the close engagement we had on health and border measures, and the collaborative evacuation missions already undertaken (from Wuhan). <sup>6(a)</sup>

We also discussed the likely economic implications of COVID-19, particularly for the tourism and education sectors, and the downstream impacts to our supply chains, and agreed to stay in touch on the issue.

17 We discussed a range of trade and economic topics including e-invoicing and digital identity, which I said I was keen to promote as part of the Single Economic Market (SEM) agenda. <sup>6(a)</sup>

18 Between our formal meeting and the working lunch, Prime Minister Morrison and I witnessed Māori Economic Development Minister, Hon Nanaia Mahuta, and her Australian counterpart, Hon Ken Wyatt, Minister for Indigenous Australians, sign the Australia and Aotearoa-New Zealand Indigenous Collaboration Arrangement. This is believed to be the first bilateral arrangement of its kind in the world, and it encompasses themes of culture, empowerment, and wellbeing as well as economic opportunity.

19 Ahead of the next Pacific Islands Forum, we agreed to give some thought to how to manage the issue of climate change, and to add other items such as

transnational organised crime, and fisheries, to the agenda to ensure the PIF remained relevant and productive. In discussing China in the region, we agreed on the need to share more information with Pacific Island Governments, as well as supporting local media.

20 6(a)

21 We discussed digital issues, including the possibility of a Digital Services Tax.

6(a)

We also discussed our mutual efforts to encourage digital platforms to make their own proposals on how to close tax loopholes, and to address preventing the upload and dissemination of objectionable material.

22 Lastly, but importantly, we discussed people to people issues. 6(a)

6(a)

In addition, in respect of deportations, while New Zealand respected Australia's policies, Australia should not deport people who were effectively Australians – results of the Australian system, with little or no connection to New Zealand. There was evidence in New Zealand – from the Police, the judiciary, those working on drug dependency – that deportees were increasing levels of crime, including patched gangs. I noted that New Zealand's approach was to take into account the time spent in New Zealand by deportees, and the seriousness of their crime, before deciding to deport them.

23 6(a)

24 At the conclusion of our meeting, Prime Minister Morrison and I held a joint press conference during which we openly disagreed about the treatment of New Zealanders in Australia, particularly with regard to deportations,

reflecting our conversation during the bilateral meeting beforehand. Prime Minister Morrison said Australia's deportations policy was part of the integrity of the Government's border regime and was therefore a matter of sovereignty. I was clear that New Zealand viewed the issue as a matter of "fairness" and that Australia needed to take much better account of the length of time people had lived in Australia, in recognition of the unique access New Zealanders have to live and work in Australia, which meant some of those people deported were effectively products of Australia.

### **Proactive release**

25 I intend to proactively release this report, subject to any redactions under the Official Information Act.

### **Recommendation**

I recommend that Cabinet note this report.

Authorised for lodgement

Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern

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

**Portfolio**                      **Prime Minister**

On 14 April 2020, Cabinet **noted** the report from the Prime Minister under CAB-20-SUB-0162 on her travel, from 24 to 27 February 2020, to Suva and Nadi, Fiji to advance New Zealand's bilateral relationship with Fiji, and her visit to Sydney, Australia on 28 February 2020 to attend the annual Australia New Zealand Leaders' Meeting.

Michael Webster  
Secretary of the Cabinet

Proactively released by the Prime Minister