

## HON Judith Collins KC, MINISTER OF DEFENCE

### Ministerial Overseas Travel: Hon Judith Collins KC – December 2025

May 2026

This publication provides the Cabinet Minute of Decision and submissions *Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Judith Collins KC – November/December 2025* and *Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Judith Collins KC – December 2025*. This material approves travel and reports back to Cabinet on the Minister of Defence's travel to the USA to attend the International Democracy Union Forum 2025 and undertake bilateral engagements.

The pack comprises the following documents:

- the Cabinet paper and associated Minute of Decision *Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Judith Collins KC – November/December 2025* [CAB-25-MIN-0425 and CAB-25-SUB-0425]; and
- the Cabinet paper and associated Minute of Decision *Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Judith Collins KC – December 2025* [CAB-26-MIN-0106 and CAB-26-SUB-0106]

This pack has been released on the Ministry of Defence website, available at: [www.defence.govt.nz/publications](http://www.defence.govt.nz/publications).

It has been necessary to withhold certain information in accordance with the following provisions of the Official Information Act 1982. Where information is withheld, the relevant sections of the Act are indicated in the body of the document

Information is withheld where making it available would be likely to prejudice:

- the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the Government of New Zealand [section 6(a)].
- the entrusting of information to the Government of New Zealand on a basis of confidence by the Government of any other country or any agency of such a Government [section 6(b)(i)].



# 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 Judith Collins KC – November/ December 2025

**Portfolios**                      **Defence / Digitising Government / GCSB / NZSIS / Space**

On 24 November 2025, Cabinet:

- 1        **authorised** the absence of Hon Judith Collins KC from New Zealand, subject to leave from Parliament being secured, from 29 November to 8 December 2025, to travel to Washington DC, United States of America to attend the International Democracy Union Forum 2025 and undertake bilateral engagements;
- 2        **approved** the estimated expenditure of up to \$10,395.00 for her travel expenses as a charge to Vote Internal Affairs (Members of the Executive – Travel);
- 3        **noted** that the costs related to her political travel and engagements are being funded by the National Party;
- 4        **agreed** that in her absence:
  - 4.1      Hon Paul Goldsmith act as Attorney-General, Minister Responsible for the GCSB and Minister Responsible for the NZSIS;
  - 4.2      Hon Chris Penk act as Minister of Defence and Minister for Space;
  - 4.3      Hon James Meager act as Minister for Digitising Government and Minister for the Public Service;
- 5        **noted** that leave from Parliament has been sought.

Rachel Hayward  
Secretary of the Cabinet

Office of the Minister of Defence  
Office of the Minister for Digitising Government  
Office of the Minister Responsible for the GCSB  
Office of the Minister Responsible for the NZSIS  
Office of the Minister for Space  
Chair, Cabinet

### **Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Judith Collins KC – December 2025**

- 1 I seek Cabinet approval to travel to the USA from 29 November to 8 December. I will be attending the International Democracy Union Forum 2025 in Washington DC as a representative of the Asia Pacific Democrat Union. My attendance at the forum is in a political capacity. While in Washington DC I will also have engagements in my ministerial portfolios.
- 2 The Prime Minister has approved the travel in-principle.

### **Purpose of Travel**

- 3 In Washington DC I will seek calls with key Defence, Space, and Intelligence counterparts. This will provide a valuable opportunity to strengthen bilateral ties and deepen mutual understanding.
- 4 Dependent on capacity within my schedule, I will also seek engagements with industry representatives relevant to my Digitising Government portfolio.

### **Ministerial Party**

- 5 I will not be accompanied by a member of staff from my Office. MFAT and Defence staff based in Washington DC will be accompanying me for ministerial engagements, as required.

### **Travel Costs**

- 6 The estimated costs related to my ministerial travel and engagements are below. The costs related to my political travel and engagements are not being funded by Vote: Internal Affairs [Members of the Executive – Travel]. These costs are being funded by the National Party and are not included below.

Airfares:	\$4,300.00
Accommodation:	\$2,400.00
Transportation	\$2,200.00

Meals and other expenses	\$1,000.00
Contingency (5%)	\$495.00
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$10,395.00</b>

### **Acting Ministers**

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

- 7.1.1 Attorney-General: Hon Paul Goldsmith
- 7.1.2 Defence: Hon Chris Penk
- 7.1.3 Digitising Government: Hon James Meager
- 7.1.4 GCSB: Hon Paul Goldsmith
- 7.1.5 NZSIS: Hon Paul Goldsmith
- 7.1.6 Public Service: Hon James Meager
- 7.1.7 Space: Hon Chris Penk

### **Proactive release**

8 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, subject to leave from Parliament being secured, from approximately 29 November to 8 December, to travel to the USA;
- 2 **note** that leave from Parliament has been sought from the Party Whip;
- 3 **approve** the estimated expenditure of \$10,395.00 for my travel expenses as a charge to Vote: Internal Affairs [Members of the Executive – Travel];
- 4 **agree** that in my absence, Acting Ministers in my portfolios will be:
  - 4.1 Attorney-General: Hon Paul Goldsmith
  - 4.2 Defence: Hon Chris Penk
  - 4.3 Digitising Government: Hon James Meager
  - 4.4 GCSB: Hon Paul Goldsmith
  - 4.5 NZSIS: Hon Paul Goldsmith

4.6 Public Service: Hon James Meager

4.7 Space: Hon Chris Penk.

5 **note** that this Cabinet paper will be proactively released following return to New Zealand by the Ministry of Defence.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Judith Collins KC  
**Minister of Defence**

Released by the Minister of Defence



# Cabinet

## Minute of Decision

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### Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Judith Collins KC – December 2025

**Portfolios**                      **Defence / Digitising Government / GCSB / NZSIS / Space**

On 7 April 2026, Cabinet **noted** the report from Hon Judith Collins KC under CAB-26-SUB-0106 on her travel, from 29 November to 8 December 2025, to Washington DC, United States of America to attend the International Democracy Union Forum 2025 and undertake bilateral engagements.

Rachel Hayward  
Secretary of the Cabinet

Released by the Minister of Defence

Office of the Minister of Defence  
Office of the Minister for Digitising Government  
Office of the Minister Responsible for the GCSB  
Office of the Minister Response for the NZSIS  
Office of the Minister for Space  
Chair, Cabinet

### **Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Judith Collins KC – December 2025**

I recommend that Cabinet note this report on my travel to Washington DC, United States of America from 29 November to 8 December. I travelled to Washington DC to attend the International Democracy Union Forum 2025 in a political capacity. While in Washington DC I also had engagements in my ministerial portfolios. Only the costs related to my ministerial travel and engagements were covered by Vote: Internal Affairs [Members of the Executive – Travel].

#### **Report**

1. My visit to Washington provided an opportunity for several bilateral engagements, including:
  - 1.1. Deputy Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Counterterrorism, Dr Sebastian Gorka and Director for CT and unmanned aerial systems, Matt Whitehead
  - 1.2. Deputy Assistant Secretary for International and Space Affairs, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Department of Commerce, Juan Caro together with Director, Office of Policy and Strategic Planning, Department of Commerce, Chris Netram
  - 1.3. Senator Rick Scott (R-Florida); Rep. Jen Kiggans (R-Virginia); Rep. Keith Self (R-Texas)
  - 1.4. US Senate Armed Services Committee Chair, Senator Roger Wicker (R-Mississippi), and Ranking Member, Senator Jack Reed (D-Rhode Island)

2.

s6(a)

3.

s6(a)

[Redacted]

4. [Redacted] s6(a)

5. [Redacted] s6(a), s6(b)(i)

6. I took the opportunity across many of my meetings to highlight the growth of New Zealand's space and aerospace sectors, [Redacted] s6(a)

7. While in Washington DC, I also met with senior executives from Amazon Web Services (AWS) at their Washington DC headquarters, including their Vice President of Public Policy, and other senior executives relevant to my Defence, Space and Digitising Government portfolios. The meeting provided me the opportunity to promote opportunities to partner with NZ businesses in our growing space and advanced aviation sectors. The meeting also yielded valuable insights on products and services AWS are developing in relation to digital government services, integrated data structures, and space communications.

8. Overall, the visit was highly beneficial. I was able to strengthen the critical relationships established in my October 2025 visit, reinforce the importance of New Zealand as a security partner to the US [Redacted] s6(a)

**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.

## **Recommendation**

I recommend that Cabinet note this report.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Judith Collins KC

Office of the Minister of Defence

Office of the Minister for Digitising Government

Office of the Minister Responsible for the GCSB

Office of the Minister Response for the NZSIS

Office of the Minister for Space

Released by the Minister of Defence