

VISA PAK ISSUE 460 — 29 JANUARY 2021

ONE-WAY QUARANTINE FREE TRAVEL FROM THE COOK ISLANDS

One-way quarantine-free travel from the Cook Islands to New Zealand commenced on 21 January 2021.

To be eligible for travel to New Zealand, people in the Cook Islands must meet particular conditions, including:

- not having been overseas outside of New Zealand and the Cook Islands in the past 14 days;
- maintaining physical distance from anyone in the arrival airport who did not arrive from the Cook Islands;
- wearing a face covering while in the arrival airport;
- having no reasonable grounds, as determined by a suitably qualified health practitioner, to suspect the individual may have COVID-19, including:
 - not having had contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case in the past 14 days;
 - not having any COVID-19 symptoms; and
 - not be awaiting a COVID-19 test result.

This means that individuals travelling to New Zealand from the Cook Islands will be exempt from New Zealand's current border restrictions and will not be required to spend 14 days in Managed Isolation and Quarantine (MIQ). Nor will they need to have a negative COVID-19 test result prior to travel.

The individual must be travelling directly to New Zealand from the Cook Islands on a commercial aircraft operated by Air New Zealand, and must have been present in New Zealand or the Cook Islands for at least 14 consecutive days immediately prior to travelling to New Zealand. Quarantine-free travel from the Cook Islands does not currently extend to the maritime border.

The immigration requirements for individuals travelling to New Zealand from the Cook Islands will revert to the normal visa requirements pre-COVID-19. That is, a person must:

- a. hold a valid NZeTA if eligible to travel visa waiver and receive a visitor visa on arrival;
or
- b. apply for and/or hold a current visa before travel, if required; or
- c. if an Australian citizen or permanent resident, travel visa-waiver and receive a resident visa on arrival.

Travel pathways

One-way quarantine-free travel only applies to individuals travelling directly to New Zealand from the Cook Islands. This means that an individual intending to travel to New Zealand from a country other than the Cook Islands will be subject to the border restrictions, even if they previously travelled to New Zealand from the Cook Islands and then departed New Zealand to travel elsewhere.

For example: a Fijian national present in the Cook Islands, applies for and is granted a visa to travel to New Zealand. They arrive in New Zealand and are not required to enter MIQ. The individual then departs New Zealand for Fiji. If they wish to travel back to New Zealand, they are now subject to New Zealand's border restrictions and must submit a *Request to Travel* and be assessed as having a critical purpose in order to return to New Zealand.

Visa travel conditions

Immigration Officers should follow standard practice and refer to any relevant immigration instructions when considering whether to grant a single or multiple entry visa. It is not expected that only single entry visas will be granted if the individual would normally be granted a multiple entry visa.

Additional paragraph for visa approval letter

When approving a visa for an individual who intends to travel quarantine-free from the Cook Islands, the following paragraph should be added to the approval template letter to provide further clarity:

Quarantine-free travel from the Cook Islands

Individuals travelling directly to New Zealand from the Cook Islands may be eligible for quarantine-free travel, provided they meet particular conditions, including:

- not having been overseas outside of New Zealand and the Cook Islands in the past 14 days;
- maintaining physical distance from anyone in the arrival airport who did not arrive from the Cook Islands;
- wearing a face covering while in the arrival airport;
- having no reasonable grounds, as determined by a suitably qualified health practitioner, to suspect the individual may have COVID-19, including:
 - not having had contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case in the past 14 days;
 - not having any COVID-19 symptoms; and
 - not be awaiting a COVID-19 test result.



If you meet the requirements for quarantine-free travel, you are not required to enter Managed Isolation and Quarantine on arrival, and you are not required to provide a negative COVID-19 test before travelling. You may still be required to go through health screening on arrival in New Zealand.

Note that quarantine-free travel only applies when travelling directly to New Zealand from the Cook Islands on a commercial aircraft. If you then depart New Zealand to another country, and then want to return to New Zealand, you will be subject to the current border restrictions. This means that you will need to submit a *Request to Travel* and be assessed as having a critical purpose in order to return to New Zealand. You will also be required to enter Managed Isolation or Quarantine on arrival in New Zealand, and you will need to get a Managed Isolation Allocation voucher before you can board your flight. You can find out more information at www.miq.govt.nz.

In the event of any changes in COVID-19 status of either New Zealand or the Cook Islands, New Zealand's Unite Against COVID-19 website, www.covid19.govt.nz, will carry the latest advice for travellers.

Changes to the online visa application system (IGMS)

IGMS will recognise applications submitted from the Cook Islands so that it can display pre-COVID-19 questions and settings.

Online application forms may include references to 'Safe Travel Zones', currently this means the Cook Islands only.

Cook Islands border restrictions

The Cook Islands have kept their current border restrictions in place. More information on their border requirements can be found here: <https://covid19.gov.ck/travel-and-border-control>

COVID-19 status changes

In the event of any changes in COVID-19 status of either country, the Government's Unite Against COVID-19 website www.covid19.govt.nz will carry the latest advice for travellers.