



## 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:** 8 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 water sector who is needed to take up a permanent position as a s 9(2)(a) for Waimakariri District Council.

This briefing recommends that Ministers support this application, as it is deemed critical to the maintenance of New Zealand's water services.

### 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 Waimakariri District Council.

### Timeframe

By Tuesday 12 May, 2020

Contact for telephone discussions (if required)

Name	Position	Direct phone line	After hours phone	Suggested 1 <sup>st</sup> 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	LG202000354			

## Purpose

- 1 This paper seeks agreement to an exemption to COVID-19 temporary border measures to enable an essential worker in the water 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 water 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 in the water sector as a s 9(2)(a) for Waimakariri District 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 Waimakariri District's water services.

## The worker is required to take up a permanent role as a s 9(2)(a) for Waimakariri District Council

- 7 The exemption is sought for one specialist worker to take up a permanent role as a s 9(2)(a) for Waimakariri District Council. This worker is identified in **Appendix A**.
- 8 This is a key role for providing a safe water supply to the community. s 9(2)(a)
- 9 s 9(2)(a). Waimakariri District Council found this vacancy extremely difficult to fill, due to the specialist qualification and experience required. A suitable candidate could not be found in New Zealand, prompting Waimakariri District Council to search for, and find, a candidate overseas.

- 10 As the s 9(2)(a) [REDACTED], there are limited aspects of the role that can be undertaken remotely. Therefore, the worker has not been able to work remotely while he waits to travel to New Zealand.
- 11 The worker's role will be particularly important as Waimakariri District Council's Water infrastructure will come under increasing pressure as industrial and commercial activity is likely to increase at Alert Levels 2 and 1. Supporting this 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)(a) [REDACTED] citizen, located in s 9(2)(a) [REDACTED] at present. It is intended that he will travel to New Zealand via a commercial service from s 9(2)(a) [REDACTED] to Auckland between 13 May 2020 and 17 May 2020, subject to flight availability and s 9(2)(a) [REDACTED] travel restrictions.
- 13 Once in New Zealand, the worker will go into 'managed isolation' in a government-provided facility (further detail provided below). At the end of this period, the worker will travel to Canterbury to commence work with Waimakariri District Council. He 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 will arrive in Auckland before 17 May 2020. s 9(2)(a) [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

### **The worker will be quarantined on arrival in New Zealand**

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

### **The worker will be invited to apply for temporary visas as a supported essential worker**

- 17 According to Immigration Instructions, *H5: COVID-19 Support Restricted Temporary Entry Instructions*, workers who do not hold a valid visa for travel to New Zealand must apply for supported temporary visas as essential workers "critical to the maintenance of critical infrastructure."

- 18 s 9(2)(a) [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

## 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 water services infrastructure is required by Waimakariri District Council.
- 4 s 9(2)(a) [REDACTED]
- 5 **note** that the worker 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 Water Engineer for Waimakariri District Council.



**Paul Barker**

Partnerships Director, Central and Local Government Partnerships Group

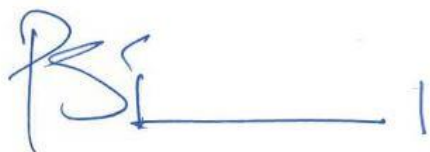


**Rebecca Heerdegen**

Director, Business and Essential Services

**Hon Nanaia Mahuta**  
**Minister of Local Government**

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**Hon Phil Twyford**  
**Minister of Economic Development**

9 / 5 / 2020

**Appendix A: Details of essential worker**

s 9(2)(a)

