



## COVERSHEET

<b>Minister</b>	Hon Erica Stanford	<b>Portfolio</b>	Immigration
<b>Title of Cabinet paper</b>	Pacific Visitor Visa Settings: Report Back	<b>Date to be published</b>	14 May 2026

### List of documents that have been proactively released

<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Author</b>
July 2025	Pacific Visitor Visa Settings: Report Back	Office of the Minister of Immigration
30 July 2025	Pacific Visitor Visa Settings: Report Back SOU-25-MIN-0097 Minute	Cabinet Office

### Information redacted

**YES**

Any information redacted in this document is redacted in accordance with MBIE's policy on Proactive Release and is labelled with the reason for redaction. This may include information that would be redacted if this information was requested under Official Information Act 1982. Where this is the case, the reasons for withholding information are listed below. Where information has been withheld, no public interest has been identified that would outweigh the reasons for withholding it.

Some information has been withheld for the reasons of international relations and free and frank opinions.



# Cabinet Social Outcomes Committee

## 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.*

### Pacific Visitor Visa Settings: Report back

**Portfolios**                      **Foreign Affairs/ Immigration**

On 30 July 2025, the Cabinet Social Outcomes Committee:

- 1        **noted** that in April 2025, the Cabinet Economic Policy Committee:
  - 1.1      agreed to implement visa waiver status for individuals travelling from Australia on passports from Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu (Pacific Islands Forum countries) that hold a valid Australian visitor, student, work, or family visa to enter New Zealand for up to 3 months on a trial basis for 12 months;
  - 1.2      agreed to extend the default visitor visa for Pacific Islands Forum country nationals from 12 months to two-year multi-entry;
  - 1.3      noted that the Minister of Immigration, in consultation with the Minister of Foreign Affairs (the Ministers), would report back to Cabinet on Pacific immigration settings more broadly so that further decisions can be taken **International** [REDACTED]

[ECO-25-MIN-0042]
- 2        **noted** that the visa-waiver status for Pacific Islands Forum country nationals travelling from Australia, as set out in paragraph 1.1 above, will be implemented in November 2025;
- 3        **noted** that on 6 July 2025, the default visitor visa for Pacific Islands Forum country nationals was extended to two years multi-entry, as set out in paragraph 1.2 above;
- 4        **International relations** [REDACTED]
- 5        **noted** that the paper under SOU-25-SUB-0097 sets out three options to further improve immigration settings for the Pacific:
  - 5.1      **International relations** [REDACTED]

5.2 International relations, Free and frank opinions

5.3 investigate funding options to reduce visa fees for nationals from Pacific Islands Forum countries and/or improve processing times;

6 International relations

7 **noted** that updated overstayer figures soon to be released indicate that while Pacific people make up between 3-4 percent of total arrivals, they make up approximately 25 percent of New Zealand's overstayer cohort;

8 International relations

9 **agreed** to:

9.1 International relations, Free and frank opinions

9.2 reduce visa fees for nationals from Pacific Islands Forum countries;

10 **authorised** International relations

11 International relations

12 **agreed** that the costs of the policies referred to in paragraph 9 will be met from within Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade baseline for the first year;

13 **authorised** the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Immigration, and the Minister of Finance (Joint Ministers) to decide the visitor visa application fees to give effect to paragraph 9.2;

14 **authorised** Joint Ministers to authorise any appropriation adjustments from Vote Foreign Affairs (International Development Cooperation appropriation) to Vote Labour Market to give effect to the decisions under SOU-25-MIN-0097;

15 **invited** the Minister of Immigration to issue drafting instructions to the Parliamentary Council Office to give effect to the policy intent of the paper under SOU-25-SUB-0097, and to report back to the Cabinet Legislation Committee to amend regulations;

16 **invited** the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Immigration to report back to Cabinet Ministers within 12 months of implementation on the outcomes of paragraphs 9.1 and 9.2 above, including the impacts on the health system, in order to inform decisions on the future of these initiatives;

17 International relations  
[Redacted]

18 **authorised** the Minister of Immigration to take decisions to give effect to the policy intent of the immigration settings changes set out under SOU-25-SUB-0097, and any issues that arise in the drafting process;

19 International relations  
[Redacted]

Jenny Vickers  
Committee Secretary

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**Present:**

- Hon David Seymour
- Rt Hon Winston Peters
- Hon Nicola Willis
- Hon Chris Bishop
- Hon Simeon Brown
- Hon Erica Stanford
- Hon Paul Goldsmith
- Hon Louise Upston (Chair)
- Hon Mark Mitchell
- Hon Tama Potaka
- Hon Matt Doocey
- Hon Nicole McKee
- Hon Karen Chhour
- Hon Nicola Grigg
- Hon Scott Simpson

**Officials present from:**

- Office of the Prime Minister
- Officials Committee for SOU
- Office of the Minister of Immigration