

## **HON RON MARK, MINISTER OF DEFENCE**

### **Ministerial Overseas Travel: 08-05-2019 to 10-05-2019 – Release of Cabinet Documents**

September 2019

This publication provides Cabinet documents regarding the proposal, and the report for Hon Ron Mark on his travel, from 8 May to 10 May 2019, to Fiji to attend the South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting.

The pack comprises the following documents:

- the March 2019 Cabinet minute of decision: *Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Ron Mark* [CAB-19-MIN-0095]
- the associated Cabinet paper *Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Ron Mark: Fiji – 8-10 May 2019* [CAB-19-SUB-0095]
- the July 2019 Cabinet minute of decision: *Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Ron Mark* [CAB-19-MIN-0322]
- the associated Cabinet paper *Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Ron Mark; Fiji 8-10 May* [CAB-19-SUB-0322]

This pack has been released on the Ministry of Defence website, available at: [www.defence.govt.nz/publications](http://www.defence.govt.nz/publications).

It has been necessary to withhold certain information in accordance with the following provisions of the Official Information Act 1982. Where information is withheld, the relevant sections of the Act are indicated in the body of the document. Where information has been withheld in accordance with section 9(2) of the Act, no public interest has been identified that would outweigh the reasons for withholding it.

Information is withheld where making it available would be likely to prejudice:

- the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the Government of New Zealand [section 6(a)]

Information is also withheld in order to:

- maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions by or between or to Ministers of the Crown or members of an organisation or officers and employees of any department or organisation in the course of their duty [section 9(2)(g)(i)]



# 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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### Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Ron Mark

**Portfolio**                      **Defence**

On 25 March 2019, Cabinet:

- 1        **authorised** the absence of Hon Ron Mark from New Zealand, subject to leave from Parliament being secured, from 8 to 10 May 2019, to travel to Fiji for the South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting;
- 2        **agreed** that he be accompanied by one member of staff;
- 3        **approved** the estimated expenditure of up to \$4,974 for the travel expenses of the Ministerial party as a charge to Vote: Internal Affairs (Members of the Executive – Travel);
- 4        **noted** that he will be accompanied by officials from the New Zealand Defence Force and the Ministry of Defence, whose travel costs will be met from their respective votes;
- 5        **agreed** that in his absence the Rt Hon Winston Peters act as Minister of Defence and Minister for Veterans.

Michael Webster  
Secretary of the Cabinet

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**Hard-copy distribution:**

Prime Minister  
Deputy Prime Minister  
Hon Ron Mark

Chair  
Cabinet

## **PROPOSED OVERSEAS TRAVEL: HON RON MARK: Fiji – 8-10 May 2019**

### **Proposal**

1. I seek Cabinet approval to travel to Fiji from 8 to 10 May in my capacity as the Minister of Defence.

### **Background**

2. The purpose of my travel is to attend the South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting (SPDMM). This biennial meeting involves the Defence Ministers from Australia, Chile, Fiji, France, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, and Tonga. Representatives from the United States and Britain attend as observers.
3. This meeting is a central part of the defence and security architecture in the South Pacific. It provides a forum for attendees to talk through regional security issues as well as discussing ways to better cooperate on key issues like responding to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) events. Key themes of previous SPDMMs have included: Women, Peace and Security initiatives in the Pacific, programmes for young defence leaders, and the impacts of climate change in the region.
4. For New Zealand, the SPDMM provides an opportunity to reiterate the importance of the South Pacific, as demonstrated through our Pacific Reset programme and the Strategic Defence Policy Statement (where we elevate the status of the South Pacific to NZDF's highest priority operating area, alongside our domestic responsibilities). I will also be taking the opportunity to discuss the recently released Defence Assessment on the *Climate Crisis: Defence Readiness and Responsibilities*.
5. I will be away from New Zealand from Wednesday 8 May to Friday 10 May 2019.
6. The Prime Minister has approved the travel in principle. The travel will occur over a sitting week.

## Delegation Details

7. I propose to travel with one staff member from my office and I will be accompanied by officials from the Ministry of Defence and the New Zealand Defence Force (funded by Defence).

## Estimated Costs

8. Indicative costs for this travel are:

<u>Minister of Defence and one staff</u>	
Airfares and Taxes	\$ 3,088
Accommodation, meals, transport	\$ 1,500
Receptions/hospitality, gifts	\$ 150
Contingency (@5%)	\$ 236.90
Total	\$4,974.90

## Acting Ministers

9. The Rt Hon Winston Peters has agreed to act in the Defence and Veterans portfolios.

## Recommendations

10. The Minister of Defence recommends that Cabinet:
- authorise** his absence from New Zealand from 8 to 10 May 2019 to travel to Fiji for the South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting;
  - agree** that the Minister be accompanied by one member of his office staff;
  - note** that he will be accompanied by officials from the New Zealand Defence Force and the Ministry of Defence, whose travel costs will be met from their respective votes;
  - approve** the expenditure of \$4,974.90 for the travel expenses of the Minister and one staff member as a charge to Vote Internal Affairs: Members of the Executive – Travel; and

- e) **agree** that in his absence the Rt Hon Winston Peters will act in the Defence and Veterans portfolios.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Ron Mark  
**Minister of Defence**

Released by the Minister of Defence



# Cabinet

## Minute of Decision

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### Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Ron Mark

**Portfolio**                      **Defence**

On 1 July 2019, Cabinet **noted** the report from Hon Ron Mark under CAB-19-SUB-0322 on his travel, from 8 to 10 May 2019, to Nadi, Fiji to attend the South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting.

Michael Webster  
Secretary of the Cabinet

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**Hard-copy distribution:**  
Prime Minister  
Deputy Prime Minister  
Hon Ron Mark

Released by the Minister of Defence

Chair, Cabinet

## REPORT ON OVERSEAS TRAVEL: HON RON MARK; FIJI 8-10 MAY

### Proposal

1. That Cabinet note the report on my attendance at the South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting in Nadi, Fiji from 8-10 May 2019.

### Travel report

2. From 8-10 May I travelled to Nadi, Fiji to attend the biennial South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting (SPDMM). The meeting was attended by Defence Ministers from Chile, Fiji and Tonga. Due to the timing of the general election, Australia was represented by the Secretary of Defence and the Chief of the Defence Force. France and Papua New Guinea were represented by their respective Ambassadors to Fiji. The United States and United Kingdom attended as observers.

3. Key themes of my engagements in Fiji were the security implications of climate change, the regional Women Peace and Security agenda and the contested strategic environment. Throughout the two day SPDMM, I engaged substantively on climate change issues, including through co-hosting a Pacific climate change breakfast with my Fijian counterpart.

4. As the previous SPDMM host, Fiji invited me to be the guest of honour at the traditional opening ceremony and reception. This presented me with an opportunity to thank Fiji for its generous hosting of the event and to represent some of New Zealand's own culture, through a mihi whakatau, at the SPDMM.

5. Every SPDMM member cited climate change as a top tier national security concern with implications for the future of defence forces. Climate change discussions focused on the French-led report, *The Security Implications of Climate Change in the South Pacific*, commissioned by SPDMM members in 2017 and completed with support from the New Zealand Ministry of Defence and engagement from Pacific members. The report and recommendations focused on the vulnerability of critical infrastructure; humanitarian challenges; and maritime surveillance. SPDMM members agreed to the report's recommendations as well as two specific proposals: that New Zealand host a working-level meeting in early 2020 to assist member countries with progress of the recommendations and provide an update to the next SPDMM; [REDACTED] s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

6. On the Women Peace and Security agenda item, my team and I provided an update on the Pacific Gender in Defence Network established since the 2017

SPDMM, with an emphasis on the importance of male advocacy. I was pleased to announce that New Zealand would be co-hosting with Samoa a Women Peace and Security Summit in Apia, 22-23 August. Members agreed to New Zealand's proposal that Women Peace and Security become a standing SPDMM agenda item.

7. [Redacted] s6(a)

8. Overall, key deliverables agreed to included:

- Fiji's role as a SPDMM member would be formalised in the Governance Framework;
- SPDMM meetings would be annual rather than biennial;
- [Redacted] s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)
- New Zealand would host a working-level meeting in 2020 to support members progress recommendations of the tabled French-led report on climate change;
- [Redacted] s6(a)
- Women Peace and Security would be included as a standing SPDMM agenda item; and
- Australia would host the next SPDMM meeting in 2020.

9. Attached is the communique issued by participants at the conclusion of the meeting.

#### **Bilateral meetings**

10. As part of the overall SPDMM programme, I had an opportunity to conduct bilateral meetings with counterparts from Chile, Fiji and Tonga. These meetings were the first opportunity I have had to engage with these counterparts during my time as Minister of Defence. I am pleased to report that all of them were warm and productive.

*Fiji*  
11. [Redacted] s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

12. [Redacted] s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

*Tonga*

13. s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

*Chile*

14. s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

**Proactive Release**

15. I propose to proactively release this paper within 30 business days. This release will be subject to redaction as appropriate under the Official Information Act 1982.

**Recommendations**

16. I recommend that Cabinet:

**Note** this report.

Hon Ron Mark  
**Minister of Defence**