



SEMAPHORE

Newsletter of the Maritime Law

Association of Australia and New Zealand



Kiwi Self-Isolation Pilot Confirmed

New Zealand COVID-19 Response Minister Chris Hipkins has confirmed that a self-isolation pilot – considered a key milestone in the country’s intended phased approach to reopening its borders – is to soon proceed following a short selection window.

Up to 150 participants are to be selected through an Expressions of Interest (EOI) process, with employers needing to submit an EOI application on behalf of their employees between 9am Thursday September 30 and 5pm Saturday October 9.

“As part of the Reconnecting New Zealanders plan announced in August, the self-isolation pilot will look at self-isolation for vaccinated travellers who have not been to very-high-risk countries,” stated Minister Hipkins on September 27.

“The pilot is to explore a new pathway of entry into New Zealand and allows the Government to test operational readiness, identify areas where further work is required to scale up the approach and provide valuable insights into our options for the future.

“The pilot is aimed at business travellers, to travel overseas on a short business trip and self-isolate in approved accommodation for 14 days on their return.”

When in self-isolation, participants must:

- remain in their place of self-isolation for at least 14 days – they will not be allowed to leave the property at any time



New Zealand COVID-19 Response Minister Chris Hipkins

- isolate alone or together with others from the same travelling party – they cannot isolate with family or any other household members
- not allow any visitors to enter the premises, aside from medical staff for testing purposes and emergency or other essential services if required – for example, fire, ambulance, police, tradespeople for urgent repairs
- provide their own food and supplies – contactless deliveries are allowed
- comply with all testing requirements set out by the Ministry of Health
- comply with all monitoring requirements

“Self-isolation must be in a private dwelling with no shared ventilation system,” continued the Minister.

“The dwelling must have cellular coverage. Monitoring and testing over the self-isolation period will be mandatory.

“Participants are required to be a New Zealand citizen or holders of a resident visa with a right to re-enter New Zealand, be fully-vaccinated in New Zealand with the Pfizer vaccine, and not travel to or through very-high-risk countries.

“Businesses are encouraged to check the criteria carefully. As demand is expected to be higher than the numbers in the pilot, all eligible EOIs will be put into a ballot and spread across the six-week arrival timeframe.”

Reconnecting New Zealanders to the World

On August 12, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern announced her Government’s “Reconnecting New Zealanders to the World” plans.

The plan, which followed publication of advice to Government provided by Sir David Skegg and the Strategic COVID-19 Public Health Advisory Group, is guided by five objectives:

- maintaining the elimination strategy to stamp out the virus and keep the country’s options open
- ensuring every eligible New Zealander is offered the opportunity to be vaccinated as soon as possible
- reducing the need for further lockdowns as much as possible by continuing to strengthen the country’s health and contact tracing systems
- maintaining strong public health tools
- developing new ways to enable people to travel safely to and from New Zealand



New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern

In her August announcement, Prime Minister Ardern emphasised the importance of widespread vaccination.

“Getting vaccinated is the number one thing everyone can do to be protected against COVID-19, help accelerate our economic recovery, reduce the risk of lockdowns and safely allow New Zealand’s borders to begin reopening next year,” said the Prime Minister.

“If we give up our elimination approach too soon there is no going back, and we could see significant breakouts here like some countries overseas are experiencing who have opened up early in their vaccination rollout.

“The plan announced today is informed by the best available scientific evidence and public health advice. It will allow us to capture the opportunities vaccination brings, while protecting the gains New Zealanders have worked so hard for.”

Next Step

Once a sufficient number of people have been vaccinated, the country will be able to move to the next step in the plan – a phased introduction of an individual risk-based approach to border settings in the first quarter of 2022 – continued the Prime Minister.

“Low-Risk, Medium-Risk and High-Risk travel pathways will be created, and which pathway a traveller takes will be based on the risk associated with where they are coming from and their vaccination status.

“Each pathway will have testing and isolation requirements proportionate to that risk.

“The Low-Risk pathway will permit quarantine-free entry for vaccinated travellers who have been in low-risk countries.

“The Medium-Risk pathway would include a combination of self-isolation and/or reduced MIQ [Managed Isolation and Quarantine] for vaccinated travellers who have been in medium-risk countries.

“The High-Risk pathway will see the continuation of a full 14 days in MIQ and testing for unvaccinated travellers and any traveller, including vaccinated travellers, who have been in very-high-risk or high-risk countries.

“This individual risk-based approach requires new systems to be set up. We will use the remainder of 2021 to continue to prepare for the operation of borders under this system.”

The Prime Minister said other ongoing work included:

- development of a traveller health declaration system
- investigating new testing technology for rapid testing on arrival at airports and reliable pre-departure testing
- strengthening other public health measures such as contact tracing

“New Zealand remains in a strong position. We don’t have COVID in the community and our economy is more open than most.

“Our plan to reopen our borders both protects the gains we have won, while setting us up to safely reconnect New Zealanders and business with the world and seize the opportunities created by our COVID success.”

Additional information on New Zealand’s MIQ system can be found [here](#).

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