

Hon Kris Faafoi

Minister of Broadcasting, Communications and Digital Media

Retrospective Overseas Travel: Hon Kris Faafoi

September 2019

Date: 26 August 2019

Title: Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Kris Faafoi

Author: Minister of Broadcasting, Communications and Digital Media

These documents have been proactively released by the Minister. This package includes the Cabinet paper and other key decision papers, as listed below.

Title: Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Kris Faafoi

CAB-19-MIN-0420 Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Kris Faafoi

Retrospective Overseas Travel: Hon Kris Faafoi

CAB-19-MIN-0350 Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Kris Faafoi

In Confidence

Office of the Minister of Broadcasting, Communications and Digital Media
Chair, Cabinet

Retrospective Overseas Travel: Hon Kris Faafoi

- 1 I seek retrospective approval to travel to London from Monday 8 July to Sunday 14 July 2019 to represent the New Zealand Government at the request of Rt Hon Winston Peters and to undertake one additional day of meetings related to my Broadcasting, Communications and Digital Media portfolio.
- 2 The Prime Minister has approved the travel in-principle, and House leave has been approved from the Party Whip.

Purpose of Travel

- 3 I travelled to London in my capacity as Minister of Broadcasting, Communications and Digital Media, and as a representative of the New Zealand Government at the request of Rt Hon Winston Peters, Minister of Foreign Affairs.
- 4 The Deputy Prime Minister asked me to represent him at two events in London over the period 10-11 July.
- 5 The first was a Commonwealth Foreign Ministers Meeting held in the margins of the Media Freedom Conference. The purpose of the meeting was to consider the recommendations of a high level report on the future governance of the Commonwealth Secretariat.
- 6 The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade recommended ministerial attendance to demonstrate the importance New Zealand attaches to modernising the governance of the Commonwealth Secretariat and to reinforce our concern that the reform package be agreed without further delay (noting that this process of reviewing the Commonwealth Secretariat was agreed at CHOGM 2015).
- 7 The second was the Global Conference on Media Freedom to which Rt Hon Winston Peters was invited by UK Foreign Secretary, Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt, and which was co-hosted with the Canadian Foreign Minister, Hon Chrystia Freeland. The Conference aimed to highlight the issue of media freedom and to improve the safety of journalists and media workers. It took place against the background of concerns raised by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres earlier this year about “unprecedented threats to media outlets and journalists, and attempts to control the media”.

- 8 The UK hosts, and Foreign Secretary Hunt in particular, were keen to attract ministerial attendance. Some 54 ministers were invited to attend, including the Australian Foreign Minister, Marise Payne. My attendance at the meeting reciprocated the support the UK Government provided New Zealand in the wake of the Christchurch attacks and, more specifically, for the Christchurch Call.
- 9 While I was in London, I was able to fit in one day of meetings to support work underway primarily in the Broadcasting, Communications and Digital Media portfolio.
- 10 I held a second session with the BBC in particular to learn from its experience in creating an integrated newsroom, while supporting a digital future. While in London in May, I had met with executives at a high level to discuss platform and audience strategies. It is timely to enable me to drill down further to how news coverage can best be supported while we consider our own public broadcasting direction.
- 11 I also met with executives from Channel 4, to discuss its unique operating model (commercially funded but not for profit model), and the role Channel 4 plays in supporting a sustainable news media ecosystem (including support for independent production). I am interested to assess Channel 4's role in providing plurality across content and genres, and what actions it is taking at a time when the media is facing considerable challenges.
- 12 Also within the Broadcasting, Communications and Digital Media portfolio, I met with Ofcom, the British content regulator responsible for TV, radio and video on demand, fixed line telecoms, mobiles, postal services plus the airwaves over which wireless devices operate. I discussed the challenges facing Ofcom including how it works with the UK's public broadcasters, and how the role of Ofcom to regulate online and social content is working.

Ministerial Party

- 13 I was accompanied by one staff member from my office as part of the Ministerial Party.

Travel Costs

- 14 The estimated costs of the travel are as follows:

Airfares:	\$27,000
Accommodation:	\$4,900
Contingency:	\$2,000
Total:	\$33,900

Acting Ministers

- 15 The following Ministers acted during my absence:

- 15.1 Broadcasting, Communications and Digital Media and Government Digital Services – Hon Andrew Little
- 15.2 Commerce and Consumer Affairs – Hon Stuart Nash
- 15.3 Associate Housing – Hon Jenny Salesa

Proactive release

- 16 With the agreement of the Foreign Minister, I propose to release this paper within 30 business days. Proactive release is subject to redaction as appropriate under the Official Information Act 1982.

Recommendations

- 17 I recommend that Cabinet:
 - 17.1 authorise my absence from New Zealand from 8 July to 14 July 2019 to travel to London, England, travelling in my capacity as Minister of Broadcasting, Communications and Digital Media, and as a representative of the New Zealand Government at the request of Rt Hon Winston Peters, Minister of Foreign Affairs;
 - 17.2 agree that I be accompanied by one member of staff;
 - 17.3 approve the estimated expenditure of \$33,900 for the travel expenses of the Ministerial party, as a charge to Vote: Internal Affairs [Members of the Executive – Travel];
 - 17.4 agree that in my absence:
 - 17.4.1 Hon Andrew Little will be acting Minister of Broadcasting, Communications and Digital Media and Government Digital Services
 - 17.4.2 Hon Stuart Nash will be acting Minister of Commerce and Consumer Affairs
 - 17.4.3 Hon Jenny Salesa will assume responsibility for the Associate Housing portfolio
 - 17.5 note that the House is not sitting during my absence;
 - 17.6 note that leave from Parliament has been approved by the Party Whip.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Kris Faafoi

Minister of Broadcasting, Communications and Digital Media



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: Hon Kris Faafoi

Portfolio **Broadcasting, Communications and Digital Media**

On 22 July 2019, Cabinet:

- 1 **retrospectively authorised** the absence of Hon Kris Faafoi from New Zealand from 8 July to 14 July 2019 to travel to London, England:
 - 1.1 to attend the Commonwealth Foreign Ministers Meeting and the Global Conference on Media Freedom on behalf of the Minister of Foreign Affairs;
 - 1.2 to undertake Broadcasting, Communications and Digital Media portfolio-related meetings;
- 2 **noted** that he was accompanied by one member of staff;
- 3 **approved** the expenditure up to \$33,900 for the travel expenses of the Ministerial party, as a charge to Vote: Internal Affairs (Members of the Executive – Travel);
- 4 **noted** that in his absence:
 - 4.1 Hon Andrew Little acted as Minister of Broadcasting, Communications and Digital Media and Minister for Government Digital Services;
 - 4.2 Hon Stuart Nash acted as Minister of Commerce and Consumer Affairs.

Martin Bell
for Secretary of the Cabinet

Hard-copy distribution:

Prime Minister
Deputy Prime Minister
Hon Kris Faafoi

[In Confidence]

Office of the Minister of Broadcasting, Communications and Digital Media
Chair, Cabinet

Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Kris Faafoi

I recommend that Cabinet note this report on my travel to London, United Kingdom, from 8 July 2019 to 14 July 2019. The purpose of my visit was to represent the New Zealand Government at high level meetings in the UK to which New Zealand had been invited, at the request of the Minister for Foreign Affairs who was unable to attend. I also undertook one additional day of meetings related to my Broadcasting, Communications and Digital Media portfolio.

Report

- 1 The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Rt Hon Winston Peters, asked me to represent him at two events in London over the period 10-11 July.
- 2 I represented New Zealand at the Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers' Meeting (CFAMM) on 10 July. CFAMM's principal objective was to endorse a package of recommendations for Commonwealth governance reform as part of a process initiated by Heads of Government in 2015.
- 3 Negotiations on the package of reform recommendations were frustrated due to objections by a small group of countries. Non-contentious recommendations were agreed while the remainder were reserved for further consideration by Foreign Ministers at an additional CFAMM meeting in September.
- 4 Ministers also discussed progress on 2018 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) mandates. New Zealand received support for the work it has done on ocean acidification, as part of the Commonwealth Blue Charter, and the connectivity agenda for trade and investment, as well as for the ongoing financial assistance New Zealand has provided for the Commonwealth small states offices in New York and Geneva.
- 5 Sri Lanka raised the Christchurch Call, in the context of the recent terrorist attacks there, with the UK Chair taking the opportunity of that intervention to express Commonwealth solidarity and support for both Sri Lanka and New Zealand in dealing with our respective attacks.
- 6 I also attended the Global Conference on Media Freedom (GCMF), to which Rt Hon Winston Peters was invited by (then) UK Foreign Secretary, Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt, and which was co-hosted with the Canadian Foreign Minister, Hon Chrystia Freeland. The GCMF brought together political leaders with officials, journalists, and civil society for two plenaries and a wide range of

panel sessions, to promote freedom of expression and accelerate global efforts to prevent attacks against journalists.

- 7 I presented a short national statement expressing New Zealand's support for a more open environment for journalists, condemning violence against journalists, and highlighting our capacity building work in the Pacific that promotes the importance of journalists to a healthy democracy.
- 8 The New Zealand delegation also attended a number of panel discussions, including sessions on what governments can do to increase media sustainability, navigating disinformation, and strengthening media freedom across the Commonwealth.
- 9 While in London, I took the opportunity to hold a day of meetings with representatives of the following British media organisations: the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Channel 4, and Ofcom.
- 10 My discussions with the BBC and Channel 4 focused on how these public broadcasting organisations are adapting to a rapidly changing global media landscape. Topics included the development of cross-platform content strategies, changing revenue models and initiatives to reach regional and youth audiences. The insights gained from these meetings will prove useful as the Government considers options for strengthening public media in New Zealand.
- 11 I also met with Ofcom, the UK's media regulator. We discussed Ofcom's experience as the independent regulator of the BBC, a role it took on in 2017, and policy issues relating to online harm. The UK has recently released a White Paper on its plans for a new regulatory framework to tackle online harms and ensure citizens are safe online. This work is highly relevant to the Christchurch Call as well as wider policy work relating to media content regulation.

Proactive release

- 12 With the agreement of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, I propose to release this paper within 30 business days. Proactive release is subject to redaction as appropriate under the Official Information Act 1982.

Recommendation

I recommend that Cabinet note this report.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Kris Faafoi

Minister of Broadcasting, Communications and Digital Media



Cabinet

Minute of Decision

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Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Kris Faafoi

Portfolio **Broadcasting, Communications and Digital Media**

On 26 August 2019, Cabinet **noted** the report from Hon Kris Faafoi under CAB-19-SUB-0420 on his travel, from 8 to 14 July 2019, to London, England to attend the Commonwealth Foreign Ministers Meeting and the Global Conference on Media Freedom on behalf of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and to undertake portfolio-related meetings.

Michael Webster
Secretary of the Cabinet

Hard-copy distribution:

Prime Minister
Deputy Prime Minister
Hon Kris Faafoi