



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, Hon Dr Shane Reti and Hon Mark Mitchell - March 2026

The following documents have been included in this release:

Title of minute: Report on Overseas Travel: Prime Minister, Hon Dr Shane Reti and Hon Mark Mitchell - March 2026 (CAB-26-MIN-0111 refers)

Title of paper: Report on Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Christopher Luxon, Hon Mark Mitchell and Hon Shane Reti – March 2026 (CAB-26-SUB-0111 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 6(a), to protect the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the Government of New Zealand.



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.

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

Portfolio **Prime Minister**

On 7 April 2026, Cabinet **noted** the report from the Prime Minister under CAB-26-SUB-0111 on his travel, together with Hon Dr Shane Reti and Hon Mark Mitchell, from 15 to 18 March 2026, to Samoa and Tonga for bilateral engagements.

Rachel Hayward
Secretary of the Cabinet

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Office of the Prime Minister

Chair, Cabinet

Report on Overseas Travel: Rt Hon Christopher Luxon, Hon Mark Mitchell and Hon Shane Reti – March 2026

I recommend Cabinet note this report on my travel to Samoa and Tonga, accompanied by Ministers Mitchell and Reti, which took place between 15 and 18 March 2026.

Report

- 2 With new Governments in two of our most important Polynesian partners - Samoa and Tonga - it was important to visit early in their tenure. We wanted New Zealand to be the first to connect with the new leadership, ensuring they see New Zealand as their partner of choice. Against that background, we were able to deliver on the objectives agreed by Cabinet for this travel, namely:

2.1 Build relationships with the new political leadership in Samoa and Tonga. In both countries, the Prime Minister was received by the Head of State / King. Accompanied by New Zealand Ministers and MPs, the Prime Minister also met with the Samoan and Tongan Cabinets, reviewing the relationship with both across major portfolios and identifying new priorities. As the first foreign leader to visit since the changes in Government, the Prime Minister's focus was on striking relationships of trust with both of his counterparts, spending significant amounts of formal and informal time with each. s6(a)

2.2 Reinforce our security 'partner of choice' credentials. With the fight against drugs a major priority for our counterparts in both Apia and Nuku'alofa, we profiled a lift in New Zealand's efforts with both countries' policing and border enforcement to counter transnational crime. Having been responsive to both Governments' needs in these areas, we hope to have helped cement New Zealand as the partner of choice across the security sector. s6(a)

2.3 Promote New Zealand businesses as commercial partners. With a delegation of 10 NZ businesspeople on the mission, we were able to profile the role Kiwi businesses play in Pacific communities, whether creating employment (e.g. Fero manufacturing), delivering quality

infrastructure (e.g. McConnell Dowell) or providing transport links (notably Air NZ, Chathams and McKay boats).

2.4 *Celebrate our enduring people links.* We were accompanied by Tipene College's Rugby League team and a group of young performance artists, A.R.T., both of which did a great job of profiling the contemporary links between our countries. It was also invaluable to have a 11-strong community delegation with us, among them sports, religious, cultural and community leaders who truly were the human bridge between our countries. In Samoa, I was honoured to be bestowed by the people of Apia with a matai title, Tuisinavemaulumoto'otua, which was a mark of respect for New Zealand. In Tonga, we were able to celebrate the longstanding education relationship, with an event at the Middle School in Nuku'alofa.

3 s6(a)
It is also clear that they have high expectations of New Zealand as they navigate an increasingly volatile and uncertain world.
s6(a)

4 In each destination, there were some issue areas where our counterparts would like to see shifts in New Zealand policy. s6(a)

Proactive release

5 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

6 I recommend that Cabinet note this report.

Authorised for lodgement

Rt. Hon Christopher Luxon

Prime Minister

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