



## COVERSHEET

<b>Minister</b>	Hon Judith Collins KC MP	<b>Portfolio</b>	Science, Innovation and Technology, Defence
<b>Title of Cabinet paper</b>	Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Judith Collins – 21 to 27 April 2024	<b>Date to be published</b>	1 July 2024

<b>List of documents that have been proactively released</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Author</b>
April 2024	Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Judith Collins – 21 to 27 April 2024	Office of the Minister of Science, Innovation and Technology, Defence
6 May 2024	Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Judith Collins – 21 to 27 April 2024 CAB-24-MIN-0193 Minute	Cabinet Office

### **Information redacted**

**YES / NO** (please select)

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Some information has been withheld for the reasons of international relations and confidential information entrusted to the Government.

## **In Confidence**

Office of the Minister of Science, Innovation and Technology

Office of the Minister of Defence

Chair, Cabinet

### **Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Judith Collins KC – April 2024**

I recommend that Cabinet note this report on my travel to Paris and Le Quesnoy, France, and Flanders and Brussels, Belgium in April 2024.

#### **Report**

- 1 I travelled to France and Belgium from 21 to 27 April in my capacity as Minister of Science, Innovation and Technology, and as Minister of Defence, to attend the OECD Science and Technology Ministerial Meeting and Anzac Day ceremonies in Flanders.
- 2 This visit cemented key relationships with counterpart Ministers in the science and innovation arena and strengthened our bilateral relations with France and Belgium.

#### *OECD Ministerial-level meeting of the Committee on Science and Technology Policy, Paris 22 – 25 April*

- 3 My attendance at this OECD Ministerial Meeting, the first held since 2015, was an important juncture for New Zealand to engage with international partners on science and technology policy. The event saw participation by high-level representatives from over 50 countries.
- 4 Policy responses to emerging technologies, particularly artificial intelligence (AI), featured prominently in discussions. A common challenge is how to manage the impact of such technologies on society without stifling their transformative opportunity.
- 5 A Joint Declaration was agreed at the meeting, which sets out a political commitment to addressing global challenges through transformative and inclusive science and technology cooperation, based on shared values. Partnerships with other countries in the science, innovation and technology domains are necessary if we are to address key global challenges such as climate change and equitable access to education and skills training.
- 6 The Ministerial-level gathering provided a backdrop for engagement with senior interlocutors from Germany (Stark-Watzinger), UK (Griffith), EU (Ivanova), and the US (Koizumi).
- 7 In relevant discussions I took the opportunity to highlight New Zealand's recent association to Horizon Europe (Europe's research and innovation

funding programme which has a budget of €95.5 billion) and the bilateral opportunities available, provided shared interests were supported.

- 8 I also met with the OECD Secretary General, Mathias Cormann, to discuss OECD efforts to achieve wider global collaboration on AI for this rapidly evolving issue.

#### *Other France-based engagements*

- 9 While in Paris I also met with the French Minister for Higher Education and Research (Sylvie Retailleau) and the French Minister of the Armed Forces (Sebastian Lecornu).

- 10 International relations, Confidential advice entrusted to the Government

- 11 Two aerospace related engagements were also included in my programme. I visited the headquarters of the European Space Agency to meet with the Director-General (Aschbacher) and separately met Executive Vice President of Airbus (Michalon). Both engagements were an opportunity to emphasise New Zealand's advantages as a location for aerospace research and development.

- 12 Finally, in the wake of raising public awareness of attacks on New Zealand's parliamentary email system, I was briefed by the French agency Viginum. This agency was set up in 2021 under the French Prime Minister's department to respond to foreign interference in elections.

#### *Commemorative events*

- 13 My travel coincided with Anzac Day, which I spent in Flanders. More New Zealand soldiers are buried in Flanders than anywhere else in the world. As Minister of Defence I was humbled by the large number of attendees at the Dawn Service and the enduring dedication of local Flanders communities in maintaining the war graves and preserving the memory of our fallen. I was honoured to have been able to acknowledge and thank them for their efforts.
- 14 I also visited the town of Le Quesnoy in France and laid a wreath at the New Zealand Memorial, located at the place where the New Zealand Division liberated the town in 1918. My visit, accompanied by the Le Quesnoy Mayor, provided an opportunity to view the recently opened New Zealand Liberation Museum, Te Arawhata, which documents the story of the town's liberation and honours all New Zealanders who fought in Europe.
- 15 Such commemorations, and the military history that we share with countries in Europe, remain a very important strand in our bilateral relations.

## **Proactive release**

- 16 This paper will be proactively released as per Cabinet Office Circular CO(18)4 on the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment's website. The paper will be subject to redaction as appropriate on the grounds set out under the Official Information Act 1982.

## **Recommendation**

I recommend that Cabinet note this report.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Judith Collins KC

Minister of Science, Innovation and Technology

Minister of Defence