



# Meeting of the COVID-19 Ministerial Group

## Minute of Decision

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### **COVID-19: Request for Exemption to Temporary Border Restrictions for Essential Worker, and Proposal to Delegate Decision Making to Joint Ministers**

The group of Ministers with Power to Act on COVID-19 matters [CAB-20-MIN-0130] convened on 21 April 2020 at 10.30am, and in accordance with their Power to Act:

#### **Background**

- 1 **noted** that on 19 March 2020, Cabinet agreed further border restrictions to prevent travel to New Zealand for anyone other than:
  - 1.1 New Zealand citizens and residence class visa holders;
  - 1.2 the partner, legal guardian or any dependent children travelling with a New Zealand citizen or residence class visa holder;
  - 1.3 Australian citizens and permanent residence class visa holders ordinarily resident in New Zealand;
  - 1.4 people subject to regulation 25 or the Immigration (Visa, Entry Permission, and Related Matters) Regulations 2010, which includes air and marine crew;

[CAB-20-MIN-0130]

- 2 **noted** that Cabinet also agreed to high level parameters for case-by-case exemptions to COVID-19 border restrictions, which include:
  - 2.1 those who need to travel for humanitarian reasons;
  - 2.2 essential health workers;
  - 2.3 citizens of Samoa and Tonga for essential travel to New Zealand;
  - 2.4 partners or dependents of a temporary work or student visa holder, and who normally live in New Zealand;
  - 2.5 any other essential workers identified by the group of Ministers with Power to Act;

[CAB-20-MIN-0122]

### Exemption for aviation sector worker

- 3 **noted** that officials have received a request to enable a worker in the aviation sector to enter New Zealand to perform an essential role, providing oversight of Boeing aircraft safety issues;
- 4 **noted** that this request is supported by the Ministry of Transport and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, as the worker is critical to the safety and viability of the commercial aviation sector in New Zealand;
- 5 **noted** that the request includes the wife and child of the essential worker;
- 6 **noted** that, on arrival in Auckland, the worker and his family will be required to undergo quarantine or managed isolation in an approved facility for a minimum of 14 days;
- 7 **noted** that all costs associated with the worker's international and domestic travel and quarantine are to be met by the Civil Aviation Authority as the sponsoring employer;
- 8 **agreed** to make an exemption to the COVID-19 border restrictions for the essential worker and his family;

### Further requests for exemptions

- 9 **noted** that further requests for exemption to temporary border restrictions for essential workers are anticipated;
- 10 **noted** that officials are considering the following factors when developing advice on requests for exemption:
- 10.1 why the workers are needed to ensure the continuity of an essential service;
  - 10.2 why it is not possible to re-deploy workers already in New Zealand (this could include time constraints or the specific nature of the work being done);
  - 10.3 what is happening to any staff currently performing the role(s);
  - 10.4 the length of the visa required and the reason for that length of visa;
  - 10.5 the requirement to undergo quarantine or managed isolation in an approved facility for a minimum of 14 days and whether appropriate domestic travel arrangements are in place
- 11 **agreed** to delegate further decision making on exemptions to border restrictions for essential workers to the Minister for Economic Development and the relevant portfolio Minister;
- 12 **agreed** that requests for exemptions for classes of workers continue to be considered by the COVID-19 Ministerial Group;
- 13 **noted** that the Minister for Economic Development will report on a three-monthly basis to the Cabinet Economic Development Committee with details of the exemption decisions made by Ministers;

**IN CONFIDENCE**

- 14 **noted** that officials are developing advice to bring to Cabinet shortly on a framework to be applied to exemptions requested through the marine pathway, primarily by arriving small marine craft and research vessels, but also fishing vessels seeking to discharge fish in New Zealand.

Rachel Hayward  
for Secretary of the Cabinet

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**Distribution:**  
The Cabinet  
Hon James Shaw

Copied to officials via email