



## 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:

**Proposed Overseas Travel: Prime Minister, Hon Dr Shane Reti and Hon Mark Mitchell - March 2026**

The following documents have been included in this release:

**Title of paper:** Proposed Overseas Travel: Prime Minister, Hon Dr Shane Reti and Hon Mark Mitchell – March 2026 (CAB-26-SUB-0070 refers)

**Title of minute:** Proposed Overseas Travel: Prime Minister, Hon Dr Shane Reti and Hon Mark Mitchell – March (CAB-26-MIN-0070 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 codes:**

- section 9(2)(f)(iv), to maintain the confidentiality of advice tendered by or to Ministers and officials

## **In-Confidence Unclassified**

Office of the Prime Minister

Chair, Cabinet

### **Proposed Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Christopher Luxon – March 2026**

- 1 I seek Cabinet approval to undertake official travel to Samoa and Tonga from 15 March to 18 March 2026 inclusive.

#### **Purpose of Travel**

- 2 I intend to travel to Samoa and Tonga to demonstrate the depth, breadth, and level of our enduring commitment to two of New Zealand's most important partners in the Pacific. This visit will be the first comprehensive engagement with the new governments in both countries. I will meet my new counterparts and undertake a series of meetings and engagements intended to promote New Zealand as an active, credible and engaged 'partner of choice'.
- 3 The objectives of the mission are to:
  - Build relationships with the new political leadership in Samoa and Tonga, deepen understanding of their priorities and influence their approaches to international affairs.
  - Reinforce responsive security 'partner of choice' credentials through discussions on fighting transnational crime, people movement issues, and the future of the HMNZS Manawanui.
  - Promote New Zealand businesses as long-term, high-quality, and culturally connected commercial partners in priority economic development areas (connectivity, infrastructure, and agriculture).
  - Celebrate and highlight our enduring people links through a programme of engagements focused on our significant cultural, sporting, and commercial ties.

#### **Outline of the visit**

- 4 In both Samoa and Tonga I intend to call on the Samoan Head of State, the King of Tonga, and the two Prime Ministers, and visit business, community, and development initiatives and events.

#### **Delegation**

- 5 To reflect the seriousness with which the Government takes its relationships with Samoa and Tonga and the broad-based nature of those relationships, I propose to travel with a cross-party parliamentary delegation, a delegation of business and community representatives, and a group of New Zealand media.
- 6 I propose to be accompanied on the mission by:

- 6.1 Hon Dr Shane Reti, Minister for Pacific Peoples;
  - 6.2 Hon Mark Mitchell, Minister for Police (Samoa only);
  - 6.3 Tim van de Molen, Chair of the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee;
  - 6.4 Jenny Salesa, Leader of the Labour Pacific Caucus; and
  - 6.5 Teanau Tuiono, Green Foreign Affairs Spokesperson.
- 7 Spouses of the parliamentary delegation will also join.
- 8 I propose to be accompanied by my spouse and two staff from my office. The Minister for Pacific Peoples and the Minister for Police will each be accompanied by a staff member. These costs would be met by Vote Internal Affairs: Members of the Executive – Travel.
- 9 Officials joining the mission will come from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, New Zealand Trade and Enterprise, Ministry for Pacific Peoples, New Zealand Defence Force, New Zealand Customs Service, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, and New Zealand Police. Their costs will be covered by their respective agencies. I will also be accompanied by New Zealand Police Dignitary Protection Service staff, whose costs would be met by Vote Police.
- 10 The business and community representatives will consist of business leaders from various sectors, and sporting, faith-based, NGO, and musical/cultural representatives.
- 11 The delegation will travel to and from Samoa and Tonga using an RNZAF asset.

**Travel Costs**

- 12 The following is a breakdown of estimated costs to be covered by the Prime Minister’s Office, as a charge to Vote Internal Affairs, Members of the Executive – Travel:

Accommodation	s9(2)(f)(iv)
Meals and other expenses, including incidentals and telecommunications	
Hospitality and events	
Gifts	
<b>Subtotal</b>	
<i>Contingency (5%)</i>	
<b>Total</b>	

- 13 The following is a breakdown of estimated costs to be covered by the Office of the Minister for Pacific Peoples, as a charge to Vote Internal Affairs, Members of the Executive – Travel:

Accommodation	s9(2)(f)(iv)
Meals and other expenses, including incidentals and telecommunications	
<b>Subtotal</b>	
<i>Contingency (5%)</i>	
<b>Total</b>	

- 14 The following is a breakdown of estimated costs to be covered by the Office of the Minister for Police, as a charge to Vote Internal Affairs, Members of the Executive – Travel:

Accommodation (Samoa only)	s9(2)(f)(iv)
Meals and other expenses, including incidentals and telecommunications	
One way flight Apia to Wellington (Minister for Police, Spouse + 1 Ministerial staff)	
<b>Subtotal</b>	
<i>Contingency (5%)</i>	
<b>Total</b>	

### Acting Ministers

- 15 If my travel is approved, I propose that Hon David Seymour act as Prime Minister, Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services, and Minister for National Security and Intelligence in my absence.
- 16 Acting in Hon Mark Mitchell's portfolios will be Hon Paul Goldsmith (Police, Corrections); Hon Chris Penk (Emergency Management and Recovery, Ethnic Communities); and Hon Chris Bishop (Sport and Recreation).
- 17 Acting in Hon Dr Shane Reti's portfolios will be Hon Chris Penk (Science, Innovation and Technology); Hon Penny Simmonds (Universities); Hon Tama Potaka (Pacific Peoples); and Hon Louise Upston (Statistics).

### Proactive release

- 18 This paper will be proactively released as per Cabinet Office Circular CO (23) 4 on the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet's website. The paper will be subject to

redaction as appropriate on the grounds set out under the Official Information Act 1982.

## Recommendations

19 I recommend that Cabinet:

- 19.1 **Authorise** my absence from New Zealand from 15 to 18 March 2026 (inclusive) to travel to Samoa and Tonga.
- 19.2 **Agree** that I be accompanied by Minister Reti, Minister Mitchell (Samoa only), two members of staff from my office and one member of staff from each of the Ministers' offices, and one official from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.
- 19.3 **Approve** the estimated expenditure of s9(2)(f)(iv) for the travel expenses of the Ministerial party, as a charge to Vote Internal Affairs: Members of the Executive – Travel.
- 19.4 **Note** that in addition to Minister Reti and Minister Mitchell, I will be accompanied by three Members of Parliament, whose costs will be met by their offices.
- 19.5 **Note** that I will be accompanied by officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, New Zealand Trade and Enterprise, Ministry for Pacific Peoples, New Zealand Defence Force, New Zealand Customs Service, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment and New Zealand Police whose travel costs will be met by respective agencies, and Dignitary Protection Service whose travel will be met by Vote Police.
- 19.6 **Note** that I will be accompanied by business, community, and media delegations, whose costs will be met by them personally, and a performing music group, costs for which will be met by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.
- 19.7 **Agree** that in my absence, Hon David Seymour will act as Prime Minister, Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services, and Minister of National Security and Intelligence;
- 19.8 **Agree** that in the absence of Hon Mark Mitchell, Hon Paul Goldsmith will act as Minister of Police and Minister of Corrections; Hon Chris Penk will act as Minister for Emergency Management and Recovery and Minister for Ethnic Communities; and Hon Chris Bishop will act as Minister for Sport and Recreation;
- 19.9 **Agree** that in the absence of Hon Dr Shane Reti, Hon Chris Penk will act as Minister of Science, Innovation and Technology; Hon Penny Simmonds as Minister for Universities; Hon Tama Potaka as Minister for Pacific Peoples; and Hon Louise Upston as Minister of Statistics.
- 19.10 **Note** that the House is not sitting during my absence.

Authorised for lodgement

Rt Hon Christopher Luxon  
Prime Minister

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# Cabinet

## Minute of Decision

*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.*

### Proposed Overseas Travel: Prime Minister, Hon Dr Shane Reti and Hon Mark Mitchell – March 2026

Portfolio                      Prime Minister

On 9 March 2026, Cabinet:

- 1        **authorised** the absence of the Prime Minister, Hon Dr Shane Reti, and Hon Mark Mitchell from New Zealand, from 15 to 18 March 2026, to travel to Samoa and Tonga for bilateral engagements;
- 2        **agreed** that they be accompanied by two members of staff from the Prime Minister's office, and one member of staff from each of the offices of Hon Dr Shane Reti and Hon Mark Mitchell;
- 3        **noted** that they will also be accompanied by their spouses;
- 4        **approved** the estimated expenditure of up to s9(2)(f)(iv) for the travel expenses of the Ministerial party as a charge to Vote Internal Affairs (Members of the Executive – Travel);
- 5        **noted** that they will also be accompanied by:
  - 5.1      Tim van de Molen MP, Hon Jenny Salesa MP, and Teanau Tuiono MP, and their spouses, whose costs will be met by their offices;
  - 5.2      officials from the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, New Zealand Trade and Enterprise, Ministry for Pacific Peoples, New Zealand Defence Force, New Zealand Customs Service, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, New Zealand Police and the Dignitary Protection Service, whose travel costs will be met by respective agencies;
  - 5.3      business, community, and media delegations, whose costs will be met by them personally;
  - 5.4      a performing music group, whose costs will be met by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade;
- 6        **noted** that an RNZAF aircraft will be used for this travel;
- 7        **agreed** that in the absence of the Prime Minister, Hon David Seymour act as Prime Minister, Minister for National Security and Intelligence, and Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services;

8 **agreed** that in the absence of Hon Dr Shane Reti:

8.1 Hon Louise Upston act as Minister of Statistics;

8.2 Hon Tama Potaka act as Minister for Pacific Peoples;

8.3 Hon Chris Penk act as Minister of Science, Innovation and Technology;

8.4 Hon Penny Simmonds act as Minister for Universities;

9 **agreed** that in the absence of Hon Mark Mitchell:

9.1 Hon Chris Bishop act as Minister for Sport and Recreation;

9.2 Hon Paul Goldsmith act as Minister of Police and Minister of Corrections;

9.3 Hon Chris Penk act as Minister for Emergency Management and Recovery and Minister for Ethnic Communities;

10 **noted** that the House is not sitting during their absence.

Rachel Hayward  
Secretary of the Cabinet

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# Cabinet

## Summary

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### Proposed Overseas Travel: Prime Minister, Hon Dr Shane Reti and Hon Mark Mitchell – March 2026

Portfolio                      Prime Minister

#### The Prime Minister recommends that Cabinet:

- 1            authorise his absence, and the absence of Hon Dr Shane Reti and Hon Mark Mitchell, from New Zealand from 15 to 18 March 2026, to travel to Samoa and Tonga for bilateral engagements;
- 2            agree that they be accompanied by his spouse, two members of staff from his office and one member of staff from each of the offices of Hon Dr Shane Reti and Hon Mark Mitchell;
- 3            approve the estimated expenditure of up to s9(2)(f)(iv) for the travel expenses of the Ministerial party as a charge to Vote Internal Affairs (Members of the Executive – Travel);
- 4            note that they will also be accompanied by:
  - 4.1        three Members of Parliament, being Tim van de Molen, Hon Jenny Salesa and Teanau Tuiono, whose costs will be met by their offices;
  - 4.2        spouses of the parliamentary delegation;
  - 4.3        officials from the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, New Zealand Trade and Enterprise, Ministry for Pacific Peoples, New Zealand Defence Force, New Zealand Customs Service, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, New Zealand Police and the Dignitary Protection Service, whose travel costs will be met by respective agencies;
  - 4.4        business, community, and media delegations, whose costs will be met by them personally;
  - 4.5        a performing music group, whose costs will be met by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade;
- 5            note that an RNZAF asset will be used for this travel;
- 6            agree that in his absence, Hon David Seymour act as Prime Minister, Minister for National Security and Intelligence, and Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services;

- 7 agree that in the absence of Hon Mark Mitchell:
- 7.1 Hon Chris Bishop act as Minister for Sport and Recreation;
  - 7.2 Hon Paul Goldsmith act as Minister of Police and Minister of Corrections;
  - 7.3 Hon Chris Penk act as Minister for Emergency Management and Recovery and Minister for Ethnic Communities;
- 8 agree that in the absence of Hon Dr Shane Reti:
- 8.1 Hon Louise Upston act as Minister of Statistics;
  - 8.2 Hon Tama Potaka act as Minister for Pacific Peoples;
  - 8.3 Hon Chris Penk act as Minister of Science, Innovation and Technology;
  - 8.4 Hon Penny Simmonds act as Minister for Universities;
- 9 note that the House is not sitting during their absence.

Janine Harvey  
for Secretary of the Cabinet

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**Hard-copy distribution:**  
The Cabinet