



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 Electricity Sector Workers

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:

1 **noted** that on 19 March 2020, Cabinet agreed to 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 of the Immigration (Visa, Entry Permission, and Related Matters) Regulations 2010, which includes air and marine crew;

[CAB-20-MIN-0122]

2 **noted** that Cabinet also agreed 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]

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- 3 **noted** that officials have received the following requests from the electricity sector to allow foreign workers to enter New Zealand to perform the following essential tasks:
- 3.1 critical maintenance on Todd Generation's Mckee and Junction Road power stations (one worker);
 - 3.2 recommissioning the Aratiatia Power Station (three workers);
 - 3.3 servicing the Edgecumbe co-generation plant gas turbines (two workers);
- 4 **noted** the name, date of birth, nationality, and passport number of the workers associated with these requests, as outlined in Annex One to the paper;
- 5 **noted** that these requests are supported by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, as the work these workers are required to undertake cannot be performed by local staff, and the work ensures security of electricity supply;
- 6 **noted** that, on arrival in New Zealand, the workers 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 workers, including international and domestic travel, quarantine, and accommodation and support if they become stranded in New Zealand, will be met by Todd Energy, Mercury Energy and Nova Energy respectively as their sponsoring employers;
- 8 **agreed** to make an exemption to the COVID-19 border restrictions for the essential workers described in paragraphs 3 and 4 above.

Rachel Hayward
for Secretary of the Cabinet

Distribution:
The Cabinet
Hon James Shaw

Copied to officials via email