

[IN CONFIDENCE]

Office of the Minister for Disability Issues

Chair, Cabinet

Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Poto Williams

- 1 I seek Cabinet approval to travel to Switzerland, Scotland and Ireland. The dates for the proposed tour are Sunday 21 August to Sunday 28 August 2022 inclusive.

Executive Summary

- 2 The purpose of this travel is to attend the 27th session of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in Geneva, Switzerland. The Committee will consider New Zealand's 2nd and 3rd Periodic reports on progress towards meeting the aspirations of the UNCRPD.
- 3 If approved, travel to these countries will have the common objective of promoting and improving Aotearoa New Zealand's commitment towards creating a more accessible and inclusive society for disabled people.
- 4 The first, and only, examination of New Zealand's implementation of the UNCRPD was held in 2014, with New Zealand due to participate in a second examination in 2019, however due to backlog of work of the Committee and then COVID-19, this review has been significantly delayed.
- 5 As input to the review, New Zealand's UNCRPD Independent Monitoring Mechanism (IMM) - comprising of the Office of the Ombudsman, the Disability Rights Commissioner and the Disabled People's Organisations (DPO) Coalition, will present a civil society report on the Government's progress to the UN Committee.
- 6 The IMM report to the Committee will be based on the across government response to the 143 recommendations in the IMM's Making Disability Rights Real and Making Disability Rights Real in a Pandemic reports. The Office for Disability Issues (ODI) has co-ordinated the across Government response to the IMM's recommendations which highlights the significant progress we have achieved in recent years.
- 7 The creation of Whaikaha - the Ministry for Disabled People as the first ministry of disabled people in any comparable jurisdiction, and the introduction of the Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill, are important milestones for the disability community and something important to promote on an international stage.
- 8 The commitment to Enabling Good Lives (EGL) principles and approaches to underpin disability provision in New Zealand, the New Zealand Disability Strategy and Action Plan, and our approach to working with disabled people in policy and service development are also indicators of our progress and commitment to the UNCRPD.

IN CONFIDENCE

- 9 At the same time, this travel is an opportunity for Aotearoa New Zealand to be held to account by the Committee to build on and improve our progressive realisation of the UNCPRD.
- 10 As Minister for Disability Issues and a representative of this Government, my attendance and participation in the Committee meeting will demonstrate the commitment the New Zealand Government has made to strengthen the inclusion of disabled people in all aspects of society.

Outline of Proposed Visit

- 11 Consideration of New Zealand's report to the CRPRD is set down for Tuesday 23 August and Wednesday 24 August, in Geneva. I would arrive early on Monday 22 August in Geneva to prepare for the Consideration of the report.
- 12 After Geneva, I would plan on visiting the Minister for State for Heritage, Malcolm Noonan or similar from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) or the National Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS) in Dublin, Ireland, to discuss the protection of blue carbon ecosystems under the new National Marine Planning Framework adopted in May 2021, which brings together for the first time all marine-based human activities and marine planning policies for each marine activity.
- 13 While in Ireland I could meet with the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Charlie McConalogue, or other senior representative, to discuss Ireland's biodiversity reward scheme for farmers. (The new national agri-environment scheme, proposed as part of Ireland's draft CAP Strategic Plan, is known as the Agri-Climate Rural Environment Scheme ('ACRES'))
- 14 I would also plan on visiting Inclusion Scotland in Edinburgh. Inclusion Scotland is the sole Disabled Peoples Organisation (DPO) in Scotland, and can be roughly equated with DPA in New Zealand. Like New Zealand's DPOs, Inclusion Scotland bases its work on the progressive realisation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Social Model of Disability.
- 15 I am also considering a number of Conservation-related visits I could also undertake while in Edinburgh.

Travel

- 16 If travel is approved, I propose to depart New Zealand for Geneva on Sunday 21 August and will return to New Zealand on Sunday 28 August 2022.

Ministerial Party

- 17 I propose to be accompanied by a member of my office staff. Officials from Whaikaha – Ministry of Disabled People, Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Education and Te Puna Aonui will also accompany me for the appearance at the UNCRPD.

Estimated Costs

18 The estimated cost for this travel is:

Airfares and taxes:	\$43,476.00
Accommodation (for 4 nights):	\$3,500.00
Other expenses (incl. surface transportation, meals):	\$2,000.00
Hospitality and gifts:	\$1,250.00
Contingency (@10%)	\$5,023.00
Total:	\$55,249.00

19 If approved, I proposed that the expenditure of up to \$55,249.00 for travel expenses be charged to Vote Internal Affairs: Members of the Executive – Travel.

Acting Ministers

20 If my travel is approved, I will ask Hon Meka Whaitiri to act as Minister of Conservation from Sunday 21 August to Sunday 28 August 2022, Hon Peeni Henare to act as Minister for Disability Issues from Sunday 21 August to Friday 26 August 2022 and Hon Ayesha Verrall to act as Minister for Disability Issues from Saturday 27 August to Sunday 28 August 2022.

21 My responsibilities as Associate Minister of Children will revert to the primary Minister, Hon Kelvin Davis.

Recommendations

I recommend that Cabinet:

- 1 authorise my absence from New Zealand from Sunday 21 August to Sunday 28 August 2022 inclusive, to travel to Switzerland, Scotland and Ireland.
- 2 agree that I will be accompanied by a member of my staff.
- 3 note that I will also be accompanied by officials from Whaikaha – Ministry of Disabled People, Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Education and Te Puna Aonui, whose travel costs will be met by the departments.
- 4 note that leave from Parliament has been sought from the Party Whip.
- 5 approve the expenditure of \$55,249.00 for the travel expenses of the ministerial party as a charge to Vote Internal Affairs, Members of the Executive – Travel.
- 6 agree that Hon Meka Whaitiri, Hon Peeni Henare and Hon Ayesha Verrall will be Acting Ministers in my absence, and that my responsibilities as Associate Minister of Children will revert to the primary Minister, Hon Kelvin Davis

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Poto Williams

Minister for Disability Issues