

Cabinet Paper progress update: A New Zealand response to Pacific climate migration

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade officials are working with other agencies to prepare advice for Cabinet on New Zealand's response to Pacific climate migration.
- The complexity of the issues associated with Pacific climate change-induced displacement, resettlement and migration, and the significant implications for New Zealand and the Pacific region, call for a comprehensive New Zealand response.
- Officials plan to recommend a multifaceted New Zealand response to Pacific climate migration that canvasses regional, multilateral, legal, development and immigration actions.
- This suite of New Zealand actions will be underpinned by acknowledgment of the need to support Pacific peoples in their expressed wish to remain in their own countries for as long as possible¹.
- If needed, New Zealand's current immigration policies might already be flexible enough to form one aspect of a future response to Pacific climate migration.
- The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment will provide parallel advice in March to Ministers of Immigration, Foreign Affairs, Pacific Peoples and Climate Change on the prioritisation and sequencing of their planned consideration of New Zealand's Pacific immigration policies.
- The draft Cabinet Paper outlining a New Zealand response to Pacific climate migration will be submitted to the Minister for Foreign Affairs in March and consulted with other Ministers.
- The Minister for Foreign Affairs has indicated that he would like to present the paper to the Cabinet Environment, Energy and Climate Committee on 10 April.

*Pacific Regional Division
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
20 February 2018*

¹ Niue Declaration on Climate Change, 2008

Suggested talking points

- New Zealand recognises that Pacific Island countries are uniquely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Our response to Pacific climate change is underpinned by acknowledgment of the expressed desire of Pacific peoples to continue to live in their own countries.
- At the same time we recognise that resettlement or migration might become necessary as Pacific peoples are affected by the impacts of climate change. In that eventuality, New Zealand's immigration policies might be sufficiently flexible to form one part of a future solution.
- Officials are preparing advice for ministers on how we might take forward a comprehensive approach to addressing Pacific climate migration, including regional, multilateral, legal, development and immigration options.