



Meeting of the COVID-19 Ministerial Group

Minute of Decision

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COVID-19: Repatriation Flights: A Framework for Decision-making on the Repatriation of Foreign Nationals

The group of Ministers with Power to Act on COVID-19 matters [CAB-20-MIN-0130] convened on 27 March 2020 at 10.30am, and in accordance with their Power to Act:

- 1 **noted** that New Zealanders overseas and foreign nationals in New Zealand are being encouraged to 'shelter in place' unless they have secured arrangements to depart, but that options for assisted departures are being kept under review;
- 2 **agreed** that no assisted departures of foreign nationals in New Zealand should occur for the remainder of March 2020;
- 3 **directed** officials to report back to COVID-19 Ministers by 31 March 2020 with a framework for considering foreign governments' requests to approve and support repatriation flights, including domestic travel requirements;
- 4 **agreed** that the key principles in operationalising managed departures by foreign nationals that would need to be met include:
 - 4.1 managed departures are assessed not to increase the burden on the New Zealand public health system;
 - 4.2 any movements must be managed in a way that minimises the risk of the further spread of COVID-19 within New Zealand;
 - 4.3 resources could be allocated by the New Zealand government to manage assisted departures without taking away from higher priorities;
 - 4.4 foreign governments can prove that all health and logistical arrangements are in place and to the satisfaction of relevant New Zealand authorities;
- 5 **agreed** that foreign governments be advised to suspend planning for government chartered repatriation flights departing New Zealand before 1 April 2020 and until such time as a framework is in place;
- 6 **s6(a)**

- 7 **agreed** that the Lufthansa flight from Auckland to Frankfurt, which is scheduled to carry a number of German school students back to their home country, be permitted to depart New Zealand on Saturday, 28 March 2020 as scheduled;
- 8 **s6(a)**
- 9 **noted** that, should the government agree to assisted departures by foreign governments, the inwards flights may present opportunities to repatriate New Zealanders from overseas and to bring in essential supplies via air freight.

Rachel Hayward
for Secretary of the Cabinet

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
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