**Operational Policy Guidelines**

**Visits and Ceremonial Office**  
Te Tari o te Rāhiri me te Manaaki Manuhiri Ōkawa

**Operational Policy Guidelines***Oketopa (October) 2024*

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[Introduction 5](#_Toc179445371)

[Tikanga Māori 6](#_Toc179445372)

[Visits 6](#_Toc179445373)

[General 6](#_Toc179445374)

[Invitation to visit New Zealand 6](#_Toc179445375)

[GoG Submissions and approval process 7](#_Toc179445376)

[Guest of Government (GoG) 8](#_Toc179445377)

[Other Visit Categories 15](#_Toc179445378)

[Working Visits by Heads of State/Government 15](#_Toc179445379)

[Partial Guest of Government (PGoG) 15](#_Toc179445380)

[Facilitated Guest of Government (FGoG) 17](#_Toc179445381)

[Parliamentary Visits 17](#_Toc179445382)

[Prime Minister’s Fellows 19](#_Toc179445383)

[Otaki Scholar 21](#_Toc179445384)

[Ministerial-hosted International Conferences 21](#_Toc179445385)

[Airport facilitation 22](#_Toc179445386)

[Personal protection and security of guests 26](#_Toc179445387)

[Media 27](#_Toc179445388)

[Gifts 27](#_Toc179445389)

[Royal Visits 27](#_Toc179445390)

[Virtual Meetings 28](#_Toc179445391)

[Events 29](#_Toc179445392)

[Ceremonial Welcomes 29](#_Toc179445393)

[National Military Commemorations 30](#_Toc179445394)

[Anzac Day 31](#_Toc179445395)

[Other National Events and Memorial Services 32](#_Toc179445396)

[State Opening of Parliament 32](#_Toc179445397)

[State Farewell Ceremonial and Function for Outgoing Governor-General 33](#_Toc179445398)

[Swearing-in of the Governor-General 33](#_Toc179445399)

[State Funerals, State Memorial Events and State Alternative Commemorative Events 34](#_Toc179445400)

[Condolence Books 36](#_Toc179445401)

[Observance of Commonwealth Day 37](#_Toc179445402)

[Health, Safety and Risk 38](#_Toc179445403)

[Pandemic 38](#_Toc179445404)

[GoG and GoP costs covered by VCO 39](#_Toc179445405)

[Categories of VCO Support for Memorial/Remembrance Events 40](#_Toc179445406)

**Frequently Used Acronyms**

AvSec Aviation Security

DIA Department of Internal Affairs

DPMC Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet

FGoG Facilitated Guest of Government

GoG Guest of Government

GoP Guest of Parliament

HoG Head of Government

HoS Head of State

IPP Internationally Protected Persons

IPR Inter-Parliamentary Relations

MS Ministerial Services

MCH Ministry of Culture and Heritage

MFAT Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

MPI Ministry of Primary Industries

NZDF New Zealand Defence Force

NZP New Zealand Police

PGoG Partial Guest of Government

PMO Prime Minister’s Office

RNZRSA Royal New Zealand Returned and Services’ Association

VCO Visits and Ceremonial Office

VIPT VIP Transport Service

# Introduction

* 1. The Visits and Ceremonial Office (VCO) is the government agency responsible for:
* Organising and delivering programmes for official visitors to New Zealand who have been accorded Guest of Government (GoG) status.
* Organising and delivering programmes for Royal visits, in conjunction with DPMC.
* Organising and delivering Guest of Parliament visits, in consultation with Inter-parliamentary Relations in the Office of the Clerk.
* Organising and delivering national ceremonial and commemorative events. These include ceremonial welcomes at Parliament and Government House; state funerals; Anzac Day commemorations; “one-off” memorial services (such as for the Christchurch earthquake, and the Christchurch terrorist attack); and an annual programme of national military commemorations at Pukeahu.
* Providing international airport arrival and departure facilitation for Guest of Government visitors and New Zealand dignitaries such as the Governor-General, the Prime Minister and other New Zealand Ministers.

1.2 VCO forms part of the Ministerial Services (MS) group of the Te Haumi – Enterprise Partnerships branch of the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA). Most VCO staff are based in DIA’s Head Office at 45 Pipitea Street, Thorndon, Wellington. VCO also operates a VIP Lounge (the ‘Kauri Lounge’) located by gate 4 at Auckland International Airport.

1.3 As part of MS, VCO reports to the Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services, who currently is also the Prime Minister.

1.4 This document sets out the over-arching principles and policies for visits and events coordinated by VCO. They describe the services and funding VCO provides, and interagency governance arrangements for the delivery of visits and events. It sets out “what” we do. Operational details of “how” visits and events are run - including specific procedures, seating at meetings and formal functions, flag protocol, and airport and border requirements – are contained in the relevant VCO desk file.

1.5 Further information can be sought through the VCO general enquiries mailbox: [vco.info@dia.govt.nz](mailto:vco.info@dia.govt.nz)

# Tikanga Māori

2.1 New Zealand is founded on a partnership between The Crown and Tāngata Whenua, which is Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Within this framework, VCO visits and events adhere to tikanga which are the customary protocols and practices of Māori.

2.2 We consult and seek advice from iwi and hapū of the region where visits and events take place, to ensure Māori views and perspectives are considered, and that we follow the appropriate tikanga.

2.3 VCO embraces and supports manaakitanga - the custom of extending hospitality to guests and seeking to establish a relationship with our guests - whanaungatanga. We acknowledge the need for reciprocal hospitality and respect between different people, groups and cultures.

# Visits

## General

3.1 Official visits are a fundamental tool for advancing New Zealand’s foreign policy objectives and priorities. They provide opportunities for New Zealand host Ministers to build relationships and engage with counterparts on relevant issues. Guest of Government status can be extended to official visitors at different levels: Full (GoG), Partial (PGoG) and Facilitated (FGoG).

3.2 VCO has a coordinating, organising, logistics and funding role. It has overall responsibility to the Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services to effectively and efficiently deliver visits. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) has responsibility for the foreign policy objectives and the programme priorities of a visit; briefing and advice for high level engagement; and bilateral relationship management. Ground transport is provided and coordinated by VIP Transport, which like VCO is part of DIA. The New Zealand Police (Dignitary Protection Services) is responsible for the security of visiting VIPs.

## Invitation to visit New Zealand

4.1***Heads of State****:* A formal invitation to the Head of State (HoS) is extended by the Governor-General, at the Prime Minister’s request. This generally follows informal discussions between New Zealand and the country concerned, including visit dates. A Head of State visit may take the form of a State or working visit.

4.2***Heads of Government:***The Prime Minister normally issues a formal invitation to the visiting Head of Government (HoG) following informal discussions with the country concerned, including on visit timing. A Head of Government visit may take an Official or working form.

4.3***Ministers and below:*** Visit proposals normally result from New Zealand Ministers extending an invitation to counterparts, or from the country concerned indicating a wish to visit. Invitations for some non-Ministerial visitors may be handled differently. Extension of FGoG courtesies may be approved by the Manager, VCO.

4.4 ***Guest of Parliament*** invitations are extended by Mr Speaker, following consultations by the Office of the Clerk (Inter-Parliamentary Relations (IPR)) with the visitor and VCO.

4.5 Informal discussions may take place with potential visitors or their officials over the possibility of a visit. However, no firm commitment to a visit, or any aspect of planning, may be given until Ministers (and the Prime Minister in the case of visits at HoS and HoG level) have formally approved the Guest of Government submission. VCO will not make tentative visit arrangements (e.g. precautionary hotel bookings), which entail a financial commitment, until the submission has been approved.

4.6. VCO will make arrangements for GoP visits which entail a financial commitment once it has been advised by IPR that the Speaker’s invitation has been accepted.

## GoG Submissions and approval process

5.1 A submission seeking formal Ministerial approval for each GoG visit is required. (Exceptions are extension of FGoG courtesies, and GoP invitations from Mr Speaker.) Any   
New Zealand Minister may propose a GoG visit.

5.2 Submissions proposing visits should outline the policy objectives and expected outcomes of the visit for New Zealand, and how the proposed programme elements will contribute to achieving these. For visits by HoS it must recommend whether the invitation should be for a State or working visit, and for HoGs an Official or working visit. If a visit at Head of Government level includes Ministers accompanying the principal, separate GoG status may be sought for these Ministers, particularly where they might have separate programme elements.

5.3 The submission must include an indicative visit budget, prepared by VCO based on information on the proposed delegation and programme from MFAT. VCO will also advise whether the visit cost can be managed within the funding available for visits for the remainder of the financial year.

### Approval Process

5.4 A submission recommending a GoG invitation be extended, including the objectives and New Zealand’s interests in hosting a visit programme, is put to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (or other Minister as appropriate) for consideration and approval. Once approved the submission is referred to the Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services for concurrence. An information copy is also referred to the Prime Minister, and if the visit submission is not to the Minister of Foreign Affairs a copy is also provided for his or her information.

5.5 Submissions recommending a visit at HoS or HoG level follow a separate approval process. A submission is put to the Minister of Foreign Affairs for consideration and endorsement. Once agreed the submission is referred to the Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services for concurrence. The submission is then referred to the Prime Minister, who gives final approval for the visit and issuing a formal invitation.

5.6 Submissions for visits by Prime Minister’s Fellows, and other visits where the visitor would be intended to meet the Prime Minister, should also be referred to the Prime Minister for final approval.

5.7 It is the responsibility of MFAT to seek advice on the availability (as appropriate) of the Governor-General, Prime Minister and other Ministers to host and meet visiting counterparts. Once availability is confirmed, it is the responsibility of VCO to put in place practical arrangements for the programme, including Ministerial meetings, and, as appropriate, any hospitality. MFAT will also make initial contact with other possible visit interlocutors or activity hosts, such as NGOs, academic institutions, business or community organisations or local government.

5.8 It is normal practice for VCO to make initial contact and liaise with the Office of the Leader of the Opposition concerning arrangements for a courtesy call on a visiting GoG at HoS/HoG level.

## Guest of Government (GoG)

### Eligibility

6.1 The following may be eligible for GoG status:

* Some members of the Royal Family (Royal visits are covered elsewhere in these Guidelines);
* Heads of State, including foreign monarchs;
* Vice Regal representatives;
* Heads of Government;
* Persons of Ministerial rank;
* Heads of provincial and state administrations;
* Heads of major international agencies (e.g. Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, Secretary-General of ASEAN, Secretary-General of the OECD, Secretary-General of the UN and persons at Under-Secretary-General level and officers of equivalent rank in the UN system);
* Parliamentary delegations visiting at the invitation of the Speaker of Parliament or as part of Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU) or Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) programmes;
* Chiefs of Defence Force;
* By right, GoG (Head of State) status is accorded to His Holiness the Pope as Head of the Vatican City State. (Support may be provided to other Heads of Churches, depending on the purpose and status of the visit).

### Visit Costs

6.2 New Zealand (through VCO) meets the following costs within New Zealand for GoG visitors:

* hotel accommodation;
* all meals;
* reasonable living expenses including laundry and mini-bar;
* any hotel Wi-Fi or Internet charges, and the cost of local phone calls from the hotel;
* domestic travel – ground transport and commercial airline flights. (New Zealand funded charter flights require explicit prior approval from the General Manager, MS, DIA);
* hospitality provided by the Governor-General;
* official hospitality where hosted by the Prime Minister or host Minister (typically a lunch or dinner for up to 14 people, although for some HoG visits a larger reception, official lunch or official dinner may be appropriate);
* tourism/other programme elements may be funded if outlined as a policy objective for the visit; and
* spouse programme for (HoG/HoS visits and only during official day. Additional days are considered on a case-by-case basis)

#### Activities outside of VCO guidelines/entitlements

6.3 Additional funds may be needed to cover activities, which extend beyond VCO guidelines for GoG visits. Contributions will need to be sought, including from NZ Inc. agencies, businesses, or relevant missions, to cover these additional costs.

6.4 Visit costs are met for the GoG principal, their partner, and an allocated number of their accompanying delegation as follows:

* Heads of State: principal (+ partner, if accompanying the principal and occupying the same suite) + 5 officials;
* Heads of Government: principal (+ partner, if accompanying the principal and occupying the same suite) + 3 officials;
* Ministerial level: principal (+ partner, if accompanying the principal and occupying the same suite) + 1 official.

6.5 The visiting side should advise VCO as early as possible of the accompanying officials whose costs they wish met under GoG provisions. VCO will arrange and meet the cost of hotel accommodation and domestic air travel for these officials. Diplomatic representatives accredited to New Zealand are not included in the above allocations.

6.6 Visit arrangements and costs all other members of accompanying delegations are the responsibility of the visitor’s country. VCO will provide ground transport for officials travelling with the principal on the visit programme, but not for business delegations.

6.7 The New Zealand Government does not meet the following costs:

* international airfares;
* excess baggage fees charged by airlines;
* gratuities;
* office facilities or expenses;
* medical expenses;
* excessive expenditure on hotel mini bars;
* in-room entertainment – pay to view movies;
* expenditure on personal services; and
* carnet charged by Customs.

#### Variation in costs met

6.8 The standard costs met for GoG visits do not apply to costs for official visits by members of the Royal Family (these are determined on a visit-by-visit basis). Visit costs for foreign monarchs are met at HoS level. Governors–General may be extended GoG status at either HoS or HoG level. The standard elements for GoG visits may not apply to some categories of visitors, for example PM Fellows and Guests of Parliament.

### Delegation Composition

6.9 There is no limit to the size of an accompanying delegation, although in the case of large delegations the amount of ground transport provided or paid for by New Zealand may be limited. There may be restrictions on the number of delegation members able to accompany the visiting principal for some programme activities, such as meetings with the Prime Minister or Ministers, or official government hospitality.

#### Accompanying Partner

6.10 VCO will meet the visit costs of a spouse or partner where they are accompanying the principal on the official programme and accommodated in the same hotel suite.

6.11 Where the spouse or partner of a HoS or HoG is accompanying the principal, VCO will consider the preparation of a separate spousal programme on a case-by-case basis. If agreed, VCO will organise and cover the cost of the programme, ground transport and escort on the official day for events hosted by the Governor-General’s or NZ Prime Minister’s spouse or partner only.

6.12 The official day comprises: a ceremony of welcome; official calls/bilaterial meetings; and official hospitality hosted by the Governor-General or Prime Minister (for example, a State dinner, official reception or official dinner/lunch). If the Governor-General or Prime Minister is officially hosting on additional days, associated activities and costs will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

6.13 Any programme outside of the official day will be undertaken by the relevant High Commission or Embassy at their own cost.

6.14 Partners of GoG visitors at Ministerial level or below are not offered a separate programme and the cost of any activities undertaken separately is not met by VCO.

#### Additional Ministers

6.15 HoS and HoG are often accompanied by Ministers. They are included in the GoG delegation and counted within the group of accompanying officials whose costs are met by New Zealand. On occasion, a Minister travelling with a HoS or HoG may be accorded separate GoG status, depending on the circumstances of the visit. This should be covered in the GoG submission to Ministers. Where an accompanying Minister is undertaking a bilateral meeting with a New Zealand counterpart, VCO will be responsible for setting up the meeting as part of the official programme, including providing ground transport if necessary. MFAT will provide a briefing for the bilateral discussions and an MFAT policy officer will attend the bilateral meeting.

#### Business delegations

6.16 High level visitors are often accompanied by business delegations. These do not form part of the official party and are not supported by VCO. The visitor’s diplomatic mission, New Zealand Trade and Enterprise, MFAT and/or Chambers of Commerce or appropriate Business Council should arrange suitable programmes.

#### Accompanying media

6.17 VCO (Media Lead) will put in place arrangements for visiting media, and New Zealand media, to be present at appropriate points in the visit programme (eg at a formal welcome, or the start of a meeting) and organise a joint media conference if one is included in the visit programme.

#### Interpreters

6.18 The New Zealand government does not pay for accommodation or other costs of interpreters in accompanying delegations, unless they are one of the designated accompanying officials whose costs will be met as a GoG.

6.19 Should interpretation (simultaneous or consecutive) be required by the New Zealand side for meetings between the visiting principal and the Governor-General, Prime Minister, the Speaker or Ministers, interpreters will be engaged and costs met by VCO.

#### Length of stay

6.20 GoG visits are for a period of up to five days (four nights’ paid accommodation) and should take place during the working week. Visitors are welcome to arrive earlier or stay longer, but any additional time will be considered a private visit. If a proposed GoG visit is expected to be of longer duration, approval for support for the additional days must be sought in the GoG submission.

#### Information required

6.21 Information required by VCO of the visiting delegation includes:

* details of all members of the visiting party including names and titles, in a list in protocol order;
* whether Cabinet Ministers or Secretaries of State will accompany the guest;
* whether a representative from the visitor’s diplomatic mission is to accompany the party;
* whether the visitor is to be accompanied by or will require an interpreter;
* details of the number of security, medical and protocol officers accompanying the visitor;
* the composition and dates of any advance parties;
* likely transport requirements for the advance and actual visit;
* professional and private interests of the principal;
* any dietary preferences, medical issues and religious requirements; and
* any professional or personal interests or wishes of the guest (and partner if travelling with the guest).

### *Visit Programme*

6.22 The visit programme is held and maintained electronically. There may also be a hard copy programme for some visits. Visits follow the VCO programme. Where the diplomatic mission produces its own form of the programme, or a translation, it is important to ensure details are the same as those in the official programme. Visits follow the VCO-produced official programme.

6.23 The programme for Heads of State making a State visit typically includes:

* For a first visit to New Zealand, a ceremonial welcome at Government House (Wellington or Auckland) with Māori and military components;
* Reception following the ceremonial welcome (at Government House Wellington only);
* Bilateral discussion with the Governor-General;
* State dinner or luncheon hosted by the Governor-General;
* Courtesy calls by the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition; and
* Wreath laying ceremony, usually at Pukeahu National War Memorial Park.

6.24 The programme for Heads of Government making an Official visit includes:

* For a first visit to New Zealand, a ceremonial welcome typically held at Parliament or (occasionally) at Government House, Auckland;
* Official luncheon or dinner hosted by the Prime Minister;
* Bilateral talks with the Prime Minister and members of the Cabinet;
* Joint media conference;
* A courtesy call by the Leader of the Opposition; and
* Wreath laying ceremony, usually at Pukeahu National War Memorial Park.

#### Accommodation

6.25 Heads of State or Heads of Government are generally accommodated in a premium suite in a hotel of international standard. VCO consults the visiting country on the selection of the hotel. Suitable suites are allocated for Ministers and those of equivalent rank, and standard rooms for other delegation members.

6.26 VCO is responsible for booking and meeting the costs of accommodation for the principal and those delegation members extended GoG status. The visitor’s country is responsible for booking accommodation for members of the delegation not extended GoG status, and for covering the cost.

6.27 The Governor-General may as an exception invite a Head of State to stay at Government House in Wellington. Only a strictly limited number of the visiting delegation can stay at Government House with the Head of State.

#### Entry and exit formalities

6.28 VCO works with a range of border agencies, airlines, airport authorities and ground handlers to facilitate formalities on entry into, and exit out of, New Zealand. This is a standard arrangement made for all GoG visits. As appropriate, VCO will provide facilities at Auckland International Airport, for clearances to be undertaken. At other international airports DIA does not have a VIP lounge, but VCO staff will make necessary entry/exit arrangements working with relevant border agencies and airlines. Officials involved in border formalities should bear in mind that certain persons - Heads of State, Heads of Government, Foreign Ministers and their spouses - will generally possess sovereign and diplomatic immunity under customary international law and are generally immune from New Zealand criminal and civil jurisdiction and enforcement.

#### Visa Waiver Process for Guests of Government and official delegation

6.29 Visitors who are granted Guest of Government status by MFAT will not need to apply for a visa or pay a fee. Guests of Government will be granted a visa waiver to travel to New Zealand by special direction (refer to schedule 3 of [Immigration Regulations 2010](https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.legislation.govt.nz%2Fregulation%2Fpublic%2F2010%2F0241%2Flatest%2FDLM3148171.html%23DLM3148171&data=05%7C02%7CLinda.Chin%40dia.govt.nz%7C664fbf3d5c6043eb281408dcbb1db14a%7Cf659ca5cfc474e96b24d14c95df13acb%7C0%7C0%7C638590983420028807%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=c4NMJfwbECeety5lDxrK%2FHEe8DTSSQsMSGG%2Bw%2FU1YEk%3D&reserved=0)). Immigration New Zealand (INZ) can facilitate this and issue the Special Direction Letter via INZ’s MFAT priority process channel.

6.30 MFAT is required to email notification of the visit and the following information to the MFAT Priority process team:

* Invitation letter issued by the New Zealand Government;
* Copy of the ‘GoG Delegation passport details form’ issued by the Visits and Ceremonial Office (VCO) of the Department of Internal Affairs;
* Copies of passports for all those listed (valid for at least 1 month after the date they plan to leave New Zealand);
* Clear confirmation (either via email or letter) from MFAT to confirm whether the entire delegation is covered under the GoG status;
* Clear confirmation in email to advise whether the NZSIS are aware of the visit and have been sent the delegation details for any necessary pre-screening that may be required; and
* Any other useful information regarding the visit.

#### Flights

6.31 International flight bookings and costs are the responsibility of the visitor. If the visitor travels in their own aircraft, ground handling arrangements and costs are the responsibility of the visitor.

6.32 VCO is responsible for booking and paying for domestic flights included in the official programme for the principal guest and those delegation members extended GoG status. If other delegation members wish to travel on the same flight as the principal, those bookings are the responsibility of the visitor. VCO does not cover the cost of excess baggage.

#### Transport of luggage

6.33 The transport of luggage for the visitor and their delegation is managed and coordinated by VIP Transport and VCO. Luggage transport will be arranged by VCO for delegation members whose ground transport is being provided by VCO.

#### Ground transport

6.34 Ground transport is provided for the principal and others in the delegation when they are travelling with the principal as part of the official programme. Delegation members are not provided with transport when undertaking a separate programme. If the delegation accompanying a HoS or HoG includes a Minister accorded separate GoG status, transport will be provided for the Minister’s separate programme where necessary.

#### Motorcades

6.35 The level of motorcade facilitation extended GoGs is a function of security and protocol requirements. It is decided on a visit-by-visit and movement-by-movement basis by the New Zealand Police in consultation with MFAT, VCO and VIPT.

#### Advance Visits

6.36 Major visits are often preceded by a reconnaissance visit by a single official advance party. Advance visits are coordinated by VCO. Dates for the advance visit must be agreed by VCO and the relevant New Zealand agencies. All participants meet their own costs during an advance visit. One vehicle is provided at VCO expense.

6.37 Foreign security personnel are not permitted to carry out reconnaissance visits without the New Zealand Police or VCO being present.

#### Private Days

6.38 While a visitor is in New Zealand, any day that contains neither internal travel nor any substantial official programming is likely to be designated a ‘private day’. Any official support for private days is limited and may include one vehicle and limited VCO staff support. New Zealand Police may also have a role.

6.39 Visitors meet their own costs on private days. Bookings and other arrangements are the responsibility of the visitor. An exception can be made if the unavailability of international flights means a visitor is obliged to spend additional time in New Zealand. International airport facilitation will be provided if an arrival is followed by, or departure preceded by, private day(s).

## Other Visit Categories

## Working Visits by Heads of State/Government

7.1 A HoS/HoG visit may take the form of a Working visit. This allows a major visit to be supported where MFAT considers, and Ministers agree, that a less formal programme is appropriate. A working visit does not include a ceremonial welcome, and it is likely that the visit will be of shorter duration (say 2-3 days). The programme focus is on substantive discussions, and any function hosted by the New Zealand side would be modest in size with a working focus.

7.2 A recommendation about the form of the visit should be included in the GoG submission to Ministers.

7.3 The extent of official support for HoS and HoG visits is the same irrespective of whether they take the form of working, State (HoS) or Official (HoG) visits.

Partial Guest of Government (PGoG)

8.1 Partial Guest of Government (PGoG) status offers a visitor more limited support and opportunity to engage with Ministers than is afforded GoGs. PGoG invitations, like those for GoGs, must be the subject of a formal Ministerial submission.

**Eligibility**

8.2 The following visitors may be eligible for PGoG status:

* Ministers (particularly self-invited);
* Associate, Junior and Vice Ministers in a national or central government;
* Ministers of provincial or state administrations in a federal system;
* Heads of regional international agencies and persons within UN agencies at Assistant Secretaries-General level and officers of equivalent rank; and
* Single service Chiefs of Staff of the Armed Forces.

8.3 These are guidelines only. Circumstances may arise where a person who would normally fall into the partial GoG category can be accorded full GoG status. The reverse can apply. In these circumstances a recommendation should be included in the GoG submission for Ministerial consideration.

Visit elements

8.4 PGoG visitors are offered the support detailed below. Host agencies may request enhanced support where necessary for operational or protocol reasons. This should be done in the submission to Ministers.

* Airport facilitation and vehicle transfers (one Crown vehicle) on international arrival and departure, as for GoGs, in Auckland or Wellington only.
* Use of one Crown vehicle for official calls (return trip). (An official call is defined as a call on a Minister, or, in the event of the Minister’s absence, a call on the CEO of a ministry, government department or agency).
* Government hospitality (one event only, for up to 10 people) where hosted by a Minister.

8.5 For PGoG visitors, VCO will:

* arrange facilitation and co-ordinate airport transfers;
* arrange car bookings for official calls;
* provide advice on request to the host department or ministerial office responsible for arranging Government hospitality; and
* meet the cost of one Government hospitality event (where hosted by a Minister), for up to ten people for an official lunch or dinner.

8.6 All other visit arrangements and costs are the responsibility of the visitor.

Facilitated Guest of Government (FGoG)

9.1 FGoG provides only for international airport facilitation in Auckland through the Kauri Lounge, and VIPT transport (one vehicle only) between the airport and hotel on arrival and departure. Eligibility is the same as for PGoG, or GoG. The category is aimed at visitors eligible for PGoG status but who in practice require international airport facilitation only, and where no officially funded hospitality is being provided by a New Zealand Minister. No transport is provided except for airport-hotel transfers.

9.2 As the costs of providing FGoG services are modest, this support can be provided at the discretion of the Manager of VCO, on request from MFAT or another department. At least eight working days’ notice must be given to VCO. No ministerial approval is required.

9.3 Dedicated aircraft (i.e. any aircraft not commercially operated) do not generally fall under FGoG. However, may be allowed on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the VCO Manager e.g. Commonwealth Head of Government Meeting (CHOGM).

## Parliamentary Visits

10.1 Inwards Guest of Parliament (GoP) visits fall into two categories: Speaker and Parliamentary visits, and Political Exchanges.

**Speaker and Parliamentary Visits**

10.2 GoPs are generally Speakers or Members of Parliament (MPs) from other national Parliaments. In terms of general visit arrangements, a visiting Speaker is accorded the courtesies extended visiting Ministers, while Mr Speaker rather than a New Zealand Minister fills the host role.

10.3 The main aims of such visits are to foster strong, positive relationships between the New Zealand and other parliaments, and to provide opportunities for exchanges of information and policy discussions between New Zealand MPs and their overseas colleagues. These visits also fulfil New Zealand’s obligations as a member of inter-parliamentary organisations and contribute to New Zealand’s foreign policy goals and objectives.

10.4 The programme of inward Speaker-led GoP visits is based on Speaker invitations, acceptances and agreement on dates. The programme for up to ten GoPs, including political exchanges, in a financial year is funded by VCO. The Speaker informs the Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services of the visits scheduled for a financial year, after the proposed Inter-Parliamentary Programme for the year is approved.

***Visit costs***

10.5 Costs for visiting GoPs are met by VCO on the same basis as those for GoGs (see para 5.2 above). For some visitors however a different regime may apply, as noted below.

10.6 In addition to the items listed in para 5.2 the cost of modest Parliamentary hospitality is also met. This is usually an informal working lunch with New Zealand MPs who are members of the appropriate Parliamentary Friendship Group.

10.7 GoG costs will be met for up to four nights (five days) for a visiting Speaker-led delegation consisting of:

* the visiting Speaker (and accompanying partner occupying the same suite);
* up to four Members of Parliament;
* one official.

10.8 Costs for all other members of a Speaker’s delegation are the responsibility of the visitor’s country. VCO will assist with the coordination of accommodation reservations and provide ground transport for those travelling with the Speaker.

10.9 Special cost arrangements, often based on reciprocity, may apply for some GoP visits and IPR’s advice should be sought early in visit planning. In particular:

* Members of the Delegation for Relations with Australia and New Zealand (DANZ) from the European Parliament meet the cost of their own accommodation and domestic flights. Details in relation to meals and reciprocity are discussed in programme planning.

***Roles and Responsibilities***

10.10 Inter-Parliamentary Relations (IPR) in the Parliamentary Engagement team of the Office of the Clerk and VCO work closely in managing GoP visits. VCO provides a Lead organiser for the visit.

10.11 VCO prepares visit programmes and visit booklets, in consultation with IPR. IPR organises Parliament-related calls and activities, coordinating with the Speaker’s Office and Parliamentary Service (e.g. security, flags, catering, tours), with Parliamentary Friendship Groups and Select Committees. IPR is also responsible for liaison with Members of Parliament where they are involved in a GoP programme outside the parliamentary complex. IPR seeks approval for Introductions to the House and advises on procedures.

10.12 VCO organises activities and calls outside Parliament in discussion with IPR, accommodation, meals, domestic ground and air transport, and provides airport facilitation on international arrival and departure. Delegations are normally accompanied by a VCO staff member and an IPR officer. The IPR officer should accompany the delegation at all times during the visit.

10.13 MFAT provides guidance for IPR and VCO on calls or activities in relation to the foreign policy objectives and issues. It also provides briefings for Mr Speaker and Members of Parliament on bilateral and related foreign policy matters, as well as for Ministerial calls. An MFAT official, and the visitor’s diplomatic Head of Mission, may attend the call on Mr Speaker and will attend calls on Ministers.

10.14 It is normal practice for meetings and calls in Wellington with members of the Executive, and the Leader of the Opposition, to take place within the Parliamentary precinct.

**Political Exchanges**

***Political exchange programme between Australia and New Zealand***

10.15 The objectives of the political exchange programme between Australia and New Zealand are to expose future political leaders of each country to the political, social, economic and cultural systems of the other country, to aid their personal development and to promote friendship and cooperation between the two countries.

10.16 Exchange participants are required to be members of a political party and are drawn from all levels of political activities, including elected representatives and party officials. They represent a broad range of political positions.

10.17 Usual GoG costs are met for up to six participants for up to seven days. Partners are not expected to accompany participants and will not be supported.

***American Council of Young Political Leaders (ACYPL)***

10.18 ACYPL and the Office of the Speaker have an agreed educational exchange between the United States and New Zealand for identified young political leaders. The exchange operates on a year-about basis. Programmes for ACYPL visits to New Zealand are designed to provide an in-depth understanding of New Zealand’s governing, judicial and policy making processes; election processes; bilateral relations with US; and cultural diversity. The American delegation is usually from different States, not from the US Congress. Calls or meetings in the programme include central government and local body politicians; government officials and diplomatic mission staff; public policy experts and think tanks; political party officials (including opposition parties); NGOs; and business and community leaders.

10.19 IPR has overall management responsibility for the programme, with VCO organising calls outside Parliament, and arranging accommodation and transport as for other GoP visits.

10.20 Usual GoG costs will be met for up to seven ACYPL participants for up to eight days, with the following exceptions:

* laundry and mini bar are not covered;
* incidentals such as local telephone calls / internet charges are not covered.

10.21 Partners may not accompany participants and will not be supported.

## Prime Minister’s Fellows

11.1 The Prime Minister offers Fellowships to visitors from several foreign countries. The main aim of the fellowships is to assist New Zealand achieve its foreign policy objectives through hosting up-and-coming individuals who have the potential to be leaders or who have influence in parliamentary, business, academic, cultural or other fields.

11.2 MFAT operates Prime Minister’s Fellowship schemes with the following:

* India, and Nepal (Sir Edmund Hillary Fellowship);
* Canada and the United States;
* Japan;
* Korea;
* Latin America;
* Member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN);
* Samoa;
* Tonga Coronation Scholar;
* Melanesia; and
* Australia.

#### Visit costs

11.3 A Fellowship is awarded by the Prime Minister on the recommendation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The submission will include an indicative cost for hosting the Fellow provided by VCO. Informal VCO advice on timing should be sought before the appropriate New Zealand Embassy or High Commission liaises directly with the awardee to discuss the visit. Subsequently, the proposed timing and key programme elements should be discussed with VCO to confirm visit resources are available.

11.4 If an MFAT submission recommending the award of a Fellowship also forms the GoG submission for a visit a copy should be referred to the Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services for concurrence in the usual way. GoG submissions for a PM Fellow visit require the Prime Minister’s approval. Details should be discussed with VCO.

11.5 VCO will meet usual GoG costs (see para 5.2 above) for PM’s Fellows for visits of up to five days (four nights). Only the Fellow’s costs will be met but partners may accompany a Fellow at their own expense. Visit arrangements will be made at “officials” level even if the visiting Fellow is a Minister, e.g. a hotel room not a junior suite, and ground transport (one vehicle only) will likely be a VIP van rather than a car, depending on vehicle availability.

11.6 VCO prepares the programme and manages logistical arrangements, in close consultation with MFAT, and will usually provide an accompanying staff member for the visit. MFAT provides an escort officer throughout the visit. Opportunities will be sought, where possible, to streamline the number of officials accompanying a PM Fellow, particularly outside of the main centres.

## Otaki Scholar

12.1 A six to seven week visit by the Otaki Scholar takes place each year, in the period from July to September.

12.2 The Otaki Scholar is the winner of the Otaki Shield, which is awarded to a top pupil from Robert Gordon’s College in Scotland. The Shield commemorates a World War I incident during which the New Zealand Shipping Company’s merchant ship ‘Otaki’ came close to sinking a heavily armed German raider. To commemorate the action, relatives of the Otaki’s Captain established a fund for an annual award, the Otaki Shield, for pupils of the Captain’s old school. The Shield includes a travel scholarship to New Zealand.

12.3 Early each year the headmaster of Robert Gordon’s College provides VCO with details of the winner of the Shield. Once flights are advised (usually around May), a VCO officer is assigned to develop and put in place a programme for the Scholar. Usual GoG visit costs (see para 5.2) are met as appropriate. The Otaki Scholar is hosted by a variety of colleges, both public and private, throughout New Zealand. Accommodation is with local families. While in Wellington, the Scholar usually meets with British High Commission staff, undertakes a tour of Parliament and visits Otaki for a day. A VCO escort is not provided.

## Ministerial-hosted International Conferences

13.1 VCO may be asked to provide support for conferences hosted by Ministers, where overseas ministerial counterparts have been invited. Past examples have included a Commonwealth Speakers’ Conference; a conference of Attorneys-General; an International Education Ministers’ Conference; the signing of the then Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement; and New Zealand’s hosting of the 4th annual meeting of the “Digital 5” group of countries in 2018.

13.2 In such cases, the host department should complete a submission seeking PGoG status for all ministerial-level conference attendees.

13.3 Where attendees travel is directly related to the conference, VCO will provide:

* airport facilitation in Auckland and Wellington for international arrivals and departures for the principal, and those travelling with the principal; and
* ground transport for transfers on arrival into, and departure from, New Zealand (including connecting flights) if this is necessary.

13.4 VCO does not cover any costs associated with the conference e.g. transport to and from the conference, functions hosted as part of the conference etc. The level of support will be discussed with the host department and determined on a visit-by-visit basis, in consultation with the Prime Minister’s Office.

13.5 Overseas Ministers undertaking a bilateral programme separate to the conference may be accorded GoG status. This should be sought by the host department in a submission to the Prime Minister in the usual way.

13.6 One-off arrangements may be necessary where a large number of Ministerial-level conference attendees are expected to be arriving or departing within at short space of time. VCO should be consulted as early as possible in these circumstances. Similarly, special arrangements may be needed if, because of limited air routes, a large number of Ministers are expected to travel through Auckland over a short period to attend a conference in the South Pacific region.

## Airport facilitation

14.1 Airport facilitation is provided for the arrival and departure of GoG and other visits supported by VCO, as well as New Zealand Ministers and Pacific Island leaders. The Kauri Lounge team will liaise with the New Zealand Customs Service (Customs), the Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI), Aviation Security, Immigration New Zealand (INZ), airlines and airport authorities to ensure the necessary arrival and departure formalities are in place.

### Eligibility

14.2 VCO has the responsibility for the facilitation of arrivals and departures at Wellington and Auckland International Airport for the following overseas guests:

* Members of the Royal Family;
* Full and partial Guests of Government;
* Heads of State or Heads of Government;
* Visitors of Cabinet rank and State Premiers; and
* Pacific Heads of Government, whether on official or private visit;

as well as the following New Zealand VIPs:

* The Governor-General and partner;
* Prime Minister, Ministers, and accompanying partner, whether on official or private visits (children are not included unless accompanying the principal);
* The Leader of the Opposition and partner; and
* The Speaker and partner, on official overseas travel.

### International arrival

14.3 Visitors are met on disembarkation from their aircraft by VCO and the visitor’s Ambassador or High Commissioner. The airport authority, Aviation Security (AvSec) and airlines place strict limits on the number of people who can meet visitors at the aircraft door. The VCO Team Leader, Auckland Operations, has responsibility for approving the composition of the greeting (and farewell) party.

14.4 Ministers and other representatives or officials who are meeting VIPs are expected to remain in the Kauri Lounge at the Auckland International Airport to await the visiting party. The Kauri Lounge has limited space. It is important that the arriving guests have space, calm and privacy after what will often have been a long flight and that New Zealand border agencies are able to efficiently provide the relevant clearances for the party. It is necessary, therefore, that the number of officials meeting the visitors be limited, and that officials present have a clear specific role to perform. (At airports other than Auckland, separate arrangements are made and advised.)

#### Immigration and Customs clearance

14.5 Immigration and Customs clearances are the responsibilities of their respective agencies. These formalities can be kept to a minimum provided that certain requirements are observed prior to the visiting delegation’s arrival:

* Details of the delegation members must be provided to VCO in advance of the visit on a VCO passport template.
* All delegation members, including the principal, must complete a New Zealand Passenger Arrival Card.
* Prior to landing in New Zealand, one member of the delegation who will leave the aircraft in close attendance on the principal should collect all entry documents and pass them to VCO on disembarkation.

#### Carnet/Temporary Import Entry

14.6 Customs require a Carnet or a Temporary Import Entry (TIE) for travelling media bringing in any commercial goods/equipment into New Zealand temporarily. It is the responsibility of the visiting country to arrange Carnet/TIEs. Helpful Customs Information can be found here: [Temporary Importation of Goods Customer Guide](https://www.customs.govt.nz/globalassets/documents/guides/customer-guide-to-temporary-admission-of-goods-26-june-2023.pdf)

14.7 Any media wanting to bring equipment into the country will need to follow one of the processes (Carnet or TIE) outlined below in the lead up to their arrival. This will need to be communicated to and arranged through the relevant High Commission / Embassy / Consulate.

**Carnet Process**

14.8 A Carnet will be the preferred option for any commercial goods/equipment entered into the country temporarily. The visiting media delegation can get a Carnet from their home country Chamber of Commerce in advance of departure.

* This will require a deposit to be paid to cover the GST and DUTY value of the goods to their home-based Chamber of Commerce. The payment is refundable by their home Chamber of Commerce upon completion of the Carnet.
* The Carnet needs to be stamped/validated on the departure from the country of origin, on arrival into NZ and on departure from New Zealand. See the New Zealand based Chamber of Commerce link for further information: [International Trade | New Zealand Chambers of Commerce (wecc.org.nz)](https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.wecc.org.nz%2Fhow-we-help%2Finternational-trade&data=05%7C01%7CMichael.OLeary%40dia.govt.nz%7Cf8ea0941541442d09db008dbb0240753%7Cf659ca5cfc474e96b24d14c95df13acb%7C0%7C0%7C638297441023915268%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=lZiFwiviLv0GNoWo4PZkQsUKUHWpbk64pXMNsJKd7D4%3D&reserved=0)
* On the day of arrival, the visiting media delegation will need to declare the commercial/business goods on a New Zealand Traveler Declaration (NZTD) New Zealand Arrival Card. For facilitation, VCO could request an officer to attend the flight, or VCO can get it stamped off by the Service Desk Officer (SDO) under a trust arrangement that Customs don’t need to sight the goods.

**Temporary Import Entry Process**

14.9 A TIE can be arranged through a Customs broker in New Zealand and should be arranged so that prior to arrival the paperwork and clearance is complete.

* If the equipment is being brought in on the aircraft as passenger carry-on/ checked baggage, the visiting media delegation will need to enquire with their New Zealand High Commission / Embassy/ Consulate as to which customs broker they should use based in New Zealand and ask them to arrange a temporary import clearance. They can also make general open-source checks on the internet; Customs cannot recommend any broker.
* If the equipment is in cargo, a customs broker within the specific freight company is required to organise the temporary import clearance and forward the clearance details to VCO. This may also require a GST and DUTY deposit to cover the value of the goods. Prior to departure it is important to complete the re-export process so that the refund of the payment can be authorized. If any items remain in New Zealand, Duty and GST will apply.

14.10 If the TIE option is chosen, the completed clearance documents should be emailed in advance to:

[control.roomakair@customs.govt.nz](mailto:control.roomakair@customs.govt.nz) (for Auckland arrival)

[Wellington.airport@customs.govt.nz](mailto:Wellington.airport@customs.govt.nz) (for Wellington arrival); or

[CHCAirflightchanges@customs.govt.nz](mailto:CHCAirflightchanges@customs.govt.nz) (for Christchurch arrival)

#### Biosecurity clearance

14.11 Biosecurity clearance at the border is the responsibility of MPI. All visitors entering New Zealand are subject to New Zealand’s biosecurity laws. It is a requirement that all food items, as well as any animal and plant products, must be declared on the arrival card. There is an instant fine for not declaring these items. Also, any gifts of an agricultural nature (e.g. wood or plant material) may be subject to any treatments necessary to meet New Zealand biosecurity laws. MPI has the discretion to x-ray or inspect a person’s belongings. A member of the incoming party should be present if inspection of any item is required.

#### Arrivals and departures by non-commercial, charter, or private aircraft

14.12 Where the travel to, from, or within New Zealand is by exclusive charter, military or private aircraft, VCO will support arrangements and provide advice on security and disinsection procedures. Security involvement will usually be limited to security of the aircraft itself and such ground security as the circumstances and visiting country may require. Any security charges will be at the cost of the visiting country.

***Airport Security Checks on Departure***

14.13 All passengers boarding an aircraft in New Zealand are subject to aviation security screening. However, at the discretion of the airline, the following persons may be exempt from aviation security screening when travelling on domestic, international and transit flights whether on private or official business:

* Heads of State or Government and their accompanying partner;
* Members of the Royal family;
* The Governor-General and Prime Minister, and their accompanying partner;
* Foreign Ministers and their accompanying partner;
* United Nations Secretary General;
* Commonwealth Secretary General;
* President of the European Commission
* President of the European Council;
* High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs; and
* European Commissioners.

14.14 This exemption from security screening may also be extended to Ministers of Cabinet rank from other countries, and their accompanying partner when travelling on international and transit flights on official business.

14.15 Airlines ultimately determine security risks and threats and whether a person can board without being screened. Therefore, VCO will follow a process to request exemption from security screening from the relevant airline.

14.16 Particular arrangements apply on flights travelling to the United States of America.

## Personal protection and security of guests

***General***

15.1 The New Zealand Government takes very seriously its obligations and responsibilities under international and domestic law to protect Internationally Protected Persons, and to prevent such persons from being harassed or having their dignity impaired.

15.2 New Zealand authorities provide comprehensive protective security arrangements for GoGs against whom an assessed security threat exists. This includes the use of specially trained Protection Officers from the New Zealand Police Dignitary Protection Services, the provision of appropriate transport (arranged through VIP Transport Services), and accommodation and venue security arrangements.

#### Carriage of Guns and Other Weapons

15.3 New Zealand’s Crimes Act 1961 and Arms Act 1983 expressly forbid the carrying of any weapons for protection in New Zealand by anyone except for New Zealand Police Officers. This includes firearms, knives, batons, protective sprays, electric disabling device (such as tasers), and anything that is intended to cause bodily harm. This should be made clear to foreign police and protection personnel prior to their entry to New Zealand.

15.4 The Government has a firm policy of refusing the carriage of firearms and weapons by foreign security personnel accompanying visiting dignitaries. Any firearms or weapons must be declared and surrendered to the New Zealand Police on arrival in New Zealand or secured on the visitor’s aircraft. The firearm or weapon will be returned on departure. Foreign bodyguards do not have diplomatic immunity.

### *Security Screening at Parliament*

15.5 Entry into Parliament or into the parliamentary complex generally requires security screening. However, the following persons are exempt from security screening:

* Heads of State and Heads of Government and their partner;
* Speakers of Parliament and partner;
* Ambassadors and High Commissioners (or Charge d’affaires or Acting High Commissioners) accredited to New Zealand (whether resident in Wellington or not); and
* Visiting ministers who are accorded GoG status and who are accompanied by VCO throughout their visit to Parliament.

15.6 Other GoGs or GoPs may be exempt from personal security screening. This is considered on a case-by-case basis by the Parliamentary Security Manager, upon a request from the agency involved in the GoG or GoP. All other delegation members must be screened. All bags and carried items must be screened, including those belonging to the principal. All gifts must be screened.

## Media

16.1 Major visits may include a media contingent which, in addition to press secretaries and official photographers, forms part of the official party.

16.2 VCO has overall responsibility for logistical and administrative arrangements for local and visiting media involved in an official visit or event. VCO facilitates media vetting, arranges venues for media conferences and coordinates accommodation and travel arrangements for the accompanying media group. It provides guidance on issues such as deployment of the official photographer and the use of social media.

16.3 Please refer to paragraphs 14.6-14.10 above on Customs’ requirements for a Carnet or Temporary Import Entry (TIE) for travelling media bringing in any commercial goods/equipment into the country temporarily, prior to their arrival.

## Gifts

17.1 New Zealand does not have set traditions for gift giving. Practice varies depending on the visiting country involved. An exchange of gifts between Heads of State, Heads of Government and Ministers is usual. If a lesser-ranked person than the Head of State of a country, such as a Prime Minister or a senior Minister, calls on our Governor-General, an exchange of gifts is appropriate.

17.2 It is helpful for New Zealand officials to be given notice of any gift exchange and the value of gifts to be presented. The procedure for the exchange of gifts varies. It is decided in advance between officials from both countries, on a case-by-case basis. VCO staff are not permitted to accept monetary gifts.

17.3 All gifts brought into Parliament must be screened.

## Royal Visits

18.1 The Prime Minister invites members of the Royal family to visit New Zealand and is the visit host.

18.2 The Cabinet Office is responsible for all policy matters to do with all visits by the New Zealand Head of State and other members of the Royal family. The official programme for a visit by a member of the Royal Family is agreed between the Royal Household, the Cabinet Office and VCO. The Prime Minister must approve the programme before it is finalised.

### Categories

18.3 There are three categories of visits:

#### Official visits

18.4 Official visits are generally initiated by the New Zealand Government, at the invitation of the Prime Minister, and are focussed on an event or a theme of national interest to New Zealand. The visitor is given Guest of Government status, and the programme is developed in partnership with the New Zealand Government.

#### Working visits

18.5 Working visits are initiated by the Royal family member and are focused on their charity/patronage interests. The New Zealand Government’s involvement may be limited to airport facilitation and no funding or programme support is provided.

#### Private visits

18.6 Private visits are initiated by the Royal family member, purely for personal reasons.

Steering Committee

18.7 A Steering Committee is established for particularly significant Royal visits, to provide coordinated strategic leadership.

18.8 Core members of the Steering Committee usually comprise the Clerk of the Executive Council, General Manager, MS, and the Manager, VCO.

## Virtual Meetings

19.1 VCO can support virtual meetings of New Zealand Ministers and counterparts overseas, where the Ministerial Office is unable to do so. Requests for VCO assistance should be made (usually through MFAT, or direct from the Minister’s Office to VCO) using the appropriate form.

# Events

## Ceremonial Welcomes

20.1 VCO has primary responsibility for the coordination of ceremonial welcomes for visiting Guests of Government, working closely with Government House, NZDF and Parliamentary Services.

20.2 A Head of State or Head of Government is accorded a Ceremony of Welcome for their first visit only.

* For a Head of State, the official welcome takes place at Government House in Wellington or Auckland. The ceremonial welcome is hosted by the Governor-General.
* For Heads of Government, official welcome ceremonies take place on the Parliament forecourt, Auckland War Memorial Museum, or Government House Auckland (occasionally). Ceremonial welcomes are hosted by the Prime Minister.

### Welcomes at Government House

20.3 The visitor is greeted by the Governor-General’s Official Secretary, Kaumātua and Kuia on arrival. The Māori ceremonial comprises a Wero (challenge) by the warrior party, Karanga (call of welcome), Haka Pōwhiri (Dance of Welcome) and hongi. The military ceremonial component may comprise:

#### Royal Guard of Honour

A Royal Guard of Honour drawn from the three Service-arms, comprising 104 all ranks, three Colour Parties carrying King’s Colours, and a military band will only be paraded for the Sovereign, HM Queen Camilla or a member of the Royal Family who is a Royal Highness.

#### State Guard of Honour

A State Guard of Honour drawn from one Service-arm, comprising 70 all ranks, with one Colour Party carrying a King’s Colour, and a military band will be paraded for visiting Heads of State. The military honours given are two royal salutes, with the visiting nation’s national anthem played, and an inspection of the guard by the visiting dignitary.

#### Prime Minister’s Guard of Honour

A Prime Minister’s Guard of Honour drawn from one Service-arm, comprising 35 all ranks, one of White Ensign, Regimental Colour or Squadron Standard, and a military band will be paraded for visiting Heads of Government. The military honours given are two general salutes, with the visiting nation’s national anthem played and an inspection of the guard by the visiting dignitary.

#### Official Gun Salutes

Gun salutes will no longer be fired for Heads of State (previously 21-gun) and Heads of Government (previously 19-gun).

Like most Commonwealth nations, New Zealand has followed the United Kingdom gun salute protocols and will continue to do so on the following Royal occasions:

* 21-gun salutes to mark Royal anniversaries: the King’s official and actual birthdays; the anniversaries of the Sovereign’s ascension to the throne and coronation and the Queen’s birthday
* 21-gun salutes for New Zealand State occasions involving a senior member of the Royal Family or The Governor-General
* Special occasions such as marking the death of the Sovereign.

20.4 The Governor-General and visitor, with spouses and official parties, then proceed into Government House. Signing the visitors’ book usually occurs on first entering the House, and the Governor-General and visitor may have a discussion. Official photographs may be taken at this point or later in the programme.

20.5 A welcome reception may also follow after (formal lunch or dinner) at Government House for visiting Heads of State.Note there is usually a break with the visitor undertaking other visit programming and returning for a welcome reception.

20.6 Formal welcomes at Government House, Auckland, broadly follow the same procedures.

### Welcomes at Parliament

20.7 The parliamentary Kaumātua meets the visitor on arrival. A Māori ceremonial, involving a Wero (challenge), Karanga (Call of Welcome), Hongi with Kaumātua (tribal elders of the local region) and Haka Pōwhiri (Dance of Welcome) follows. At the conclusion of the Māori ceremonial, the Kaumātua, escorted by warriors, presents the visitor to the Speaker of the House of Representatives who in turn presents the Prime Minister. At Parliament the Māori ceremonial component is not provided by the NZDF Cultural Group. The Kahurangi Māori Dance Company will usually (but not exclusively) provide the Māori ceremonial component.

20.8 The military ceremonial component comprises a Prime Minister’s Guard of Honour drawn from one Service-arm, comprising 35 all ranks, one of White Ensign, Regimental Colour or Squadron Standard, and a military band will be paraded for visiting Heads of Government. The military honours given are two general salutes, with the visiting nation’s national anthem played and an inspection of the guard by the visiting dignitary. Note there will no longer be a military gun salute provided for Heads of Government (see ***Official Gun Salutes*** above).

20.9 At the conclusion of the military ceremony, the visitor re-joins the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister presents New Zealand Ministers to the Visitor. The Prime Minister is then presented to ministers and senior officials of the visiting delegation. The Prime Minister then leads the visitor up the Main Steps and enters Parliament House.

## National Military Commemorations

21.1 VCO has responsibility for organising national military commemorations and Wreath laying ceremonies. They are arranged in partnership with the NZDF, Ministry for Culture and Heritage (MCH), the National War Memorial Advisory Council, and other agencies as required.

21.2 The Ministry for Culture and Heritage has overall policy responsibility for the programme of commemorative events. MCH chairs the interagency Steering Group that coordinates the National Commemoration Programme. DIA is represented on the Steering Group.

21.3 VCO is responsible for coordinating the planning and delivery of national commemorative events. VCO chairs interagency planning meetings for individual events and works closely with Veterans’ Affairs and individual veterans’ associations. VCO funds the costs of running events including, as required, sound and lighting systems, screens, staging, seating, portable toilets, wreaths, choir, printed programmes, advice to the public on practical arrangements for events, refreshments and any additional security and traffic management required for larger events. The VCO Media Lead is responsible for media management at these events.

21.4 NZDF is responsible for the protocol and delivery of Ceremonial Guards, Guards of Honour, Catafalque Guards and Wreath Layings.

## Anzac Day

22.1 Anzac Day Observance falls on 25 April annually. An organising committee, chaired by VCO, brings together the main agencies responsible for organising the national Anzac Day observance in Wellington, including the Dawn Service. VCO is responsible for the overall coordination and management of two commemorations: the Dawn Ceremony and the National Commemorative Service, both at Pukeahu National War Memorial Park.

22.2 The Atatürk Memorial Ceremony follows the Anzac Day commemoration, and is held at the Atatürk Memorial, Tarakena Bay, Wellington, usually at 2.00 pm. It is organised by VCO. Wreaths are laid by representatives of the New Zealand, Australian and Turkish Governments – in the case of the latter, usually by the Turkish Ambassador if there is no visiting dignitary. The New Zealand wreath is provided by VCO.

#### Wreaths for the four main centres

22.3 In addition to providing wreaths for the National Anzac events at Pukeahu National War Memorial Park and Atatürk Memorial ceremonies, VCO provides wreaths/chaplets for the Government representative at the following ceremonies in the four main centres:

* Auckland (Dawn and Citizens services at the Auckland War Memorial Museum);
* Wellington (Citizens service at the Wellington Cenotaph);
* Christchurch (Dawn and Citizens services, temporarily held in Cranmer Square and the Transitional Cathedral); and
* Dunedin (Dawn service at the Cenotaph in the Octagon and the posy ceremony at Anderson Bay cemetery).

22.4 The Prime Minister’s Office may also arrange for Ministers to represent the Prime Minister at other ceremonies around the country.

## Other National Events and Memorial Services

23.1 The Government may direct VCO to organise an event to mark a tragedy, or to celebrate our national identity. The former have included events marking the Christchurch Earthquake in 2011 (including the dedication of the Christchurch Earthquake Memorial in 2017) and the memorial service following the Christchurch Terrorist Attack in March 2019.

23.2 As a general rule, VCO is involved where the Government designates an event as a “National” commemorative event. Close coordination is often required with the relevant local body and other stakeholders where an event is held outside Wellington.

23.3. The extent of VCO involvement in these commemorative events can vary. There are three broad categories of VCO service provided. These are described on page 39. Decisions on the level of support are made in consultation with the Prime Minister’s Office and local community representatives (where relevant).

## State Opening of Parliament

24.1 The State Opening of Parliament occurs following the holding of a General Election, and comprises:

* Members of Parliament assemble in the House of Representatives;
* Governor-General arrives at Parliament - Mana Whenua Greeting followed by Military ceremony of welcome;
* Governor-General summons Members of Parliament to the Legislative Council Chamber;
* Governor-General delivers speech from the throne;
* Members of Parliament return to the House of Representatives;
* Governor-General receives second Royal Salute and formally departs Parliament;
* Governor-General returns to Parliament informally;
* House of Representatives rises; followed by
* Reception hosted by the Prime Minister for Members of Parliament and their guests attended by the Governor-General.

#### Roles and Responsibilities

24.2 The Office of the Clerk of the House is the lead agency in planning and delivering the State Opening and associated parliamentary activity. The New Zealand Herald of Arms Extraordinary to The Queen provides advice on the ceremonial aspects of the State Opening.

24.3 The role and responsibilities of VCO include:

* organising and funding the Prime Minister’s reception in the Banquet Hall;
* managing the Governor-General’s return to Parliament via the Parliamentary Library entrance;
* movement of the spouses of the Prime Minister and the Speaker from the LCC to the Speaker’s Lounge;

provision of hospitality for the Official Party in the Speaker’s Lounge (Governor-General, Prime Minister, Speaker and Leader of the Opposition plus partners); and

* movement of the Official Party in procession format headed by Black Rod and the NZ Herald of Arms Extraordinary from the Speaker’s Lounge to the Banquet Hall.

## State Farewell Ceremonial and Function for Outgoing Governor-General

25.1 By tradition, the Government hosts a State luncheon or dinner to farewell an outgoing Governor-General.

25.2 Once the timing and format of the function has been agreed, the Cabinet Office formally conveys this to all agencies involved. The Prime Minister will formally announce the arrangements honouring the outgoing Governor-General. VCO undertakes planning with the Cabinet Office, Government House, Prime Minister’s Office and the Parliamentary Service. The event is usually held within the Parliamentary complex.

25.3 The day of the State Farewell comprises three official events:

* Ceremonial Welcome with Māori and Royal Salute components;
* Farewell Presentations in the Grand Hall and Official Photos; and
* State Luncheon (or dinner) in the Banquet Hall.

#### Roles and Responsibilities

25.4 The Cabinet Office as lead agency chairs the interagency committee.

25.5 The administrative, procedural, hospitality and media arrangements are the responsibility of VCO, working closely with the Clerk of the Executive Council, the Official Secretary to the Governor-General, New Zealand Herald of Arms Extraordinary to Her Majesty the Queen, Parliamentary Service and the Speaker's Office.

25.6 The Parliamentary Kaumātua has responsibility for the Māori ceremonial elements and NZDF for the military ceremonial elements.

## Swearing-in of the Governor-General

26.1 A State Swearing-in Ceremony is held every five years at the commencement of the term of office for a new Governor-General and comprises.

* Ceremony of Welcome (with Māori and General Salute components);
* Swearing-in Ceremony on the Parliament Forecourt or the Legislative Council Chamber in the event of adverse weather;
* Presentations in the Grand Hall;
* Official photos in the Speaker’s Lounge;
* Government Reception in the Banquet Hall; and
* Wreath laying ceremony at Pukeahu National War Memorial Park.

#### Roles and Responsibilities

26.2 The Cabinet Office (Clerk of the Executive Council) approaches the principal parties (Governor-General designate, Prime Minister, Chief Justice and Speaker) to agree timing. The Cabinet Office formally conveys the agreed timing to the agencies concerned, and takes responsibility for the drafting of the constitutional documents for use at the Swearing-in.

26.3 The New Zealand Herald of Arms Extraordinary to Her Majesty the Queen provides advice on the ceremonial aspects of the Swearing-in Ceremony.

26.4 The administrative, procedural, hospitality and media arrangements are the responsibility of VCO. In formulating these arrangements, VCO works closely with the Clerk of the Executive Council, the Official Secretary to the Governor-General, the New Zealand Herald of Arms Extraordinary to Her Majesty the Queen, the Parliamentary Service and the Speaker's Office.

## State Funerals, State Memorial Events and State Alternative Commemorative Events

#### Purpose

27.1 A State funeral is a formal, national farewell to individuals who have held the highest offices in the country. It acknowledges the individual’s service to New Zealand and demonstrates the country’s respect for that person. It is also a public event, allowing people to show their respect by participating in some way in the proceedings. A State funeral also acknowledges the personal loss to the family of the deceased.

27.2 A State memorial event serves the same purpose as a State funeral but takes place after a private funeral and interment, enabling the family to farewell their family member privately, and then join with the country in the public farewell to the public figure.

#### Eligibility

27.3 No person is entitled by right to a State funeral but by custom the Prime Minister offers a State funeral to the closest family members of:

* A Governor-General who dies in office;
* A Prime Minister who dies in office; and
* Former Governors-General.

27.4 As an alternative to a State funeral, a State memorial event may be offered to the family of the deceased. A State memorial event serves the same purpose as a State funeral.

#### The Sovereign and the Royal Family

27.5 A State memorial event is traditionally held in New Zealand to mark the death of the Sovereign, or a senior member of the Royal family. The decision as to whether to hold a State memorial event for a member of the Royal Family will be made by the Prime Minister, on the advice of the Cabinet Office.

#### Fundamental elements of a State Funeral or State Memorial Event

27.6 A State funeral or memorial event is an opportunity for the State to express its respects for the deceased. Representatives of the State, including the Governor-General and the Prime Minister (or their representatives), must be able to attend and participate in the funeral service or memorial event. State representatives are expected to speak at the event, for example by giving a tribute or a reading.

27.7 The funeral or event must take place in New Zealand at a venue suitable to accommodate the official guests, enable media coverage of events, and enable public attendance (or observation from nearby). The guest list will include representation that reflects the high office that was held by the deceased. The Prime Minister’s Office has ultimate responsibility for the official guest list for such an event.

### Alternative commemorative event

27.8 The family of the deceased may choose to decline the offer of a State or official funeral or memorial event and instead opt for an alternative commemorative event.

27.9 An alternative commemorative event may be a funeral, or a commemorative event held after a private funeral. It also must take place in New Zealand at a venue suitable to enable media coverage of events and enable public attendance (or observation from nearby). However, representatives of the State are not required to be present or participate in the event, the Prime Minister is not responsible for the official guest list, and the venue does not need to accommodate official guests.

### Official funeral and official memorial event

#### Purpose

27.10 An official funeral serves the same purpose as a State funeral.

#### Eligibility

27.11 The Prime Minister may consider offering an official funeral or an official memorial event to the family members of:

* A Speaker of the House who dies in office;
* A Chief Justice who dies in office; and
* An eminent New Zealander.

27.12 An official funeral is an exceptional honour and such an offer should be reserved for only the most celebrated iconic New Zealanders.

#### Elements of an official funeral

27.13 The fundamental elements of a State funeral are also required for an official funeral.

***Funding***

27.14 The State will provide funding for a State funeral or State memorial event and an official funeral or memorial event. The family may be responsible for meeting some costs. VCO will maintain written guidance on the allocation of costs, setting out the expected division of costs between the State and the family. This will be discussed with the family of the deceased, and agreement must be reached between VCO and the family before costs are incurred. The Prime Minister has the final decision-making authority.

27.15 The responsibility for arranging and paying for an alternative commemorative event rests with the family. Any request from the family for funding for such an alternative event will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Prime Minister.

27.16 It is not possible for someone to have a State funeral or State memorial event and receive funding for an alternative commemorative event.

## Condolence Books

28.1 Condolence Books may be opened in conjunction with a national commemoration or memorial service marking an unprecedented event or natural disaster. VCO provides official condolence books for signature for such situations. Electronic condolence messages can be sent to a dedicated VCO email address.

28.2 An official condolence book may be opened at Parliament House for several days preceding a state funeral or memorial event. This offers the Prime Minister, Ministers, Members of Parliament, members of the diplomatic corps, staff working within the Parliamentary Precinct and members of the public an opportunity to sign before the day of the event. More than one book may be opened at Parliament, and additional books may be opened in a nearby location such as the National Library.

28.3 VCO coordinates with the venue hosts on practical arrangements, such as providing the condolence books, signature tables and chairs. VCO supplies New Zealand flags and bases if required and arranges for flowers as appropriate.

28.4 VCO will staff official condolence book tables in Parliament (and any supplementary Wellington location such as the National Library) on an as needed and best endeavours basis. For a State funeral, arrangements for signing the condolence book are integrated with those for the period of lying in state at Parliament.

28.5 The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade is responsible for advising diplomatic missions of arrangements for signing the book of condolence at Parliament, in consultation with VCO. MFAT provides staff at Parliament House to facilitate all diplomats who arrive to sign the condolence book. MFAT has responsibility for managing the opening of condolence books at New Zealand overseas posts.

28.6 After the state funeral or memorial event it is VCO’s responsibility to arrange for the presentation of condolence books (in bound form) to those affected, as appropriate. VCO also has responsibility to ensure copies of the condolence books are archived.

## Observance of Commonwealth Day

29.1 Commonwealth Day was established by the Commonwealth Heads of Government at the 1977 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. The second Monday of March was chosen. Each Commonwealth Day has a theme which the Commonwealth Secretary-General announces in October of the previous year. The Commonwealth Secretariat also issues Affirmations relating to the chosen theme in the week before Commonwealth Day. The Queen’s Commonwealth Day message is usually released three to four working days before Commonwealth Day and is embargoed. In the case of New Zealand, MFAT and DPMC collaborate and prepare a suitable message to be delivered at the National Observance.

29.2 VCO, in partnership with NZDF and MFAT, organises the event. It is arranged in close consultation with the Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS Wellington), Commonwealth Youth New Zealand (CYNZ) and the Interfaith Council. The interagency co-ordinating committee is convened and chaired by VCO.

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# Health, Safety and Risk

30.1 An appropriate health and safety plan is developed by the visit or event lead and discussed with the Team Leader VCO prior to the date of every event, ceremony or visit. Specific H&S risks will also be advised to the respective Ministry/Agency lead staff member.

30.2 The plan will identify the hazards and risks at the event, ceremony or visit. The risks will be assessed and the most effective controls, so far as reasonably practicable, will be implemented. The input of staff, including contractors and relevant stakeholders is sought in the development of the plan.

30.3 In planning, the Government’s Protective Security Requirements (PSR) must be adhered to, and expectations around managing personnel, physical and information security met.

30.4 VCO maintains a business continuity plan in the case of emergency. For visits, the plan involves close cooperation with Police, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and VIP Transport. Continuity planning includes arrangements for coordination among our respective offices in Auckland. VCO maintains three satellite phones for emergency use.

30.5 All VCO staff deployed on visits and events have received training and are certified in the New Zealand Coordinated Incident Management System (CIMS), which provides the framework for ‘All of Government’ responses to crisis situations.

30.6 All VCO staff deployed on visits and events have received training on Crowded places strategy that is endorsed by Department of Internal Affairs.

# Pandemic

31.1 VCO health and safety plans, and operational procedures (including at the border) for all visits and events strictly follow Government Pandemic Plan requirements.

31.2 If required, VCO works with the Ministry of Health (MOH) and local District Health Board (DHB) on pandemic planning and issues relating to visiting official overseas delegations. Visiting delegations have responsibility for ensuring New Zealand regulations are met, and Pandemic-related travel insurance cover is taken out as necessary.

31.3 Travel insurance costs are met by the visiting delegation. The Kauri Lounge has responsibility for providing advice on pandemic requirements at the border and airline practices.

# GoG and GoP costs covered by VCO

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Head of State incl  Foreign Monarchs | Head of Government | Ministerial level visit | Guest of Parliament |
| **Main visit** |  |  |  |  |
| Size of GoG party | Principal (+ partner) + 5 | Principal (+partner) + 3 | Principal (+partner) + 1 | Speaker (+partner) + 4 MPs + 1 official |
| Accommodation  (inc meal & laundry costs) | GoG party | GoG party | GoG party | GoG party |
| Minibar costs | GoG party – reasonable costs | GoG party – reasonable costs | GoG party – reasonable costs | GoG party – reasonable costs |
| Telephone/facsimile/internet | GoG party – hotel Wi-Fi & local calls from hotel only | GoG party – hotel Wi-Fi & local calls from hotel only | GoG party – hotel Wi-Fi & local calls from hotel only | GoG party – hotel Wi-Fi & local calls from hotel only |
| Domestic air transport | GoG party | GoG party | GoG party | GoG party |
| Ground transport\* | GoG party and other delegation members | GoG party and other delegation members | GoG party and other delegation members | GoG party and other delegation members |
| Delegation members not in GoG party | own cost | own cost | own cost | own cost |
| Domestic air charters | GoG party only. Others charged pro rata | GoG party only. Others charged pro rata | not applicable | not applicable |
| NZ Defence Baggage party | Only provided for The Sovereign of New Zealand | not applicable | not applicable | not applicable |
| **Advance visit** | ground transport only | ground transport only | not applicable | not applicable |

\*Special ground transport provisions may apply for large delegations; including luggage vehicles

# Categories of VCO Support for Memorial/Remembrance Events

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Category One  National event | Category Two  Civic-led event | Category Three  Civic event |
| * Requires the Prime Minister to designate the service as a National Commemorative Event * VCO involved in all aspects of planning and delivery, working with other stakeholders. Generally, VCO is the lead agency responsible for the event, but this is not always the case * VCO resources based on site for both planning and delivery of the event * VCO funds the entire event * Usually attended by the Governor General, Prime Minister, NZ Ministers, overseas dignitaries, members of the diplomatic corps. * If required – Prerecording of event as contingency due to current Covid environment * VCO delivers the initial event, then the 1st and 10th year Anniversaries * Flags flown at half-mast (1st and 10th Anniversaries) * National minute Silence * *Previous Category One events include:* The Christchurch terrorist attack national remembrance service (March 2019); the Christchurch earthquake first year anniversary event (February 2012); the Pike River official remembrance service (2010). | * Local Government or community would plan and deliver the event (i.e. civic based event) * VCO would provide advice and share examples from previous events (e.g. budget plans, orders of service) * VCO may support the delivery of the event if requested by local government, community and/or iwi. * VCO may make a financial contribution towards the cost of the event * Possible government representation (invited by local government or community) * *Previous Category Two events include:* Carterton Balloon tragedy service (2012); Tuia 250 (2019); Christchurch Earthquake 10-year anniversary (2021) | * Local Government or community would plan and deliver the event (i.e. civic based event) * VCO’s role would be limited to providing agreed funding towards the cost of the event * VCO would not provide onsite resources for the event * Possible Government representation (invited by local government or community) * *UPDATE: Previous Category Three events include:* the White Island/Whakaari Eruption one-year anniversary (December 2020) |