

In Confidence

Office of the Minister for Māori Development
Chair, Cabinet

Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Tama Potaka – August 2025

I recommend that Cabinet note this report on my travel to Honolulu, United States of America and Vancouver and Chilliwack, Canada from 3 August to 11 August 2025 to meet with indigenous communities, government agencies, and private investors to discuss how they are delivering social services, raising funds and debt for infrastructure and large-scale developments for indigenous communities, as well as partnering in conservation and social housing delivery.

Report

Hawai'i

- 1 The objectives of the visit to Hawai'i were to meet with indigenous communities, government agencies and private investors to discuss how they are delivering social services as well as housing and conservation efforts, in line with my portfolios.
- 2 **Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL).** I met with the Director, Kali Watson, and Acting Administer of the DHHL, Kalani Fronda. The DHHL was established as a Trust for the administration of 200,000 acres of land to establish a permanent homeland for native Hawaiians with the intent of returning native Hawaiians to the land and encouraging them to become self-sufficient homesteaders on leased parcels of trust land. We discussed the provision of housing, including partnering with private developers, the use of social housing tax credits, and how those credits could be monetised for re-investment.
- 3 **Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA).** I met with OHA Trustees Brickwood Galuteria and Keli'i Akina, and Chief Executive, Kealohalani Ferreira. OHA is a self-governing corporate body of the State of Hawai'i and is often referred to as the fourth branch of government in Hawai'i. OHA was created in 1978 to manage ceded lands allotted for the use of homelands for Native Hawaiians, advance the lifestyle of Native Hawaiians, preserve Hawaiian culture and protect Native Hawaiian rights and interests. We discussed areas of mutual interest for Native Hawaiians, including economic development, environment and social services, including Whanau Ora.
- 4 **Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR).** I met with Chairperson, Dawn Chang, and senior staff of the DLNR, which is the equivalent of the Department of Conservation, and visited Volcanoes National

Park in the Big Island of Hawai'i. With DLNR and National Parks staff we discussed shared challenges over management of sites, visitor impacts and charging, and relationship with Native Hawaiians in the management of assets and concessions.

- 5 Hawai'i has increasingly focused on access charging and reservation systems as key tools, as well as a "green fee" of USD50 for visitors, which works much like the International Visitor Levy. This approach had the dual benefits of managing down visitor numbers at sites which had become significantly over-utilised while generating a revenue stream to better provide for infrastructure and facilities. The result was a better visitor experience and increased resourcing to reinvest into conservation outcomes. An ancillary benefit had been to encourage tourists to visit a wider range of sites, which better spread the benefits of tourism around Hawaiian communities and reduced incidence of overtourism. At Volcanoes National Park, which has to deal with regular eruptions, such systems have also been key to supporting emergency response.
- 6 I also visited a conservation site at Manoa Cliffs where DLNR was working alongside the University of Hawai'i (Manoa) to reestablish a species of snail, which had become extinct in the wild and dwindled to only 11 in captivity. The work had a strong New Zealand connection, with enclosures based off a New Zealand design, utilising New Zealand materials and with the extensive deployment of (Wellington-based pest management manufacturer) Goodnature's systems around the site. In this environment, the snail population had grown to several hundreds. I will invite Minister Jones to future similar visits given his interests in matters of this nature.
- 7 **University of Hawai'i.** Meeting with Land and Ocean Conservation researchers who have been investing in research based on "BioInvest" work by the Department of Conservation, on using a data-driven approach to most efficiently allocate scarce conservation resources against biodiversity outcomes. They noted collaboration with New Zealand experts in this space had been invaluable. Discussions on conservation highlighted the shared challenges facing New Zealand and Hawai'i, both small island environments with a large number of threatened species to protect, a range of ecological zones to manage, and limited conservation resources.
- 8 **Employees' Retirement System of the State of Hawai'i.** This pension fund which has USD23 billion of funds under management. We discussed investment approaches and potential opportunities in New Zealand. The fund's managers are interested in future investment opportunities.

British Columbia, Canada

- 9 The Indigenous Collaboration Agreement (**ICA**) between New Zealand and Canada was signed in 2022 and is the second standalone bilateral arrangement of its kind (second to ICA with Australia). Most of my meetings in Canada focused on indigenous development, especially with regards to housing and infrastructure.

- 10 **Ministerial bilaterals.** I held bilateral meetings with my British Columbia ministerial counterparts: the Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, Hon. Spencer Chandra Herbert; the Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs, Hon. Christine Boyle; and the Minister of Jobs and Economic Growth, Hon. Ravi Kahlon. The Premier of British Columbia announced a Cabinet reshuffle in July 2025. These were new appointments but many of the ministers had held relevant posts to my portfolios, and generously provided reflections on their previous ministerial warrants. Ministers were interested in our Fast Track processes, as they had introduced their own fast track to encourage infrastructure and energy projects, and diversify trade. First Nation partnerships and participation is something the provincial and federal governments are trying to encourage, through procurement, funding and loan guarantees.
- 11 **Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC).** Indigenous tourism in Canada has grown significantly, with rising global interest in authentic experiences. ITAC identified that while many businesses offer ways to connect with Indigenous culture, not all of them directly support Indigenous individuals, families and communities. ITAC has developed the brand, *Original, Original*, and New Zealand Māori Tourism is collaborating with ITAC.
- 12 **Indigenous Services Canada and Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada.** The Te Puni Kōkiri counterpart agency which co-administers the Aotearoa NZ-Canada Indigenous Collaboration Arrangement. We discussed the use of Whanau Ora and service contracts with indigenous communities, as well as Treaty settlements.
- 13 **University of British Columbia.** We met with members of the Sauder School of Business who are providing Ch'nook indigenous business education, to encourage more indigenous entrepreneurship. The school recently received funding to expand their programmes, and there may be opportunities to partner with New Zealand universities.
- 14 **MST Development Corporation.** I met with leaders representing Musqueam Indian Band, Squamish Nation and Tsleil-Waututh Nation representatives. The three Nations are full or co-owners of six significant properties throughout Metropolitan Vancouver, totalling more than 160 acres of developable land and are currently valued at over \$2B CAD. We discussed aligned Indigenous-Indigenous opportunities and challenges.

The role of First Nations in the provision of housing and infrastructure

- 15 Most of the kōrero related to the delivery of First Nations infrastructure and housing.
- 16 **First Nations Major Projects Coalition.** I met with the Chief Executive, Mark Podlasly. The First Nations Major Projects Coalition provides a model for indigenous economic development through encouraging equity investments and assisting First Nations to approve/co-invest in projects, including through the Canadian fast track system. Its mission is to support Indigenous communities in making free, prior, and informed decisions about their

participation in major natural resource and infrastructure projects. We heard how when combined with government loan guarantees multiple projects, including wind farms have attracted 50 percent equity investment from First Nations.

- 17 **Nch'kaý Development Corporation.** Nch'kaý Development Corporation is the economic development arm of the Squamish Nation. We discussed their projects including the Park Royal Shopping Centre and Senákw high rise housing project. The Senákw project will inject 4.5 times more rental units into the Vancouver housing market than are built by the city in a single year, and provide Senákw will also provide rentals that are 30-40% cheaper than other market rentals. The housing will be available for tribal and non-tribal members.
- 18 In Chilliwack, I met with the leaders of **Ch'iyáqtel First Nations Office**. Ch'iyáqtel has established extremely favourable land planning and development laws through their Land Code and are building large scale housing for Tribal and non-tribal members, including affordable rentals.
- 19 With both Nch'kaý Development Corporation and Ch'iyáqtel First Nations we discussed the regulatory levers that have enabled these developments, namely the First Nations Fiscal Management Act. This Act enables the taxing of First Nations land, issuing federally indexed bonds, and the ability for First Nations Tribes to undertake their own planning and consenting. We were also fortunate to meet with the First Nations Tax Commissioner, Manny Jules, who was one of the architects of the First Nations Fiscal Management Act.
- 20 I was accompanied with delegates from Tainui throughout my travel, and was joined by representatives from Ngāi Tahu in British Columbia.

Proactive release

- 21 I propose to proactively release this paper within 30 business days in accordance with Cabinet Office Circular CO (18) 4. Proactive release is subject to redactions as appropriate under the Official Information Act 1982.

Recommendation

I recommend that Cabinet note this report.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Tama Potaka

Minister for Māori Development