



Meeting of the COVID-19 Ministerial Group

Minute of Decision

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Requests for Exemptions

The group of Ministers with Power to Act on COVID-19 matters [CAB-20-MIN-0130] convened on 2 April 2020 at 10.30am, and in accordance with their Power to Act:

- 1 **noted** that on 19 March 2020, Cabinet agreed 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-0130]
- 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]
- 3 **noted** that:
 - 3.1 officials have received a request to make an exemption to the travel restrictions to enable seven essential workers to travel to and enter New Zealand to work on the Mt Albert Sludge project;

IN C O N F I D E N C E

3.2 these requests are supported by the Infrastructure Pillar of the COVID-19 government response, as the Mt Albert Sludge project is critical to repair Wellington's wastewater system;

- 4 **noted** that visas have not yet been granted for these workers, but that they will be invited to apply for temporary visas as supported essential workers;
- 5 **noted** that the workers will be required to self-isolate on arrival in New Zealand before commencing work, and that the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, in conjunction with the Ministry of Health, will need to be satisfied as to the adequacy of the proposed self-isolation arrangements;
- 6 **agreed** to make an exemption to the COVID-19 border restrictions for the seven workers who have been identified as critical for the Mt Albert Sludge project.

Rachel Hayward
for Secretary of the Cabinet

Distribution:
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Copied to officials via email