

HON RON MARK, MINISTER OF DEFENCE

Ministerial Overseas Travel: 14-05-2019 to 20-05-2019 – Release of Cabinet Documents

September 2019

This publication provides Cabinet documents regarding the proposal, and the report for Hon Ron Mark on his travel, from 14 to 20 May 2019, to Italy to attend the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Cassino Commemorations and hold bilateral meetings.

The pack comprises the following documents:

- the March 2019 Cabinet minute of decision: *Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Ron Mark* [CAB-19-MIN-0096]
- the associated Cabinet paper *Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Ron Mark: Italy – 14-20 May 2019* [CAB-19-SUB-0096]
- the July 2019 Cabinet minute of decision: *Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Ron Mark* [CAB-19-MIN-0346]
- the associated Cabinet paper *Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Ron Mark; Italy 14-18 May* [CAB-19-SUB-0346]

This pack has been released on the Ministry of Defence website, available at: 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. Where information has been withheld in accordance with section 9(2) of the Act, no public interest has been identified that would outweigh the reasons for withholding it.

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 the basis of confidence by the Government of any other country [section 6(b)(i)]
- the entrusting of information to the Government of New Zealand on the basis of confidence by an international organisation [section 6(b)(ii)]

Information is also withheld in order to:

- maintain the constitutional conventions for the time being which protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials [section 9(2)(f)(iv)]



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 Ron Mark

Portfolio **Veterans**

On 25 March 2019, Cabinet:

- 1 **authorised** the absence of Hon Ron Mark from New Zealand, subject to leave from Parliament being secured, from 14 to 20 May 2019 to travel to Italy to attend the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Cassino Commemorations and hold bilateral meetings;
- 2 **agreed** that he be accompanied by one member of staff;
- 3 **approved** the estimated expenditure of up to \$24,944 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 be accompanied by officials from the New Zealand Defence Force and the Ministry of Defence, whose travel costs will be met from their respective votes;
- 5 **agreed** that in his absence the Rt Hon Winston Peters act as Minister of Defence and Minister for Veterans.

Michael Webster
Secretary of the Cabinet

Hard-copy distribution:

Prime Minister
Deputy Prime Minister
Hon Ron Mark

Chair
Cabinet

PROPOSED OVERSEAS TRAVEL: HON RON MARK: Italy – 14-20 May 2019

Proposal

1. I seek Cabinet approval to travel to Italy from 14 to 20 May in my capacity as the Minister of Defence.

Background

2. The primary purpose of my travel is to represent the Government at the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Cassino. While in Italy, I will take the opportunity to conduct bilateral calls.
3. The brutal struggle for Cassino in early 1944 is one of New Zealand's most important World War 2 battles, especially for the 28th Maori Battalion. Overall the 2nd New Zealand Division suffered 1,600 casualties during the several battles of Monte Cassino. New Zealand's role in the Liberation of Italy laid the foundations for our bilateral relationship.
4. Up to 500 New Zealanders are expected to travel to Cassino for the occasion, including at least three tour groups. Over the period 16 to 17 May I will attend six commemorative activities, led variously by NZ, the UK, and the local community. On 18 May I will conduct bilateral calls.
5. I will be away from New Zealand from Tuesday 14 May to early afternoon, Monday 20 May 2019.
6. The Prime Minister has approved the travel in principle. The travel will occur over a recess week, and I have obtained leave to arrive late to Cabinet on Monday 20 May.

Delegation Details

7. I propose to travel with one staff member from my office and I will be accompanied by officials from the Ministry of Defence and the New Zealand Defence Force (funded by Defence).

Estimated Costs

8. Indicative costs for this travel are:

<u>Minister of Defence and one staff</u>	
Airfares and Taxes	\$ 21,376
Accommodation, meals, transport	\$ 1,900
Receptions/hospitality, gifts	\$ 500
Contingency (@5%)	\$ 1,168
Total	\$24,944

Acting Ministers

9. The Rt Hon Winston Peters has agreed to act in the Defence and Veterans portfolios.

Proactive release

10. I propose to proactively release this travel request paper, along with the travel report, following the conclusion of my travel to Italy.

Recommendations

11. The Minister of Defence recommends that Cabinet:

- a) **authorise** his absence from New Zealand from 14 to 20 May 2019 to travel to Italy for Battle of Cassino Commemorative Activities;
- b) **agree** that the Minister be accompanied by one member of his office staff;
- c) **note** that he will be accompanied by officials from the New Zealand Defence Force and the Ministry of Defence, whose travel costs will be met from their respective votes;
- d) **approve** the expenditure of \$4,974.90 for the travel expenses of the Minister and one staff member as a charge to Vote Internal Affairs: Members of the Executive – Travel; and
- e) **agree** that in his absence the Rt Hon Winston Peters will act in the Defence and Veterans portfolios.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Ron Mark
Minister of Defence

Released by the Minister of Defence



Cabinet

Minute of Decision

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Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Ron Mark

Portfolio **Defence**

On 22 July 2019, Cabinet **noted** the report from Hon Ron Mark under CAB-19-SUB-0346 on his travel, from 14 to 19 May 2019, to Rome and Cassino, Italy, to attend the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Cassino Commemorations, and hold bilateral meetings.

Martin Bell
for Secretary of the Cabinet

Hard-copy distribution:

Prime Minister
Deputy Prime Minister
Hon Ron Mark

Released by the Minister of Defence

Chair, Cabinet

REPORT ON OVERSEAS TRAVEL: HON RON MARK; ITALY 14-18 MAY

Proposal

1. That Cabinet note the report on my travel to Rome and Cassino, Italy from 14-19 May 2019.

Travel report

2. From 14-19 May I travelled to Cassino, Italy to attend the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Cassino. I also conducted bilateral engagements with my counterparts from Rome and London, and the Director General of the Multinational Force and Observers. A planned engagement with the Polish Minister of Defence was cancelled after my arrival due to his unavailability.

Commemorations

3. The 2nd New Zealand Division suffered 1600 casualties during the several battles of Monte Cassino, making this one of our most important World War 2 battles, especially for the 28th Maori Battalion.
4. On 16 and 17 May the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) led a programme of activities that included a NZ national commemorative service at the commonwealth war cemetery, a dawn service at the Cassino railway station, and the first non-Catholic service at the Basilica of the Abbey of Monte Cassino in its 1500 year history.
5. The commemorative events were well attended by Italian and diplomatic representatives, and some 400 New Zealanders who had travelled to Italy to attend, including one veteran and many relatives of those who had served. The ceremonies were conducted to a high professional standard, and supported by a substantial effort from the Rome mission, who had only recently welcomed Ambassador Anthony Simpson. Participants commended the events for their intimate and authentic tone.
6. I also attended a UK-led national commemorative service, and after my departure diplomatic and military staff represented NZ at the Polish commemorative mass and service.

Bilateral meetings

Italy

7. I met for the first time with my Italian counterpart, Minister of Defence for Italy Elisabeta Trenta. The meeting was warm and frank, and will provide me with an excellent relationship for future engagement on defence and security issues.

s6(a), s6(b)(i)

United Kingdom

8. While in Cassino I met with the Under-Secretary for Defence People and Veterans of the United Kingdom, Rt Hon Tobias Ellwood.

s6(a), s6(b)(i)

s6(a), s6(b)(i), s9(2)(f)(iv)

Multi-National Force and Observers

9. I had a working lunch in Rome hosted by Multi-National Force and Observers (MFO) Director-General Stephen Beecroft. Beecroft provided an update on the current status of the MFO,

s6(a)

There are no significant changes to the security situation,

s6(a)

10.

s6(a), s6(b)(ii), s9(2)(f)(iv)

Proactive Release

11. I propose to proactively release this paper within 30 business days. This release will be subject to redaction as appropriate under the Official Information Act 1982.

Recommendations

12. I recommend that Cabinet:

Note this report.

Hon Ron Mark
Minister of Defence

Released by the Minister of Defence