

HON Paul Goldsmith, MINISTER OF DEFENCE

MINISTERIAL OVERSEAS TRAVEL 22 to 24 July 2026

October 2026

This publication provides the Cabinet proposal and report back on Hon Chris Penk travel over the period 22 to 24 July to Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea for the Pacific Islands Forum ICT meeting and bilateral engagements.

The pack comprises the following documents:

- The July 2026 Cabinet paper and associated minute of decision *Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Chris Penk – July 2026* [CAB-26-SUB-0224 and CAB-26-MIN-0224]
- The September 2026 Cabinet paper and associated minute of decision *Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Chris Penk – July 2026* [CAB-26-SUB-0304 and CAB-26-MIN-0304]

This pack has been released on the Ministry of Defence website, available at:

www.defence.govt.nz/publications



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 Chris Penk – July 2026

Portfolio **Defence**

On 6 July 2026, Cabinet:

- 1 **authorised** the absence of Hon Chris Penk from New Zealand, from 22 to 24 July 2026, to travel to Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea for the Pacific Islands Forum ICT meeting and bilateral engagements;
- 2 **agreed** that he be accompanied by two members of staff, one of whose costs will be met by the Ministry of Defence;
- 3 **approved** the estimated expenditure of up to \$20,000 for the travel expenses of the Ministerial party as a charge to Vote Internal Affairs (Members of the Executive – Travel);
- 4 **noted** that he will also be accompanied by officials from the Ministry of Defence and the New Zealand Defence Force, whose travel costs will be met by their respective agencies;
- 5 **agreed** that in his absence:
 - 5.1 Hon Mark Mitchell act as Minister of Defence, Minister for Veterans, and Minister Responsible for the GCSB and NZSIS;
 - 5.2 Hon James Meager act as Minister for Building and Construction and Minister for Space;
- 6 **noted** that leave from the House has been approved.

Rachel Hayward
Secretary of the Cabinet

Office of the Minister of Defence

Chair, Cabinet

Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Chris Penk – July 2026

- 1 I seek Cabinet approval to travel to Port Moresby from 22-24 July for the Pacific Islands Forum ICT meeting and Defence engagements.
- 2 The Prime Minister has approved the travel in-principle, and House leave has been secured.

Purpose of Travel

- 3 I intend to travel to Port Moresby to attend the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) ICT meeting on 23 July. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) advises that Ministerial attendance would be well received by both the PIF and the Papua New Guinea Government, particularly ahead of New Zealand assuming the PIF Chair in 2027.
- 4 While in Port Moresby, I will also undertake engagements in my Defence portfolio, including signing the Statement of Intent on Defence Cooperation with Acting Minister of Defence, Prime Minister Marape, subject to his availability.

Ministerial Party

- 5 I would be accompanied by one member of staff from my Office (travel costs met by Vote Internal Affairs: Members of the Executive – Travel), and my Defence Private Secretary (travel costs met by Vote Defence).
- 6 Officials from the Ministry of Defence and New Zealand Defence Force would also accompany me at departmental cost.

Travel Costs

- 7 The estimated costs of the travel (including my staff members travel) are:

Airfares:	\$15,000
Accommodation:	\$2,000
Other expenses	\$2,000
Contingency (5%)	\$1,000
Total:	\$20,000

Acting Ministers

8 In my absence, Acting Ministers in my portfolios will be:

- 8.1 Defence: Hon Mark Mitchell
- 8.2 Building and Construction: Hon James Meager
- 8.3 Veterans: Hon Mark Mitchell
- 8.4 GCSB and NZSIS: Hon Mark Mitchell
- 8.5 Space: Hon James Meager

Proactive release

9 This paper will be proactively released on the Ministry of Defence's website. Proactive release is subject to redactions as appropriate under the Official Information Act 1982.

Recommendations

I recommend that Cabinet:

- 1 **authorise** my absence from New Zealand from 22-24 July, to travel to Port Moresby;
- 2 **agree** that I be accompanied by two members of staff from my office;
- 3 **note** that I will be accompanied by a delegation from the Ministry of Defence and the New Zealand Defence Force, whose costs will be met by departmental budgets;
- 4 **approve** the estimated expenditure of \$20,000 for my travel expenses and a member of staff from my office, as a charge to Vote: Internal Affairs [Members of the Executive – Travel];
- 5 **agree** that in my absence, Acting Ministers in my portfolios will be:
 - 9.1 Defence: Hon Mark Mitchell
 - 9.2 Building and Construction: Hon James Meager
 - 9.3 Veterans: Hon Mark Mitchell
 - 9.4 GCSB and NZSIS: Hon Mark Mitchell
 - 9.5 Space: Hon James Meager
- 6 **note** that this Cabinet paper will be proactively released following return to New Zealand by the Ministry of Defence.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Chris Penk

Minister of Defence

Released by the Minister of Defence



Cabinet

Minute of Decision

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Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Chris Penk – July 2026

Portfolio

Defence

On 21 September 2026, Cabinet **noted** the report from Hon Paul Goldsmith under CAB-26-SUB-0304 on Hon Chris Penk's travel, from 22 to 24 July 2026, to Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea for the Pacific Islands Forum ICT meeting and bilateral engagements.

Rachel Hayward
Secretary of the Cabinet

Released by the Minister of Defence

Office of the Minister of Defence
Chair, Cabinet

Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Chris Penk

I recommend that Cabinet note this report on Hon Chris Penk's travel from 22-24 July 2026 to Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea.

Report

- 1 Hon Chris Penk travelled to Port Moresby to attend the inaugural Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Information and Communications Technology Ministers' Meeting. The meeting provided an opportunity to reaffirm New Zealand's commitment to the Pacific Islands Forum architecture and support the Forum's role as the region's principal mechanism for dialogue and decision-making, ahead of New Zealand hosting the Forum in 2027.
- 2 While in Papua New Guinea, Mr Penk met with the newly appointed Minister for Defence, Hon Elias Kapavore, and signed a Statement of Intent on Defence Cooperation. The signing marked an important milestone in the bilateral defence relationship and provided a valuable opportunity for New Zealand to engage with Minister Kapavore early in his tenure. The statement outlines three key priorities for our defence relationship out to 2029:
 - i Enhancing our military cooperation;
 - ii Strengthening our civilian defence engagement; and
 - iii Deepening our commitment to Pacific-led solutions to regional security challenges.
- 3 Mr Penk also visited the Kumul Leadership Centre at Murray Barracks, a Papua New Guinea Defence Force facility developed in partnership with the New Zealand Defence Force. During the visit, New Zealand was thanked for its support of the leadership training programme, including the recent contributions towards upgraded shower facilities, and the installation of a hybrid solar panel and battery backup system.

Proactive release

- 4 This paper will be proactively released, subject to redactions as appropriate under the Official Information Act 1982.

Recommendation

I recommend that Cabinet note this report.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Paul Goldsmith
Minister of Defence