



COVERSHEET

Minister	Hon Paul Goldsmith	Portfolio	Media and Communications
Title of Cabinet paper	Universal Postal Union: Voting positions for the 28 th Congress	Date to be published	29 October 2025

List of documents that have been proactively released

Date	Title	Author
September 2025	Universal Postal Union: Voting positions for the 28 th Congress	Office of the Minister for Media and Communications
1 September 2025	Universal Postal Union: Voting positions for the 28 th Congress CBC-25-MIN-0042 Minute	Cabinet Office

Information redacted

YES / ~~NO~~ (please select)

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- International relations
- Confidentiality of advice
- Commercially sensitive information

In Confidence

Office of the Minister for Media and Communications

Cabinet Business Committee

Universal Postal Union: Voting positions for the 28th Congress

Proposal

- 1 To seek Cabinet's approval for the negotiating positions to be taken by New Zealand at the 28th Congress of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) to be held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from 8 to 19 September 2025.

Relation to government priorities

- 2 A Cabinet mandate is required to participate in the UPU Congress negotiations, and for approving the signing of the UPU Final Acts. This is because negotiations may result in amendments to the UPU's international treaties.

Executive Summary

- 3 The UPU is a United Nations specialised agency responsible for coordinating the postal policies of 192 member states. The UPU's supreme body is the Congress, which meets every four years and is responsible for reviewing the UPU's international agreements. The 28th UPU Congress will be held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from 8 to 19 September. As New Zealand's designated postal operator under the Postal Services Act 1998, New Zealand Post Limited (**NZ Post**) will represent New Zealand at the Congress.
- 4 I am seeking Cabinet approval for the negotiating positions that the New Zealand delegation will take at the Congress. I note that the matters for discussion at the Congress are largely low risk and non-controversial, given they relate to the internal workings of the UPU and the ongoing maintenance of the international postal system. I also note that some of the proposals at Congress relate to the expenditure of the UPU and that NZ Post funds New Zealand's contribution to the running of the UPU.
- 5 I am also seeking a delegation of authority from Cabinet for the New Zealand delegation to be able to vote on any other matters that may arise at the Congress in a timely fashion, without requiring further Cabinet approval.

Background

- 6 The UPU is a United Nations specialised agency that regulates the flow of mail between 192 member states. Its supreme body is the four-yearly Congress, which sets the UPU's work programme and budget, elects officials and Councils, and reviews UPU treaties.

- 7 A Cabinet mandate is required for the New Zealand delegation because the Congress is considering proposals that would amend the UPU's international treaties, notably the UPU Convention and General Regulations. These proposals are outlined below.
- 8 As in previous Congress cycles, NZ Post is representing New Zealand in person at the Congress as our designated operator under the Postal Services Act 1998.

Issue One: Integrated Product Plan 2026-2029

- 9 The Integrated Product Plan (IPP) 2026-2029 is a proposal to modernise and simplify postal products, in response to market trends such as the decline in letter volumes and the growth of e-commerce.
- 10 A key feature of the plan is to shift focus from the format of postal products (i.e. letters and parcels), to the content of the postal products (i.e. documents and goods), so that postal products can be handled more efficiently. More precise delineation by content will assist in prioritisation for screening at the border.
- 11 I propose that New Zealand supports the Integrated Product Plan and approves the recommendations contained in the IPP 2026-2029 as a package.

Issue Two: Integrated Remuneration Plan 2026-2029 and Integrated Remuneration System 2026-2030

- 12 The purpose of the Integrated Remuneration Plan and Integrated Remuneration System is to align international mail remuneration with actual handling and delivery costs. The proposals seek to support affordable and sustainable international postal delivery by introducing fairer remuneration rates. For example, rates that cover the actual cost of member countries delivering international postal items.
- 13 I propose that New Zealand supports the Integrated Remuneration Plan 2026-2029 and approves the proposals as a package.

Issue Three: Integrated Quality Plan

- 14 The Integrated Quality Plan (IQP) is a plan to enhance postal service quality in response to rising e-commerce expectations. The IQP introduces a six-step methodology to assist postal operators in improving their service quality.
- 15 I propose that New Zealand supports the proposals on the IQP.

Issue Four: Setting the expenditure ceiling for the UPU's next financial period

- 16 Congress will finalise the UPU's expenditure ceiling for the next financial period (2026 – 2029) and propose an expenditure ceiling for the next Congress. Member countries contribute to the UPU's annual budget through membership fees and other associated costs. I note that NZ Post fully funds New Zealand's UPU contributions.
- 17 The International Bureau of the UPU has presented three options for the UPU's next expenditure ceiling:

- 17.1 Option 1: carry forward expenditure ceiling from the 2021 to 2025 period, which is approximately NZD 82 million.
- 17.2 Option 2: increase the ceiling to approximately NZD 83 million, to fund cybersecurity and emergency activities. This option would increase NZ Post's contributions to the UPU by approximately NZD 10,000 per annum.
- 17.3 Option 3: a further increase to approximately NZD 85.5 million. This option would increase NZ Post's contributions to the UPU by approximately NZD 20,000 per annum.

18 Confidential advice to Government

19 International relations

Issue Five: New Zealand proposal to reduce voluntary UPU contribution units

- 20 The UPU's expenses are jointly financed by member countries through a contribution system. Currently, NZ Post pays five contribution units but is only required to pay a minimum of four units. NZ Post has been unable to reduce its contributions because the 27th Congress mandated that member countries could not reduce their contributions before the next Congress cycle.
- 21 The unit price for this current cycle is CHF 44,270. New Zealand's contribution of five units equates to NZ Post paying CHF 221,350 (NZD 472,206) every year.

22 Commercial Information

- 23 I propose providing the New Zealand delegation with the discretion to request a reduction to New Zealand's voluntary contributions to the UPU.

International relations

International relations

Issue Seven: UPU Strategy 2026-2029

- 29 The UPU Strategy 2026-2029 is a forward-looking roadmap that seeks to address how the UPU and its stakeholders will adapt to the rapidly evolving communications landscape. Member countries will have an opportunity to vote on the UPU Strategy at this year's Congress. The UPU strategy will be guided by goals aimed at delivering innovation and cooperation across the international postal system.
- 30 I propose that New Zealand supports the UPU Strategy 2026-2029.

Issue Eight: Draft Dubai Business Plan and work proposals for 2026-2029

- 31 The purpose of the Draft Dubai Business Plan is to set the UPU's activities for the next Congress cycle and their resourcing requirements. The Business Plan also needs to align with the expenditure ceiling.
- 32 The draft Dubai Business Plan includes three tiers of work proposals for Congress to consider:
- 32.1 Tier 1: a minimal set of viable activities, carrying forward the existing expenditure ceiling of NZD 82 million.
- 32.2 Tier 2A: two additional work proposals and an increased expenditure ceiling of NZD 83 million.
- 32.3 Tier 2B: five additional work proposals and an increased expenditure ceiling of NZD 85.5 million.

33 International relations

Elections for UPU Positions

New Zealand is seeking election to the Postal Operations Council

- 34 Elections to appoint the 48 members of the Postal Operations Council (**POC**), which is the technical and operations body of the UPU, will take place at the Congress. NZ Post, on behalf of New Zealand, is seeking appointment to the POC. New Zealand was previously appointed to the POC in the 26th UPU Congress cycle.

Voting positions

- 35 Elections will also take place at the Congress for the Council of Administration (**CA**), and for the UPU Director General (**DG**) and the Deputy Director General (**DDG**) positions.
- 36 Decisions on New Zealand's votes for the DDG, POC and CA positions are made by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (**MFAT**), in consultation with the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (**MBIE**) and NZ Post.
- 37 The decision on New Zealand's vote for the DG position will be made by the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Other matters

Delegation of authority to make decisions on new issues that arise at the Congress

- 38 It is possible that issues with treaty implications, beyond the scope of the positions outlined above, may arise during the 28th Congress. To accommodate this, given the time-limited nature of Congress, I am seeking delegation of authority from Cabinet to enable NZ Post, as New Zealand's delegation, to vote on any matters that may arise at the Congress in a timely fashion.
- 39 NZ Post will engage with MBIE and MFAT as such matters arise, as appropriate and if time allows. MBIE or MFAT will seek direction from their respective Ministers if required. NZ Post may abstain from voting on matters of significance that it has not been able to canvass with MBIE or MFAT.

Outcome of Congress vote

- 40 The proposals that are agreed by the UPU Congress are known as the 'Final Acts'. Implementing the Final Acts will result in amendments to the UPU Convention and General Regulations. These amendments will take the form of an Additional Protocol, which will not enter into force for New Zealand until an instrument of ratification is deposited with the Director General of the UPU.
- 41 Ratification of the amendments will be subject to Cabinet's approval and will be sought in due course. However, given that ratification is a time-consuming process, NZ Post would still abide by the amendments before ratification. I will seek to progress these ratifications when resourcing allows.

Declaration upon signing the Final Acts

- 42 Following the UPU Congress, I propose New Zealand make a declaration that New Zealand will apply the Final Acts of the UPU, consistent with its rights and obligations under the rules of the World Trade Organisation. This is a standing declaration New Zealand, and many other UPU member countries, have had in place over several Congress cycles.

Cost-of-living Implications

- 43 There are no cost-of-living implications from the proposals in this paper.

Financial Implications

- 44 There are no direct financial implications for the New Zealand Government from the proposals in this paper.
- 45 Two of the proposed negotiating positions have potential financial implications for NZ Post, as discussed above.

Legislative Implications

- 46 There are no legislative implications from the proposals in this paper.

Impact Analysis

National Interest analysis

- 47 A National Interest Analysis (**NIA**) will be prepared when Cabinet approval for the ratification of the amendments is sought. The NIA will address the reasons for New Zealand becoming party to the amendments, the advantages and disadvantages to New Zealand of the amendments entering into force, any obligations New Zealand will be bound by and other considerations like effects and costs of compliance.

Regulatory Impact Statement

- 48 A Regulatory Impact Statement is not required as there are no legislative implications arising from this paper.

Climate Implications of Policy Assessment

- 49 A Climate Implications of Policy Assessment is not required for the proposals in this paper.

Population Implications

- 50 There are no population implications from the proposals in this paper.

Human Rights

- 51 The proposals in this paper are consistent with the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 and the Human Rights Act 1993.

Consultation

- 52 MFAT, the Treasury and NZ Post have been consulted on the proposals in this paper. The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet has been informed.

Communications

- 53 Subject to Cabinet decisions on the proposals contained within this paper, MBIE will communicate the outcome of each voting position to the New Zealand delegation (NZ Post).
- 54 There is no communications plan in relation to the Congress decisions, as these are generally not of interest to the public. However, there will be a proactive release of this paper which contains the proposals and a future ratification process of the UPU's Final Acts.

Proactive Release

- 55 This paper will be published on MBIE's website within 30 business days of Cabinet's agreement, subject to any redactions as appropriate.

Recommendations

The Minister for Media and Communications recommends that the Committee:

- 1 **note** that the Universal Postal Union (UPU) is a United Nations specialised agency responsible for coordinating the postal policies of its member states;
- 2 **note** that the UPU's supreme body, the Congress, is considering changes to the UPU's international agreements, notably the UPU Treaty and the UPU Convention;
- 3 **note** that New Zealand Post Limited (NZ Post) represents New Zealand at the UPU Congress because it is New Zealand's designated postal operator under the Postal Services Act 1998;
- 4 **note** that the 28th Congress of the UPU to be held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from 8 to 19 September 2025 and NZ Post will be attending in person;
- 5 **agree** to the following negotiating positions for the New Zealand delegation:
 - 5.1 **support** the Integrated Product Plan;
 - 5.2 **support** the Integrated Remuneration Plan;
 - 5.3 **support** the Integrated Quality Plan;

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5.7 **support** the UPU Strategy 2026-2029; and

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- 6 **note** that elections for the UPU's permanent bodies are taking place at the Congress and NZ Post is seeking election to the Postal Operations Council;
- 7 **note** that following signature of the amendments, Cabinet approval will be sought for the ratification of the amendments in due course;
- 8 **delegate** authority to the New Zealand delegation to make decisions on any new issues that arise at the Congress as required, in consultation with relevant government agencies and Ministers as appropriate; and
- 9 **agree** that the New Zealand delegation is authorised to sign the treaty level Final Acts, subject to them being consistent with the negotiating positions as agreed under recommendation 5, or at the approval of the Minister for Media and Communications for matters that fall outside these positions.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Paul Goldsmith

Minister for Media and Communications