

[In Confidence]

Office of the Minister for ACC, Arts, Culture and Heritage and Social Development and Employment

Chair, Cabinet

Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Carmel Sepuloni

- 1 I recommend that Cabinet note this report on my travel to Scotland, the Netherlands and France from 24 August – 3 September 2022 to attend the Edinburgh International Culture Summit (Summit) and engage in bilateral meetings with Ministerial counterparts and representatives of international organisations.

Report

- 2 My visit to Scotland, the Netherlands and France achieved its objectives to:
 - 2.1 share experiences and information regarding supporting our countries' recovery from COVID-19 through employment, education and training initiatives, and using the recovery as an opportunity to explore ways to safeguard workers from future economic shocks, and
 - 2.2 demonstrate the value Aotearoa New Zealand places on the protection, recognition, and utilisation of indigenous arts, culture and heritage and share lessons about our mahi to support sustainable cultural institutions and careers for artists as we recover from COVID-19.
- 3 The key elements of my visit programme included: attendance at the Summit and meetings with the Scottish Minister for Higher and Further Education, Youth Employment and Training and Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, External Affairs and Culture, the United Kingdom's (UK) Under Secretary of State for Arts, the Dutch Minister for Social Affairs and Employment, the Secretary-General of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the French Ministers for Labour, Full Employment and Insertion and of Culture.
- 4 This visit was timely given our priority of reconnecting New Zealand with the world and strengthening relationships with counterparts in Europe and the UK, after a long period with limited face-to-face contact. The visit also reflected the importance of the UK and Europe to our reconnecting initiative, as we move forward in our respective recoveries from COVID-19 with closer economic ties after the signing of recent trade deals.

Edinburgh International Culture Summit


- 5 The Summit is a biennial ministerial forum hosted by the Edinburgh International Festival, with support from the British Council, Scottish

Parliament and Scottish and UK Governments. It is one of the most important events in the international arts and cultural calendar and was attended by Ministers and delegations from over 30 countries.

- 6 The centrepiece of my attendance at the Summit was my speech reflecting on the contributions of speakers on the key theme of Culture and Education. This speech, to an audience of arts and culture Ministers, artists, thinkers, and art leaders from around the world, emphasised the benefits of the reconnection that the Summit facilitated for us – lessons for New Zealand from the other attendees as well as the opportunity for us to share insights from our support for the arts and cultural sector through the pandemic and on our areas of expertise, such as language revitalisation and traditional knowledge systems.
- 7 As well as learning from other speakers at the plenary sessions, the Summit presented me with the opportunity for numerous bilateral meetings:
 - 7.1 I met with the Scottish Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, External Affairs and Culture, Angus Robertson MSP. Our discussion included the support we provided to the arts sector through the pandemic, which for Scotland was complementary to UK-wide supports. We also covered his work to mainstream culture across the Scottish government, including in areas like health, and opportunities for greater international cooperation with regards to arts sector workforce development.
 - 7.2 My meeting with the UK Under Secretary of State (Minister for Arts), Lord Parkinson, presented an opportunity to learn more about the UK arts and cultural sector's recovery from COVID-19. He noted the time-limited nature of support through the almost £2 billion national Culture Recovery Fund and we discussed how to support sustainable arts and cultural careers and institutions once COVID-19 funding expires.
 - 7.3 My meeting with Iain Munro, Head of Creative Scotland reflected the Scottish success of providing supports during the pandemic directly to individual creatives, not just to organisations – similar to our ACCESS scheme. Creative Scotland is concerned about the career choices made by young people during the pandemic, which has taken them away from arts and cultural employment. The organisation is now focused on audience sentiment, and regenerating people's access and participation at live, in-person arts and cultural events.
 - 7.4 I met with the delegation from Wales, which included representation from Arts Council Wales, Wales Art International and the Culture Division of the Welsh Government. We discussed their work to develop a Culture Strategy that reflects the value of arts and culture across government, including the role it plays supporting wellbeing outcomes for people in areas like health, the revitalisation of indigenous languages and improving social cohesion.

- 7.5 I discussed UK investment in New Zealand and Pacific arts and culture with the British Council, who reiterated the strong cultural ties between our nations and their support for Māori and Pacific arts.
- 8 I took advantage of Edinburgh hosting its International and Fringe Festivals and met with the Chief Executive of the Fringe, Shona McCarthy, and the Founder and Director of Assembly, a major venue operator, William Burdett-Coutts OBE. We discussed workforce shortages in the arts and cultural sector and they highlighted to me the number of New Zealanders bringing their artistic, cultural and technical expertise to international arts festivals.
- 9 I also met with some of these New Zealanders, including Michael Braithwaite, the Director of the Edinburgh Military Tattoo, and Alex Reedijk FRC, the General Director of Scottish Opera, to celebrate their achievements and discuss their experiences of the return of large-scale events overseas. As described to me by Creative Scotland, they explained that although overseas audiences are returning, those from communities such as older and disabled people have been slower. Supporting these audiences to return continues to be a focus for our traditional arts organisations, as well as expanding their appeal to a broader audience.
- 10 After a long period away from international cultural events due to COVID-19, attending the Summit and other meetings strengthened our ties with the international arts community and supported the mana and profile of Toi Māori and Aotearoa New Zealand arts and culture overseas. It also highlighted the strength of our response to the impact of COVID-19 on the arts and cultural sector and in particular, the provision of funding over four years – which was unprecedented among the countries I met with at the Summit – and provides us with a unique opportunity to learn from their experiences and smooth the sector’s transition to a post-pandemic future.
- 11 I also took away opportunities for us here in New Zealand, including the potential for:

9(2)(f)(iv)



- 11.3 deeper engagement and cooperation with our counterparts in the UK, including the British Council, in relation to funding for arts and cultural initiatives in Aotearoa New Zealand and the Pacific.

Recovery from COVID-19: interventions and lessons

- 12 While in Scotland I travelled to Glasgow to meet with the Minister for Higher and Further Education, Youth Employment and Training and discuss the role

of employment, education and training in Scotland's economic recovery. Scotland is also experiencing low levels of unemployment and a tight labour market, resulting in skills shortages across the economy. We discussed:

- 12.1 the importance of in-work training to develop a skilled workforce and the financial support Scotland provides for this through Individual Learning Accounts, which contribute to the cost of training on the job, and
 - 12.2 Scotland's decision not to target interventions like this only at people receiving support through the welfare system, reflecting our own shift to target supports to those at risk of falling out of the labour market.
- 13 We also shared insights regarding our Regional Skills Leadership Groups and their recently-released Regional Workforce Plans and the Scottish Regional Skills Investment Plans, on which our regional skills model was based.

The Hague, the Netherlands

- 14 I met with the Dutch Minister for Social Affairs and Employment, Karien van Gennip, to discuss the Dutch employee insurance schemes, which include cover for unemployment and health condition and disability that is comparable to our proposed New Zealand Income Insurance Scheme (NZIIS).
- 15 Minister van Gennip highlighted the opportunity that exploring setting up a new scheme presents for New Zealand to:
- 15.1 reduce the complexity Dutch schemes have developed since they were set up in the 1950s and substantially reformed in the 1970 - 80s, and
 - 15.2 mitigate some of the harshness in the Dutch schemes, such as overly strict abatement rules, which she has announced reforms to address.
- 16 The Minister noted that in response to COVID-19, the Dutch set up Regional Mobility Teams to provide urgent, localised support to new jobseekers. This intervention was grounded in lessons about the importance of early "activation" to return to work outcomes in the Dutch schemes – having active labour market policies that involve intervening as early as possible to reconnect people with the labour market.
- 17 I undertook a deep-dive into Dutch scheme policy with a group of Ministry for Social Affairs and Employment officials before travelling to the headquarters of the Dutch Employee Insurance Agency (UWV), the autonomous administrative authority responsible for delivering the Dutch schemes.
- 18 As the Minister for ACC^{9(2)(f)(iv)} [REDACTED] these meetings were an opportunity for a detailed discussion of how Dutch schemes work in practice. Lessons for our proposed scheme included the potential for employers to insure themselves against the risk of an employee claiming on the schemes, including through a mechanism like ACC's "CoverPlus" offering, the need for case management systems that

facilitate a whole-of-person assessment of barriers to employment and active labour market policies that cut across agencies to address them.

- 19 I also visited a Dutch social workplace, Happy Tosti, and was the first New Zealand Minister to visit Te Hono ki Aotearoa, a waka taua gifted to the Museum Volkenkunde by Toi Māori Aotearoa.

Paris, France

- 20 My visit to Paris began with a meeting with OECD Secretary-General Mathias Cormann. This was his first meeting with a New Zealand Minister since he started in his role in mid-2021 and an important opportunity to reconnect and strengthen the relationship between Aotearoa New Zealand and the OECD.

- 21 The Secretary-General praised our successful COVID-19 response. He noted the impact of the long tail of COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine on the global economic outlook, which will be reflected in the OECD's next interim report. However, he stated that our strong economic fundamentals, including record low unemployment, and focus on our digital and green transitions leave us better placed than many to deal with this uncertainty.

- 22 We discussed our proposed NZIIS and in particular, how COVID-19 had highlighted the value of a scheme that is extendable in difficult economic times and supported by strong active labour market policies – 9(2)(f)(iv) [redacted]. I continued this discussion with Director for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Stefano Scarpetta, who focused on:

22.1 the OECD's support for the introduction of the NZIIS and our proposal to include health conditions and disability in the scheme

22.2 the comparison between our proposed scheme and others, and in particular the level and length of entitlements under the NZIIS, and

22.3 9(2)(f)(iv) [redacted], and that this issue is currently being grappled with by several European countries.

- 23 I also met with the OECD's Centre for Well-being, Inclusion, Sustainability and Equal Opportunity, who were keenly interested in our world-leading social wellbeing approach and the Cabinet and cross-agency structures that support it. At their request, I committed to appoint an official to their Working Party on Social Policy to ensure we are better connected with their work going forward.

- 24 I visited the Minister for Labour and Employment, Olivier Dussopt, to discuss the French income insurance scheme and the effectiveness of employment, education and training interventions in their recovery from COVID-19. This meeting was a timely opportunity to learn from the reforms to the French scheme he was about to introduce, which aim to increase its ability to flex with the labour market – tightening during good times to incentivise people to take jobs, but becoming more generous during periods of economic difficulty.

- 25 Minister Dussopt explained the French COVID-19 recovery focused on supporting youth into employment through their 1 jeune (young person), 1

solution initiative, which offers a one-stop shop for employment and training opportunities for people under the age of 25. Like New Zealand, France also has much higher unemployment for young and older people, showing the importance of our Youth and Older Workers Employment Action Plans in ensuring our COVID-19 recovery cuts across our whole labour market.

- 26 My meeting with Minister of Culture, Rima Abdul Malak, also focused on the COVID-19 recovery. We discussed the impact on the arts sector of lower audience participation and increasing screen time resulting from the pandemic, and the steps the French Government is taking to reconnect audiences with the arts. I was particularly interested in the Culture Pass app, through which young people and their schools can access funding for arts and cultural experiences. This has relevance for our *Creatives in Schools* programme and would be particularly valuable for lower decile schools, which may be otherwise unable to offer these opportunities to students.
- 27 While in Paris I met with other arts leaders, including the Assistant Director General for Culture at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Ernesto Ottone, who advised that Aotearoa New Zealand is seen by UNESCO as a world leader on indigenous issues and asked us to give back through contributions to the Mondiacult conference in September and United Nations Decade for Indigenous Languages.⁹⁽²⁾
(f)
(iv)
- 28 I visited Musée du Quai Branly and its President Emmanuel Kasarhérou – the first Kanak person in such a role. After viewing an exhibition of Pacific and Māori masks, we discussed repatriation and the support Aotearoa New Zealand could provide to institutions around the world to actively engage with these communities to better understand, and potentially return, their taonga.

Proactive release

- 29 I propose to proactively release this paper within 30 business days of its consideration by Cabinet.

Recommendation

- 30 I recommend that Cabinet note this report.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Carmel Sepuloni

Minister for ACC

Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage

Minister for Social Development and Employment