



COVERSHEET

Minister	Hon Michael Wood	Portfolio	Immigration
Title of Cabinet paper	<i>Border Settings and Border exceptions referred to Cabinet</i>	Date to be published	19 August 2022

List of documents that have been proactively released

Date	Title	Author
July 2021	<i>Border Settings and Border exceptions referred to Cabinet</i>	<i>Office of the Minister of Immigration</i>
12 July 2021	<i>CAB-21-MIN-0278 Minute</i>	<i>Cabinet Office</i>
2 August 2021	<i>2122-0198 Further advice on phasing and timing to broaden border settings</i>	<i>MBIE</i>
<i>30 September 2021</i>	<i>2122-0969 Implementing Broader Border Settings</i>	<i>MBIE</i>

Information redacted

YES / NO

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Some information has been withheld for the reasons of privacy of natural persons and free and frank opinions



Cabinet

Minute of Decision

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Border Broadening and Border Exceptions

Portfolio **Immigration**

On 12 July 2021, Cabinet:

- 1 **noted** that border closure remains a central part of New Zealand's COVID-19 strategy and that restrictive immigration settings are a key part of this border closure;
- 2 **noted** that in November 2020, Cabinet agreed that decisions made by the Ministerial Group considering border exceptions (the Ministerial Group) be referred to Cabinet for approval [CAB-20-MIN-0466];
- 3 **noted** that the Ministerial Group met on 5 July 2021 to consider the proposals set out below;

Broadening Border Settings

- 4 **noted** that demand for Managed Isolation Quarantine (MIQ) is currently managed through highly targeted border exceptions that are complex and costly to administer, create inconsistencies between groups and are not effective at addressing periods of under-utilisation of MIQ given the long lead times to adjust immigration settings;
- 5 **noted** that MIQ now has better tools to manage periods of high demand which creates an opportunity to broaden the border settings for key groups (such as split families and critical workers) that have some flexibility around their travel;
- 6 **agreed** to reduce the salary threshold for long-term (more than six months) other critical workers to 1.5 times median wage per annum and retain all other criteria;
- 7 **noted** that, of the onshore temporary work visa holders who have supported partners and/or dependent children, there are around 2,000 with families offshore who are unable to enter with the current border exceptions;
- 8 **noted** that the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) has estimated, based on previous ratios, that there may be 8,500 onshore temporary work visa holders who have not supported a partner or dependent children to date, who may bring their family to New Zealand if family reunification is opened to all onshore temporary visa holders;
- 9 **noted** that those who do have family offshore will need to meet the relationship-based visa criteria which requires demonstration of a genuine and stable relationship;
- 10 **agreed in principle, subject to** paragraph 14 below, to establish a border class exception for partners and dependents of all onshore temporary work visa holders;

- 11 **noted** that there are approximately 5,000 offshore residence visa holders who are unable to enter New Zealand with the border closure;
- 12 **agreed** to establish a border exemption to allow all offshore residence visa holders to enter New Zealand;
- 13 **authorised** the Minister for COVID-19 Response and the Minister of Immigration, **subject to** paragraph 14 below, to take implementation decisions on the broadening border setting proposals including timing and phasing;
- 14 **invited** the Minister for COVID-19 Response and the Minister of Immigration to provide further advice to Cabinet on the timing and phasing of the border class exception proposed in paragraph 10 above;

Group allocation in MIQ

- 15 **noted** that the Ministerial Group has approved a group allocation package that includes all government priority groups;
- 16 **noted** that the approved group allocation package is based on the Recognised Seasonal Worker (RSE) group allocation ceasing by 1 September 2021 to facilitate the entry of other groups, in particular deep sea fishers;

Deep-sea fishing crew

- 17 **agreed** to establish a border class exception for 615 deep sea fishing crew (no partners or dependents) from July 2021 to September 2022 with a pay rate of at least minimum wage plus \$4 per hour (\$2 more per hour than currently required) for a 12-month visa;
- 18 **agreed** that non-BATM-class vessel crew can enter MIQ through the managed isolation allocation system (MIAS) and that three or more BATM-class crew members must enter MIQ through the group allocation;

Port crane operators

- 19 **agreed** to establish a border class exception for up to five port crane operators with at least two-years crane operating experience (plus partners and dependent children) earning at or above 1.5 times the median wage per annum for a 12-month visa;
- 20 **noted** the port crane operators, partners and dependent children will be required to book space in MIQ through MIAS;

International students

- 21 **agreed** to establish a border class exception for up to 1000 international students (plus partners and dependent children if they are eligible under current Immigration Instructions) on the basis that these students will enter MIQ through MIAS with no entry during December 2021 and January 2022;
- 22 **agreed** that the Minister of Education will decide the allocation of students between the sub-sectors;

Additions to government-approved event list

23 **noted** that the Ministerial Group agreed to add the following to the government-approved event list:

- 23.1 Summer of Cricket 2021/22;
- 23.2 Bledisloe Cup 2021;
- 23.3 Rugby Championships 2021;

Implementing the border exceptions

24 **noted** that the above border exceptions and exemptions require implementation by the Minister of Immigration through certifying changes to Immigration Instructions, which may require further work on detailed eligibility requirements for applying the exception and changes to online forms, ICT systems and business processes.

Michael Webster
Secretary of the Cabinet

Secretary's note: This minute has been revised to clarify the wording of paragraph 6.