



# Cabinet

## Minute of Decision

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### Stronger COVID-19 Border Measures

**Portfolio**                      **Immigration**

On 19 March 2020, Cabinet:

1        **noted** the following considerations for changing the current border restrictions:

- 1.1      risk to the health of New Zealanders;
- 1.2      risk to the health of Pacific Island countries
- 1.3      readiness of agencies to operationalise any measures;
- 1.4      risks to foreign relations or of significant adverse economic impacts;

2        **noted** the categorisations for travel restrictions as of 16 March 2020:

Category	Coming from or have been through in 14 days prior to travel to New Zealand
Category 1A: Cannot travel to New Zealand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mainland China and Iran</li> </ul>
Category 1B: Can travel to New Zealand but must self-isolate for 14 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rest of the world except specific Pacific Island countries.<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>
Category 2: Can travel to New Zealand and must self-isolate for 14 days if unwell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specific Pacific Island countries.<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>

3        **noted** that given the rapidly worsening global health situation relating to COVID-19, the threat to public health in New Zealand has risen;

4        **noted** that effective containment of COVID-19 requires government resources to be focussed on testing, contact tracing, and preparation for large-scale self-isolation should there be widespread transmission here;

<sup>1</sup> This means all Pacific Islands Forum members (except Australia and French Polynesia), associate member Tokelau, and observer Wallis and Futuna.

<sup>2</sup> This means all Pacific Islands Forum members (except Australia and French Polynesia), associate member Tokelau, and observer Wallis and Futuna.

5 **noted** that travellers on visitor and working holiday scheme visas are unlikely to have a realistic prospect of self-isolation without significant government support and call on scarce resources;

6 **agreed** to stronger measures at the border as set out below:

<i>Category</i>	<i>Coming from or have been through in 14 days prior to travel to New Zealand</i>
Category 1A: Cannot travel to New Zealand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mainland China and Iran: all travellers.</li> <li>• Rest of the world.</li> </ul>
Category 1B: Can travel to New Zealand but must self-isolate for 14 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People to whom Category 1A does not apply, except air and marine crew.</li> </ul>
Category 2: Can travel to New Zealand and must self-isolate for 14 days if unwell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None.</li> </ul>

7 **noted** that Category 1A restrictions will continue not to apply to:

7.1 New Zealand citizens and residence class visa holders<sup>3</sup> (including the Realm);

7.2 the partner, legal guardian or any dependent children travelling with a New Zealand citizen or residence class visa holder;

7.3 Australian citizens and permanent residence class visa holders ordinarily resident in New Zealand;

7.4 people subject to regulation 25 of the Immigration (Visa, Entry Permission, and Related Matters) Regulations 2010, which includes air and marine crew;

8 **agreed** that Category 1A restrictions will not apply to diplomats accredited to New Zealand and currently resident in New Zealand;

9 **agreed** that exceptions can be sought in relation to Category 1A on a case-by-case basis, in particular for:

9.1 humanitarian reasons;

9.2 essential health workers;

9.3 citizens of Samoa and Tonga for essential travel to New Zealand;

9.4 those on visitor visas who are partners or dependents of a temporary work or student visa holder, and who normally live in New Zealand;

9.5 any other essential workers identified by the group of Ministers with Power to Act;

10 **agreed** that the requirement to self-isolate will continue not to apply to air and marine crew to allow flights to continue operating;

<sup>3</sup> This exemption from these restrictions will not apply to a person whose residence class visa was granted off shore and the person is arriving in New Zealand for the first time.

- 11 **noted** any such change to the Immigration Instructions could come into effect for passengers boarding planes to New Zealand from 2359 hours on Thursday, 19 March 2020 if a decision is made by 1700 hours on Thursday, 19 March 2020 (all times in NZDT);
- 12 **agreed** that decisions in paragraphs 6–10 will expire at 2359 hours on Tuesday, 31 March 2020;
- 13 **invited** the Minister of Immigration to give effect to the decisions in paragraphs 6–12 (and paragraph 15 if required) through certifying Immigration Instructions;
- 14 **noted** that these restrictions could impact the New Zealand horticulture and viticulture industries who source workers under the Recognised Seasonal Employer Scheme, however Vanuatu has already temporarily closed this for Vanuatu itself;
- 15 **agreed** that those subject to Category 1A border restrictions, but who are eligible to travel to Australia as their final destination, are able to transit via New Zealand as long as that transit remains airside and does not allow entry into New Zealand.

Michael Webster  
Secretary of the Cabinet

***Secretary's note:** This minute has been updated to include the additional decision in paragraph 15 which was agreed by Cabinet by email subsequent to the meeting.*

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**Hard-copy distribution:**

Prime Minister  
Deputy Prime Minister  
Minister of Immigration