



# Meeting of the COVID-19 Ministerial Group

## Minute of Decision

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### COVID-19: Border Closure: Seeking Approval for Repatriation Transits through Auckland for Third Country Nationals

The group of Ministers with Power to Act on COVID-19 matters [CAB-20-MIN-0130] convened on 22 March 2020 at 5.00 pm and, in accordance with their Power to Act:

- 1 **noted** that under current border settings third country nationals are unable to transit New Zealand airports to be repatriated to home countries and that this is currently inconsistent with Australian measures;
- 2 **noted** that this presents foreign policy risks and potentially negative implications for New Zealand citizens seeking to transit foreign airports;
- 3 **noted** that in the Pacific, including the Realm, there are up to 700 third country nations seeking to be repatriated via Auckland;
- 4 **agreed** to open a time-limited window of:
  - 4.1 up to 1500 Tuesday 24 March 2020 (NZT) to enable transit via New Zealand to Australia for onward connection:
    - 4.1.1 from the Pacific;
    - 4.1.2 to and from South America;
  - 4.2 up to one week (Sunday 29 March 2020) to enable transit via New Zealand:
    - 4.2.1 from Australia to the United States and Canada for US and Canadian nationals
    - 4.2.2 from the Pacific for other nationals not transiting Australia to their home countries;
- 5 **noted** that transit of passengers will only be allowed if the following conditions are met in order to manage the health risks to New Zealand:
  - 5.1 no COVID-19 test result that is positive or for which the results have not been received in the previous 14 days;
  - 5.2 no close contact with a suspected or confirmed case in the previous 14 days;

- 5.3 no symptoms, especially no fever (temperature check undertaken) in the previous 14 days;
  - 5.4 an assurance that airlines will permit boarding for the full journey;
  - 5.5 an assurance received via MFAT that the destination country will permit arrival;
  - 5.6 an assurance that they can meet any entry requirements of the destination country (including measures required in transit, such as temperature checking);
  - 5.7 the airline does not allow unwell passengers on board;
- 6 **invited** the Minister of Immigration to sign a Special Declaration to give effect to the decision under paragraph 4;
- 7 **noted** that officials will revert to Ministers to seek further guidance on transits, should demand continue.

Michael Webster  
Secretary of the Cabinet

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**Hard-copy distribution:**

Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern (Chair)  
Rt Hon Winston Peters  
Hon Kelvin Davis  
Hon Grant Robertson  
Hon Chris Hipkins  
Hon Carmel Sepuloni  
Hon Dr David Clark  
Hon James Shaw

**Officials:**

Office of the Prime Minister  
Chief Executive, DPMC  
Chief Executive, Ministry of Health  
Commissioner of Police  
All of Government Controller

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