



## COVERSHEET

<b>Minister</b>	Hon Stuart Nash	<b>Portfolio</b>	Tourism
<b>Title of Cabinet paper</b>	Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Stuart Nash	<b>Date to be published</b>	18 July 2022

<b>List of documents that have been proactively released</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Author</b>
6 June 2022	Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Stuart Nash	Office of the Minister of Tourism
7 June 2022	Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Stuart Nash CAB-22-MIN-0213	Cabinet Office

**Information redacted**

**No**

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In Confidence

Office of the Minister of Tourism

Chair, Cabinet

## **Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Stuart Nash**

I recommend that Cabinet note this report on my travel to Sydney, Australia from 8 May to 11 May 2022 for the Tourism New Zealand (TNZ) Regional Tourism Showcase.

### **Report**

- 1 The TNZ Regional Tourism Showcase (formerly known as the New Zealand Regional Tourism Organisations (RTO) Workshop) is an annual offshore event that provides a unique opportunity for RTOs to facilitate and establish business relationships with new and existing key travel agents from Australia and gain insights into the Australian market.
- 2 The TNZ Regional Tourism Showcase was the first major industry event since March 2020 and was considered a significant event to re-ignite trans-Tasman travel by reuniting key tourism operators from New Zealand and Australia.
- 3 The primary focus of this visit was to assist in the promotion of TNZ's undertaking of extensive promotional activity to engage Australian travellers, and drive visitation to New Zealand for the 2022 ski/winter season following the reopening of New Zealand's border to Australian visitors on 12 April 2022, and beyond.

### *New Zealand Delegation*

- 4 I was accompanied by the Chief Executive of Tourism New Zealand, and a New Zealand Trade and Enterprise (NZTE) private secretary from my office.

### *TNZ Regional Tourism Showcase*

- 5 Around 60 delegates from almost 30 RTOs in New Zealand took part in the two-day TNZ Regional Tourism Showcase.
- 6 I attended and spoke on the second day of the showcase and emphasised the importance of Australia's presence to New Zealand's tourism industry;
  - 6.1 Australia was our largest international visitor market pre-COVID, accounting for over 40 per cent of international visitor arrivals, around 1.55 million people.

- 6.2 Visitors from Australia return to New Zealand three to four times in their lifetime. They are open to visiting a number of different regions and 71 per cent opted for self-drive holidays while visiting.
- 6.3 Our proximity and close friendships will continue to drive tourism and business travel as we reconnect.
- 7 My attendance at the TNZ Regional Tourism Showcase followed the Prime Minister's successful trade and travel visits to Singapore and Japan. The resumption of tourism and trade missions is considered crucial for our economic recovery as we reconnect to the world.
- 8 Initial survey responses from the New Zealand and the Australian delegation show an 81 per cent satisfaction rate in meeting exhibitor and buyer objectives, and 100 per cent support to attend the event in the future.

*Pylon Lookout Tour and meeting with Executive Director of Hammons Holdings*

- 9 I met with the Owner of Hammons Holdings (the tourism operator behind both BridgeClimb and ScenicWorld). We discussed the experience of restarting international visitation. The most significant challenge continues to be finding staff as operations increase, particularly specialist staff. I heard of Hammons Holdings' experience in pivoting toward domestic tourism during COVID-19 with the loss of international visitors that made up 65 per cent of visitors to BridgeClimb Sydney.

*Qantas*

- 10 This engagement was a chance to reunite with a strategic airline partner for New Zealand. I met with the Group Executive Corporate Affairs, and the Executive Manager Network, Revenue Management & Alliances.
- 11 I outlined New Zealand's commitment to its reconnecting strategy being more than reuniting family and friends, rather a crucial part of strengthening our economic recovery.
- 12 We discussed the ways in which New Zealand is encouraging our tourism sector to enhance our visitor offering and attract visitors from Australia who stay longer and experience more of what New Zealand has to offer.
- 13 Qantas discussed many of the challenges they have faced throughout the pandemic, including constraints in increasing capacity on routes. Qantas expressed their desire to operate on trans-Tasman routes with both their Jetstar and Qantas offerings.
- 14 Qantas enquired about the International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy and pre-departure COVID-19 testing in New Zealand, noting that they had observed an immediate and significant increase in bookings when restrictions were removed.

### *Dinner with Regional Tourism Organisations*

- 15 This was an opportunity to connect with delegates from more than 27 RTOs from around New Zealand at the conclusion of their working group sessions.
- 16 I was able to hear first-hand the feedback from delegates on the Australian market and trade engagement. All were positive about the levels of interest, and appreciative of being able to reconnect in person with Australian buyers, many of whom had not had the opportunity to meet in person since before the COVID-19 pandemic.

### *Tourism Leaders' Luncheon*

- 17 The Tourism and Transport Forum hosted a luncheon for a small group of influential and senior leaders from the Australian tourism sector, including representatives from the cruise, airline, state tourism, hotels, accommodation, conventions, data insights, airports, tourism operators, and industry bodies.
- 18 This was a unique environment to engage with key commercial partners in Australia. I was able to hear of the challenges, and overall experiences with markets reopening. Some of the key themes included matching supply of airplanes with traveller demand; building a regenerative industry; rebuilding the workforce; improving data; and addressing public perceptions on the return of cruise ships.

### *International Convention Centre and ASM Global*

- 19 I met with the Chief Executive International Convention Centre (ICC) Sydney, and Group Director Convention Centres ASM Global.
- 20 ASM Global recently launched Te Pae Christchurch Convention Centre.
- 21 The discussion centred on the return of international conferences and the increasing global demand for such events. Many international forums and conferences are awarded up to seven years in advance.
- 22 We discussed New Zealand's unique offering for events and the ways in which Australia and New Zealand can work together to build a destination brand and attract delegates from around the world.
- 23 During my tour of the centre, I visited the New Zealand stand at the Indo-Pacific International Maritime Expo being held at the ICC. I engaged with New Zealand businesses active in the market and learned about their work in Australia, supported by NZTE.

### *Roundtable and Dinner with New Zealand Trade and Enterprise Beachhead Advisors*

- 24 General discussion was held on how New Zealand exporters entered the Australian market, and the development of their product. How the private sector has worked with New Zealand exporters to gain market insights to

improve their digital offerings through websites, brand, media, and physical sites, which has led to increases in customer conversion rates.

- 25 Current trends associated with digital commerce in Australia were discussed, particularly in relation to the opportunities and challenges of New Zealand exporters in the Australia.
- 26 Some of the most successful examples were exporters who could tell their sustainability story, presented with clear evidence.

#### *Media engagements*

- 27 I spoke to various New Zealand and Australia based media outlets. Through these interviews I was able to reiterate New Zealand's commitment to reconnecting with the world messaging.

#### **Proactive release**

- 28 I propose to release this paper within the normal Cabinet-mandated timeframes.

#### **Recommendation**

I recommend that Cabinet note this report.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Stuart Nash

Minister of Tourism