

# The Treasury

## Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Shane Jones Information Release

November 2019

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### Cabinet Document Details

Title: **Cabinet Paper CAB-19-SUB-0356: Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Shane Jones: Fiji, Asian Development Bank Annual Meeting 2 to 4 May**

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### Final Cost of Travel

\$2,916.06

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Office of the Associate Minister of Finance (Jones)

Chair, Cabinet

## **Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Shane Jones: Fiji, Asian Development Bank Annual Meeting 2 to 4 May**

### **Proposal**

1. I propose that Cabinet note this report on my visit to Fiji from 2 May to 4 May 2019.

### **Report**

2. I attended the 2019 Asian Development Bank ('ADB') annual meeting in Denarau Island, Fiji ('Annual Meeting'). I represented the Minister of Finance at this meeting in his capacity as New Zealand's Governor of the ADB.
3. The Annual Meeting was the first ADB annual meeting held in the Pacific Islands. This provided an opportunity for New Zealand to promote New Zealand's priorities for the ADB, including a lift in investment in the Pacific.

### **Official events**

4. As part of the Annual Meeting, I spoke at the following events:
  - 4.1. the Business Session (the formal event in which each shareholding country expresses its views on the performance and priorities of the Bank); and
  - 4.2. the Pacific Reception (an informal event for Australian, New Zealand and Pacific Island delegations hosted by Australia).
5. I spoke about the challenges faced by the Pacific Island and highlighted the importance of the multi-lateral system in addressing these at both of these events.

### **Bilateral meetings**

6. As well as attending the official events, I also held a number of bilateral meetings with ministers from other countries and members of the ADB executive. The aims of these meetings were to express support and solidarity for Pacific countries, and to promote New Zealand's priorities in the ADB.
7. A summary of each bilateral meeting is set out below:

*Hon Dalton Tagelagi, (Minister for Natural Resources, Niue)*

- 7.1. I started the meeting by congratulating Niue on its recent successful application to become an ADB member. The Niuean delegation thanked New Zealand for its substantial assistance. Key topics of discussion included the importance of

the technical expertise that ADB would provide to Niue and the positive impact of New Zealand's pension portability scheme on the Niuean economy.

*Hon Sili Epa Tuioti (Minister of Finance, Samoa)*

7.2. The Samoan delegation expressed thanks to New Zealand for its ongoing assistance and emphasised the importance of ADB assistance for Samoa's development. Key points of discussion included:

7.2.1. issues with Samoa's water supply infrastructure arising from climate migration; and

7.2.2. the possibility of Samoa seconding public servants to New Zealand agencies to build expertise.

*Hon Mark Brown, (Minister of Finance, Cook Islands)*

7.3. Our discussion focused on the performance of the Cook Islands' economy, difficulties the Cook Islands is facing accessing funding from international financial institutions other than ADB, and the challenges posed by the procurement process for ADB projects. Minister Brown also said that New Zealand's pension portability scheme was beneficial for the Cook Islands' economy.

*President Takehiko Nakao (President, ADB)*

7.4. I opened the meeting by noting the importance of the ADB's funding to the Pacific Islands and highlighting New Zealand's concerns with the gender balance of the ADB board.<sup>1</sup> President Nakao agreed with our view on both issues <sup>[1]</sup> and <sup>[3]</sup>

*Hon Amiruddin Hamzah (Deputy Minister of Finance, Malaysia)*

7.5. I opened this short meeting by offering my condolences for the Malaysian victims of the March terrorist attack. Minister Amiruddin thanked me and praised the way the New Zealand Prime Minister had responded to the attack. Discussion focused on APEC, which Malaysia is hosting in 2020,<sup>[2]</sup>

7.6. We agreed that New Zealand and Malaysia should collaborate more to ensure both APEC 2020 and APEC 2021 are successful.

<sup>1</sup> At the Annual Meeting, New Zealand announced that it had appointed Karen Murray as the new alternative executive director to replace Mario Di Maio whose term has ended.

<sup>[2]</sup>

*Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle (European Union Candidate for Director General of United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation ('FAO'), France)*

- 7.7. Ms Geslain-Lanéelle was using the annual meeting as opportunity to gain support for her campaign to be director general of the FAO. We discussed fisheries and its importance to the Pacific, the challenge of climate change to food producers and how FAO could benefit the New Zealand.
- 7.8. It has recently been announced that Geslain-Lanéelle was unsuccessful in her campaign and Qu Dongyu, the Chinese nominated candidate, has been elected.

*Hon Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum (Attorney General, Minister of Economy, Fiji)*

- 7.9. I opened this meeting by offering my condolences for the Fijian victims of the March terrorist attacks. Minister Sayed-Khaiyum thanked New Zealand for the feeling and empathy provided following the attacks. Our discussion ranged from challenges facing Fiji and its Pacific Island neighbours, including climate change, overseas investment reform, and the shortages in both housing and tradespeople that are facing both New Zealand and Fiji.

*Vice President Ahmed Saeed (Vice President (East Asia Pacific), ADB)*

- 7.10. Our discussion focused on the vulnerabilities of Pacific Islands and the importance of continued ADB investment in the Pacific Islands, and the ADB's funding of work in China.

### **Proactive release**

8. I plan to release this paper in part within 30 business days. All redactions will be made in line with the Official Information Act 1982.

### **Recommendation**

9. I recommend that Cabinet **note** this report.

Hon Shane Jones  
**Associate Minister of Finance**