



Aide-Memoire

RECONNECTING NEW ZEALANDERS' READINESS FOR NEXT STEPS

To	Rt Hon. Jacinda Ardern, Prime Minister Hon. Chris Hipkins, Minister for COVID-19 Response	Report No	DPMC-2021/22-2145
From	Ruth Fairhall, COVID-19 Group, DPMC	Date	11/05/2022

Purpose

1. This Aide-Memoire provides an update on the status of system readiness to go live with the next steps of Reconnecting New Zealanders.

Background

2. This report provides an update on readiness for: (1) Visitor visa classes for Pacific Island Forum countries from 16 May; (2) Step 4 – Accredited Employer work visas and Work Visas from 04 July; and (3) Step 5 – Visitor / Education Visas from 31 July. Appendix A provides an overview summarising the Reconnecting New Zealanders (RNZ) steps, settings, and pathways.
3. Appendix B includes a readiness report dated 11 May 2022.

Traveller volumes and airline updates

Passenger numbers since step 1 of Reconnecting and comparisons:

4. The latest Reconnecting step, unvaccinated resident class visa holders eligible to enter New Zealand from 11.59pm on 05 May, has been completed successfully.
5. Numbers of travellers since RNZ Step 1 (28 February to 10 May):
 - i. Total – 248,338
 - ii. Australia – 156,004
 - iii. Rest of the World – 92,334
6. We have seen a small increase in travellers in the past week, with the average daily total travellers at 5,489 up from the previous week's average of 5,450.
 - i. Australia - average of 1,527 per week for seven days from 28 February and 3,108 for the seven days from 13 April and 3,263 for the past seven days.
 - ii. Rest of the world - average of 202 per week for the seven days from 28 February and 688 for the seven days from 13 April and 1,113 for the past seven days.

Key operational updates including readiness

7. This report has an overall **Green rating**, with activities remaining on track for the current steps included in the report.
8. Work is ongoing, between agencies, to confirm the remaining outstanding aspect of what happens when a visitor gets COVID-19. This relates to what services are available to travellers who do not have a place to safely isolate and how the system can provide Alternative Accommodation Support for travellers that find themselves in this situation. This does not prevent any of the Reconnecting steps from occurring.
9. As the system continues to evolve, the following updates are included here for awareness:
 - a) Unvaccinated resident class visa holders are now eligible to enter New Zealand. Some operational challenges have been encountered, however overall, the border operations teams are managing this latest change. Whilst updates to the New Zealand Traveller Declaration (NZTD), scheduled for release on 12 May, will see the automation of the issuing of the conditional travel pass, travellers will continue to be required to have their residency status verified manually at both check-in and upon arrival in New Zealand.
 - b) Overall arrival testing compliance remains steady at 78%¹ while overall positivity at 1.6%. From next week the three single Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) packs provided to arriving travellers will be replaced with a single box containing four RAT tests. Work is ongoing with MPI airport staff (who distribute the Welcome Packs, including RAT test kits) to prepare for this adjustment. Whilst the flyer in the Welcome Pack remains current, Q&As and websites will be updating to reflect the change during the coming week.
 - c) Ministry of Health are preparing a report, for the Minister for COVID-19 Response, to progress a change cycle for future Air Border Order (ABO) and Director-General Notices. This cycle will review public health and administrative requirements and collate a range of adjustments to remove inconsistencies, better align across agencies, and provide simplicity to the process.
 - d) The Ministry of Health has agreed to provide weekly reporting to the Associate Minister for COVID-19 regarding the numbers of travellers presenting for testing, community testing, whole genome sequencing (WGS), and increasing ESR capacity for WGS. This report will start Friday 20 May.

¹ Currently the total number of testing on arrival travellers are under-reported as there are a number of travellers who have not correctly completed the New Zealand Traveller Declaration (NZTD) and are therefore not added into the National Border System (NBS) which is the system utilised to record this data.

Recommendations

11. It is recommended that you **note** the contents of this aide-memoire.



Ruth Fairhall
Head of Strategy and Policy
COVID-19 Group

Date: 11/05/2022

NOTED

Rt Hon. Jacinda Ardern
Prime Minister

Date: / /

NOTED

Hon. Chris Hipkins,
Minister for COVID-19 Response

Date: / /

Cc: COVID-19 Chief Executives Board (with regular meeting papers), COVID-19 Independent Continuous Review, Improvement and Advice Group

Attachment A Readiness report dated 11 May



Appendix A: RNZ summary

Reconnecting New Zealanders: Policy Summary

Entry pathways

Travellers will enter using one of four entry pathways – only three of these are in use today:



Quarantine Free Travel – entry without quarantine or isolation for eligible travellers from some Pacific Countries



Testing on arrival – entry without quarantine or isolation for eligible travellers with testing before departure and after arrival (on day 0/1 and 5/6)
This is the main entry pathway to New Zealand.



Managed Isolation and Quarantine – full MIQ for other travellers – small number of exceptional travellers are allowed to use MIQ (e.g. refugees, Antarctic survey team, Air Crew). These individuals can leave MIQ at any time.



The **self-isolation pathway** is not currently in use.

Key settings summary

Setting	QFT	Test on arrival	MIQ
PDT:	Not required	48h PCR or 24h RAT/LAMP	
Vaccinated	Nzers/ Perm Residents: N/A Other visitors: Vaccinated with approved vaccine		
Contact tracing info/ 14 day travel history	Self-declaration in NZTD		MIQ team completes NZTD
Testing	Not required	RAT on day 0/1 & 5/6 If positive, PCR at a CTC	Testing on day 0/1, day 3, day 5/6
Positive test	N/A	Selfisolate	Moved to Quarantine facility
Airport health screening	Option to self-refer	Option to self-refer	Required

Reconnecting New Zealanders step phasing and timing

Feb	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November
Completed steps									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Step 1.1 – 23.59h 27 February – New Zealanders to and from Australia (Plus Nauru, Tuvalu and American Samoa) Step 1.2 – 23.59h 02 March – Removal of the need to self-isolate for 7 days Step 2.1 – 23.59h 04 March – New Zealanders able to travel to and from everywhere Step 2.2 – 23.59h 13 March – More exceptions for Skilled Workers (1.5x median wage), Working holiday visas MIQ changes – 23.59h 18 March – Changes to MIQ eligibility/ fully vaccinated definitions NZTD Launch – 25 March, NZTD legally mandated for all travellers from 31 March Pacific pathway changes – Shift of the Cook Islands, Samoa, Vanuatu, and American Samoa to the Testing on Arrival pathway (23.59h on 8 April) – therefore QFT remains for direct flights from Nauru, Niue, Tokelau and Tuvalu Step 3.1 – 23.59h 12 April – More border exceptions for critical workforces, students, and sports/events and Australians Step 3.2 – 23.59h 01 May – Visa-waiver travellers and existing visitor visa holders Step 3.3 – 23.59h 05 May – Unvaccinated Residents permitted to enter New Zealand 									
Outstanding steps									
Step 4.1 – 16 May – Visitor visas from Pacific Island Forum countries (excluding Australia)									
Step 4.2 – 4 July – Accredited Employer Work Visas and Work Visas									
Step 5 – 31 July – Visitor Visas and Student Visas									

STEPS 4 and 5 TO BE ANNOUNCED ON 11 MAY

Appendix B: RNZ Readiness summary

Reconnecting New Zealanders Readiness Report – Status as at 11 May 2022

Overall status
GREEN

Ref	Lead agency	Group of activities	Visitor visas for Pacific Islands from 16 May	Step 4 – Accredited Employer work visas and Work Visas from 04 July	Step 5 – Visitor / Education visas from 31 July
1	MoH	Regulatory			
2	MoH	Border Health Updates			
3	Customs	Border Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review Staffing ○ Update SOPs and processes ○ Update staff training ○ Update Immigration Regulations ○ Update Safe Travel Advisory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ≠ Review Staffing ≠ Update SOPs and processes ≠ Update staff training ≠ Update Immigration Regulations ≠ Update Safe Travel Advisory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ≠ Review Staffing ≠ Update SOPs and processes ≠ Update staff training ≠ Update Immigration Regulations ≠ Update Safe Travel Advisory
4	Customs	Aviation sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Update FAQ for aviation ○ Update sector advice/ websites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ≠ Update FAQ for aviation ≠ Update sector advice/ websites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ≠ Update FAQ for aviation ≠ Update sector advice/ websites
5	MBIE	ALOs / Immigration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Update Training for Offshore airports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ≠ Update Training for Offshore airports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ≠ Update Training for Offshore airports
6	DPMC	Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Update UAC and websites across government ○ Update 'Re-educate the traveller project' continuing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Update UAC and websites across government ○ Update 'Re-educate the traveller project' continuing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Update UAC and websites across government ○ Update 'Re-educate the traveller project' continuing

Legend: ≠ Not started
○ Work in-progress
✓ Complete

Proactively Released