



## Proactive Release

The following documents have been proactively released by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC), on behalf of Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern, Prime Minister:

### **Report on Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern and Hon Damien O'Connor**

The following documents have been included in this release:

**Title of paper:** Report on Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern and Hon Damien O'Connor (CAB-22-SUB-0321 refers)

**Title of minute:** Report on Overseas Travel: Prime Minister and Hon Damien O'Connor (CAB-22-MIN-0321 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:**

- Section 6(a), to protect the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the Government of New Zealand; and
- Section 9(2)(f)(iv), to maintain the confidentiality of advice tendered by or to Ministers and officials.

Office of the Prime Minister  
Chair, Cabinet

**Report on Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern and Hon Damien O'Connor**

I recommend that Cabinet note this report on travel to the United States of America from 23 May to 2 June by Minister O'Connor and myself to reconnect with important political and trade partners, and signal that New Zealand is open for business.

**Report**

- 1 This was my second overseas visit since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, and I was accompanied by Hon Damien O'Connor and a delegation of 15 business leaders and 9 media. The focus of the trip was on reconnecting New Zealand to the world and highlighting New Zealand's trade, tourism and exports interests. It also provided an important opportunity to meet with a key partner to discuss bilateral issues and global and regional challenges, including Russia's invasion of Ukraine, a free and open Indo-Pacific, China, and the regional trade agenda. The visit reaffirmed our close partnership with the US at a time of global uncertainty and geostrategic change.

*Bilateral meetings*

- 2 On 31 May I met with President Biden and Vice President Harris. My discussion with President Biden was lengthy, and covered a range of issues including strategic competitions; China; the Pacific; trade; Russia and Ukraine; the Christchurch Call; and gun control reform.

- 3 s6(a) [Redacted]

- 4 [Redacted]

s6(a)  
[Redacted]

[Redacted]

6 Finally, President Biden agreed to support New Zealand's efforts with tech companies to address hate speech and disinformation. I notified him of plans for a Christchurch Call Summit in the margins of this year's UN General Assembly. We also discussed the importance of broadening out from our existing cooperation in these areas to strengthen our digital technology relationship, growing people-to-people connections and building capability.

7 My discussion with Vice President Harris focused on two priority topics: space coordination, and the US and violent extremism. On space cooperation, the Vice President welcomed the growing partnership between the US and New Zealand. We agreed upon the urgency of developing rules and norms for the peaceful use of space, and I expressed New Zealand's readiness to help shape these rules. The Vice President also highlighted climate change as an area of space cooperation where New Zealand and the US could work more closely. She thanked New Zealand for joining the Artemis Accords.

8 On combatting violent extremism online, I spoke about the Christchurch Call and my discussions with west coast technology companies, urging them to provide greater transparency on the use of algorithms. The Vice President asked me to explain how New Zealand had been able to introduce rapid and effective changes to gun laws, s6(a)  
[Redacted]

9 During my time in Washington, I also conducted five engagements with a total of 16 senators. The centrepiece was a bipartisan leadership engagement with Senator Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, Republican Chief Whip John Thune, and eight other senior senators. I also met with Rep. Rick Larsen, co-chair of the Friends of New Zealand Caucus. In the wake of the previous day's shooting in Texas, interest in New Zealand's recent gun law reform was high, s6(a)  
[Redacted]

[Redacted] I took this opportunity to again highlight the value of the Christchurch Call, noting that the Call's crisis protocol had been activated

during the events in Buffalo, so the video of the attack was taken down much more quickly than had been the case on March 15.

10 s6(a)  
[Redacted]

11 In my bilateral meeting with the United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres, I reaffirmed New Zealand's support for the UN, and that New Zealand would support Guterres' efforts to reform and strengthen the UN. We discussed climate change, and while Guterres expressed his frustration at the lack of urgency on the climate crisis, he commended New Zealand's additional commitments under the Emissions Reductions Plan as "fantastic". I explained that New Zealand's priority and challenge was to build capability in the region to be able to implement the range of adaptation and mitigation measures made possible by increased climate financing. On geopolitical issues, I provided an update on New Zealand's support to Ukraine, and sought Guterres' personal observations on the situation in Ukraine. s6(a)  
[Redacted]

*Announcements and engagements*

12 In New York, Minister O'Connor and I delivered the reconnecting message at a roundtable event with editors from key tourism publications such as the New York Times and Travel Weekly. During the visit, American Airlines announced that they would resume direct flights to New Zealand with a daily service between Dallas and Auckland daily from October to March. We also attended the launch of Silver Fern Farms new Net Carbon Zero Angus Beef product.

13 Minister O'Connor and I also led the delegation in an investment roundtable hosted by BlackRock with support from the US Chamber of Commerce. BlackRock CEO Larry Fink and US Chamber of Commerce Executive Vice President Myron Brilliant facilitated a discussion involving the New Zealand business delegation and US business representatives. Fink and Brilliant both expressed admiration for New Zealand's leadership on issues such as COVID, climate change, and international organisations like APEC.

14 In Boston, I gave the Harvard Commencement Speech on democracy, disinformation, and kindness. I focused on the role of social media, and the responsibility that fell upon social media companies to prevent the spread of disinformation and its effect on democracy. I also emphasised the importance of cooperation between governments, civil society, and tech companies to change the online landscape.

15 While in Boston, Minister O'Connor and the business delegation visited the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Langer Lab, and met with MIT Institute Professor Dr Bob Langer and VitaKey founder Catherine Reynolds. The Minister and business delegation heard about the recent partnership between VitaKey and Fonterra, where they are working together to maximise the potential of dairy products. The research discussed appears to have huge potential to improve the health of consumers, contribute to solving the food crisis by getting more out of less, and helping to address climate change by reducing agricultural methane emissions. s9(2)(f)(iv)

16 I met with California Governor Gavin Newsom in San Francisco, and witnessed the signing of a memorandum of cooperation between New Zealand and California, formalising greater cooperation in tackling climate change. During the meeting, New Zealand Merino and a group of Silicon Valley entrepreneurs signed a partnership agreement to measure and certify agricultural emissions reductions targets, starting with wool but moving to other sectors with the intent of being globally scaled. I highlighted to Governor Newsom the recent deal by New Zealand company Parkable and US company META to manage traffic flow and reduce emissions at their network of global offices, as well as the work of New Zealand business the Better Packaging Company in using recycled ocean plastic waste in their products. I also noted that partnerships with California could help New Zealand address its electric vehicle supply challenge, and that both governments can learn from sharing of experiences and policies, such as those addressing an affordable transition to cleaner vehicles.

17 Minister O'Connor attended a business breakfast which focused on the theme of "The impact of environmental, social, and corporate governance (ESG) on a firm's bottom line". The Minister and Governor Newsom's Senior Economic Advisor and Director of the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development, Dee Dee Myers, addressed the group, as did a panel of senior New Zealand business leaders from the Bay Area.

18 In Seattle, I delivered remarks on the importance of tourism and reconnecting with New Zealand to an audience of local officials and senior business leaders, including executives at Boeing, Alaska Airlines, Starbucks, Bank of America, and Microsoft.

19 I met with senior leaders from Twitter (in San Francisco) and Amazon/AWS and Microsoft in Seattle. We covered Christchurch Call developments ahead of the forthcoming Summit in September. We discussed progress on crisis response, focused on the attack in Buffalo NY and lessons we could learn from it. I emphasised the pressing need to accelerate work on transparency of algorithmic processes that can contribute to radicalisation and explored ways forward on this with the companies. I emphasised the importance of shared work to deal with the challenge of disinformation, drawing on the themes in the Harvard address. I received a briefing from Microsoft executives s6(a)

All three firms talked to the difficult experience of grappling with disinformation and expressed openness to work

alongside governments, civil society, and others in industry on ways to address this.

- 20 I spoke with the firms about plans to strengthen the digital technology partnership with the USA. With Microsoft and Amazon/AWS I discussed the opportunities to build upon significant investments in cloud computing infrastructure in New Zealand. AWS outlined its programme seeking to train 100,000 New Zealanders in digital skills. Microsoft announced new initiatives to train young Māori and Pasifika cyber security practitioners, support New Zealand software exporters, and partner with Landcare Research/Manaaki Whenua to deliver enhanced mapping of ground cover using satellite imagery and AI capabilities. Executives in the firms expressed a positive approach to strengthening the digital technology relationship, including drawing on the capabilities of New Zealanders already working in their firms

#### *Media*

- 21 In the United States I undertook an interview with Stephen Colbert, focusing on reconnecting the US and New Zealand.
- 22 Our comments in the media emphasised that New Zealand is open, safe, and welcoming to tourists, and reaffirmed New Zealand's close relationship with the US.
- 23 Our visit to the United States received broad coverage in local media – print, broadcast, and social – which was extensive and positive in tone, supporting our diplomatic, business, and trade interests.

#### **Proactive release**

- 24 This paper will be proactively released as per Cabinet Office Circular CO (18) 4 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 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 and Hon Damien O'Connor

**Portfolio**                      **Prime Minister**

On 15 August 2022, Cabinet **noted** the report from the Prime Minister under CAB-22-SUB-0321 on her travel, together with Hon Damien O'Connor, from 23 May to 2 June 2022, to New York, Washington DC, Boston, San Francisco, and Seattle in the United States of America for various bilateral discussions.

Rachel Hayward  
Acting Secretary of the Cabinet