

VISA PAK ISSUE 345 — 16 FEBRUARY 2018

## **REMINDER ON FURTHER VISITOR VISAS FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE UNABLE TO RETURN HOME DUE TO CIRCUMSTANCES IN THEIR HOME COUNTRY**

In light of Cyclone Gita adversely affecting Tonga and other parts of the Pacific, please remind your staff of previous advice given regarding requests for further visas from people who ordinarily reside in a country that has suffered a disaster.

This item also confirms that the best practice advice is not only restricted to natural disasters.

### **Background**

When people are currently in New Zealand, and circumstances in their region of their home country have changed to the extent that they may not be able to return immediately (for example natural disaster, an outbreak of contagious disease or civil war), please consider this information when determining an application made to enable them to remain in New Zealand.

### **Best Practice**

- consider all such requests on a case by case basis;
- view sympathetically requests for a longer stay where the person is from an affected area;
- use the discretion available in temporary instructions where you judge the request is appropriate;
- ensure AMS notes show in sufficient detail why a further visa was granted, e.g. rather than "further visa for humanitarian reasons" state "further visa issued because the customer is from the area affected by the recent cyclone in Tonga and has requested a longer stay with family in New Zealand until it is safe to return home".

In short – where we have customers in distress because of events in their home country, please use your common sense and empathy when dealing with any further applications from them.

Please ensure all staff are aware that additional visas issued as exceptions to instructions, or using discretion, are not restricted to situations where a natural disaster has occurred.