



## 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

Date of release: 18 December 2019

The following documents have been included in this release:

***Title of paper: Report on Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern  
(CAB-19-SUB-0576 refers)***

***Title of minute: Report on Overseas Travel: Prime Minister  
(CAB-19-MIN-0576 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; and
- 6(b)(i): to protect the entrusting of information to the Government of New Zealand on a basis of confidence by the Government of any other country or any agency of such a Government.

~~Restricted~~

Office of the Prime Minister

Chair, Cabinet

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

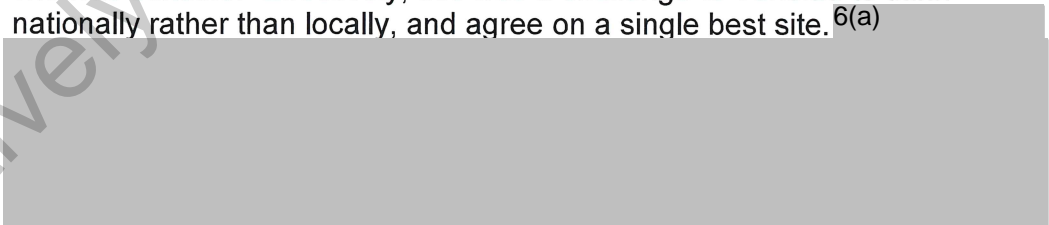
I recommend that Cabinet note this report on my travel to Apia, Samoa and Tokelau, from 27 July to 1 August 2019. The main purpose of the visit was to deepen New Zealand's relationship with Tokelau, and affirm our enduring commitment and support to the atolls.

### **Report**

- 1 I stopped in Samoa on 27-28 July and 1 August 2019 en route to and from Tokelau. My aim was to review progress in the bilateral relationship since my inaugural visit in March 2018, as well as discussing Samoan views on constructive engagement with Tokelau. I briefly visited the New Zealand-funded redevelopment of the Apia waterfront event space and clock-tower boulevard, and joined the Samoan Deputy Prime Minister to launch a strategy to help protect Samoa's endangered national bird. That New Zealand's bilateral relationship with Samoa is in good shape, was evidenced by my wide-ranging and positive bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Tuilaepa.
- 2 The key focus of my trip, however, was to visit Tokelau – something made possible only with the assistance of the highly professional staff and personnel of the offshore patrol vessel, *HMNZS Otago*. My visit was the first Prime Ministerial visit to New Zealand's only overseas territory in fifteen years; and only the fourth in almost 100 years by a New Zealand Prime Minister, to see the far-flung atolls that house around 1,500 New Zealand citizens. I was accompanied by Minister Faafoi, who had made his own highly successful visit last year, and the Administrator of Tokelau. The participation in my delegation of the Commanding Officer of the *Otago*, Ben Martin, and Defence Attache, Julie Fritzell, as well as the navy multicultural group, was key to reinforcing the cultural affinity between the people of New Zealand and Tokelau, and referencing the links between us as inhabitants of islands, both of whom navigate the oceans. I was also accompanied, from the first atoll throughout Tokelau and back to Apia, by the Ulu o Tokelau, Kelihiano Kalolo.
- 3 As Tokelau is part of the Realm of New Zealand, New Zealand has constitutional obligations to assist the Government of Tokelau to deliver core public services and provide essential infrastructure, and assist Tokelau to develop its capacity for self-governance. <sup>6(b)(i)</sup>

6(b)(i)



- 4 My visit presented a unique and special opportunity to stress the importance of the New Zealand-Tokelau relationship, and emphasise New Zealand's ongoing commitment to supporting improvements to the quality of life on the atolls; help improve national infrastructure and connectivity; and increase Tokelau's resilience to the impacts of climate change. As a dependent territory, Tokelau is not able to access international climate finance, so New Zealand is the only donor ready to assist with its climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts.
- 5 I visited each of the three inhabited atolls: Atafu, Fakaofu and Nukunonu. Each had undertaken extensive preparations; prepared cultural performances; organised meetings with women's and village councils; and arranged site visits which focused on key issues such as education and health, energy generation, and climate change. Several areas were highlighted where New Zealand's assistance needs to focus, including: improving infrastructure – including ICT and air services; improving health services, in particular screening services for women; and rethinking the education model.
- 6 I made several funding announcements, including a project to expand and replace the systems and components of solar energy generating facilities. I opened a new staff and patient residence and toured the hospital on Nukunonu, and gifted foetal heart monitors to the hospitals on each of the atolls. I also opened the new wharf on Fakaofu. Once the last wharf is built, it will mark the end of the largest infrastructure project ever undertaken on Tokelau, to improve the safety of ship to shore transfers on each atoll.
- 7 Tokelau remains one of the few countries in the world without an airstrip (Pitcairn Island is another). I indicated that New Zealand would support the development of one airstrip, provided engineers confirmed that the proposed site was suitable. Effectively, this was a challenge to Tokelau to think nationally rather than locally, and agree on a single best site.<sup>6(a)</sup>
- 8 We took a crew (reporter and camera operator) from TVNZ and Newshub with us. They filed pre-trip reports and a story each day during the trip.
- 9 There were communications challenges for them to file from the atolls but the local telecom company was very helpful (in one case providing space and connectivity for the reporters to work from).

**Proactive release**

10 This paper will be proactively released subject to any redactions.

**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 11 November 2019, Cabinet **noted** the report from the Prime Minister under CAB-19-SUB-0576 on her travel, from 27 July to 1 August 2019, to undertake official travel to Tokelau, with a transit visit to Samoa.

Michael Webster  
Secretary of the Cabinet

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**Hard-copy distribution:**  
Prime Minister  
Deputy Prime Minister