



Local Government briefing

Hon Nanaia Mahuta
Minister of Local Government

Hon Phil Twyford
Minister of Economic Development

Title: COVID-19: REQUEST FOR EXEMPTION TO TEMPORARY BORDER RESTRICTIONS FOR ESSENTIAL WORKERS

Date: 11 May 2020

Key issues

Officials have received a request to enable an essential worker to enter New Zealand further to the exemptions provided to essential workers under the COVID-19 border restrictions.

The exemption is sought for an essential worker in the s 9(2)(a) sector who is needed to take up a permanent position s 9(2)(a) for Northland Regional Council.

This briefing recommends that Ministers support this application, as it is deemed critical to the maintenance of New Zealand's s 9(2)(a) infrastructure.

Action sought

That the Minister of Local Government, and Minister of Economic Development:

- **agree** to make an exemption to the COVID-19 border restrictions for a worker who is required to take up a permanent role in the delivery of essential services for Northland Regional Council.

Timeframe

By Wednesday 13 May, 2020

Contact for telephone discussions (if required)

Name	Position	Direct phone line	After hours phone	Suggested 1 st contact
Paul Barker	Partnerships Director, Central and Local Government Partnerships Group	s 9(2)(a)		✓
Phillip Eyles	Lead Strategic Advisor			
Return to	Matt Walker, level 9, 45 Pipitea Street			
Ministerial database reference	LG202000394			

Purpose

- 1 This paper seeks agreement to an exemption to COVID-19 temporary border measures to enable an essential worker in the s 9(2)(a) sector to enter New Zealand.

Cabinet has agreed high-level parameters for exemptions to the COVID-19 border restrictions

- 2 On 19 March 2020, Cabinet agreed to border restrictions preventing entry to New Zealand [CAB-20-MIN-0122 refers]. High level parameters for case-by-case exemptions to these restrictions were also agreed.
- 3 On 20 April 2020, Cabinet agreed to delegate exemption decisions for essential workers to Joint Ministers, to include the relevant portfolio Minister and the Minister of Economic Development [CAB-20-MIN-0130 refers].

A request has been made for an exemption to the travel restrictions for a worker in essential services

- 4 Officials have received a request to enable an essential worker in the s 9(2)(a) sector to enter New Zealand under the exemptions to the border restrictions that were agreed by Ministers. The essential worker is required to take up a permanent position s 9(2)(a) for Northland Regional Council.
- 5 s 9(2)(a)
- 6 The Infrastructure Pillar of the COVID-19 government response recommends Ministers support this application, as it is deemed critical to the maintenance of the Northland region's s 9(2)(a) services.

The worker is required to take up a permanent role overseeing the delivery of essential services for Northland Regional Council

- 7 The exemption is sought for one specialist worker to take up a permanent role as s 9(2)(a), at the Northland Regional Council. This worker is identified in **Appendix A**.
- 8 Northland Regional Council collaborates with the Whangarei, Kaipara and Far North District Councils, and the New Zealand s 9(2)(a) Agency to deliver joined-up s 9(2)(a) services for Northland. s 9(2)(a)
- 9 The s 9(2)(a) role is a specialist appointment which Northland Regional Council has found extremely difficult to fill. A suitable candidate was only found s 9(2) following two rounds of unsuccessful advertising over a period of 10 months.

- 10 While New Zealand is at alert level 4 and alert level 3 in response to COVID-19, the worker has been able to complete a portion of his role remotely and has been doing so since 6 April 2020. When the alert level changes to level 2 or lower, as s 9(2)(a) [REDACTED], this essential worker will be urgently required on the ground to:
- 10.1 s 9(2)(a) [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
- 10.2 s 9(2)(a) [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
- 10.3 s 9(2)(a) [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
- 11 These 'on-the-ground' functions cannot be fulfilled remotely as they require a high-level of interaction with contractors in the field, and rapid response to implementation issues as they arise. The worker's role will be particularly important as Northland's s 9(2)(a) [REDACTED] infrastructure will be a significant factor in enabling the region's economic and social recovery from the effects of COVID-19.
- 12 The worker is a s 9(2) citizen, located in s 9 at present. It is intended that he will travel to New Zealand via a commercial service from s 9 to Auckland between 4 and 17 May 2020, subject to flight availability. s 9(2)(a) [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Information about these family members is provided in
- Appendix B.**
- 13 Once in New Zealand, the worker and his family will go into 'managed isolation' in a government-provided facility. During that time, the worker will continue to work remotely. At the end of this period, the worker will carry out onsite work to the extent permitted by government guidelines and in a manner that is safe to do so (e.g. by using appropriate PPE).
- 14 Subject to Ministerial agreement, this worker and his family will arrive in Auckland before 17 May 2020. s 9(2)(a) [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

The worker and his family will be quarantined on arrival in New Zealand

- 15 On arrival in New Zealand the worker and his family will be required to undergo quarantine or managed isolation in an approved facility for a minimum of 14 days. During this 14-day period, the worker will only be able to provide remote support to his employer.
- 16 All costs associated with the family's accommodation and support for quarantine or managed isolation, will be met by Northland Regional Council as the sponsoring employer.

Recommendations

The Department of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment recommends that Ministers:

- 1 **note** that on 19 March 2020, Cabinet agreed to border restrictions preventing entry to New Zealand [CAB-20-MIN-0122 refers]. High level parameters for case-by-case exemptions to these restrictions were also agreed;
- 2 **note** that on 20 April 2020, Cabinet agreed to delegate exemption decisions for essential workers to Joint Ministers, to include the relevant portfolio Minister and the Minister of Economic Development [CAB-20-MIN-0130 refers];
- 3 **note** that this request is supported by the Infrastructure Pillar of the COVID-19 government response because delivery of critical s 9(2)(a) services infrastructure is required by Northland Regional Council;
- 4 s 9(2)(a) [REDACTED]
- 5 **note** that the worker and his family will enter managed isolation on arrival in New Zealand; and
- 6 **agree** to make an exemption to the COVID-19 border restrictions for one worker who is required to take up a role as a s 9(2)(a) [REDACTED] for Northland Regional Council.



Paul Barker

Partnerships Director, Central and Local Government Partnerships Group



Rebecca Heerdegen

Director, Business and Essential Services



Hon Nanaia Mahuta
Minister of Local Government

/ /

Hon Phil Twyford
Minister of Economic Development

/ /

Appendix A: Details of essential worker

s 9(2)(a)



Appendix B: List of family members of Musheer Ilahi Khan

s 9(2)(a)

