



COVERSHEET

Minister	Hon Michael Wood	Portfolio	Immigration
Title of Cabinet paper	<i>Decisions on border exceptions referred to Cabinet</i>	Date to be published	19 August 2022

List of documents that have been proactively released

Date	Title	Author
February 2022	<i>Decisions on border exceptions referred to Cabinet</i>	<i>Office of the Minister of Immigration</i>
21 February 2022	<i>CAB-22-MIN-0043 Minute</i>	<i>Cabinet Office</i>

Information redacted

YES / NO

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Some information has been withheld for the reason of free and frank opinions.



Cabinet

Minute of Decision

This document contains information for the New Zealand Cabinet. It must be treated in confidence and handled in accordance with any security classification, or other endorsement. The information can only be released, including under the Official Information Act 1982, by persons with the appropriate authority.

Further Decisions on Border Exceptions

Portfolio **Immigration**

On 21 February 2022, Cabinet:

Background

- 1 **noted** that on 1 February 2022, as part of the decisions on the Reconnecting New Zealanders strategy, Cabinet authorised Border Exception Ministers to approve expanded class exceptions and additions to government-approved lists, to be in place from Step 3 on 12 April 2022 [CAB-22-MIN-0008];
- 2 **noted** that on 16 February 2022, Border Exception Ministers considered proposals for new and extended class exceptions, including requests to address acute seasonal demands in the primary sector, which would necessitate the workers entering New Zealand as soon possible;

Workforce shortages in the primary sector

- 3 **noted** that while expanded settings for critical workers and reopened Working Holiday Schemes under Step 2 will go a considerable way to alleviate workforce pressures across the economy, significant worker shortages are expected to remain, particularly in the primary sector;

Class exceptions to address critical worker shortages in the wine, red meat, and seafood sectors

- 4 **noted** that due to pressing and imminent seasonal peaks, wine, red meat and seafood workers are needed in New Zealand as soon as possible;

Winery workers

- 5 **noted** that the most experienced and skilled winery makers are likely to meet the criteria to enter through the 'other critical worker' (short term) pathway, but that this will not provide the full range of workers needed to successfully deliver the 2022 vintage;
- 6 **agreed** that the border class exception for up to 75 winery workers open for processing from 21 February 2022, so that workers are able to enter New Zealand as soon as possible;

Red meat and seafood processing workers

- 7 **agreed** that the class exception for up to 150 meat processing workers, coming to New Zealand for up to 10 months, open for applications from 21 February 2022, so that workers are able to enter New Zealand as soon as possible;
- 8 **agreed** that the class exception for up to 150 seafood processing workers, coming to New Zealand for up to 10 months, open for applications from 21 February 2022, so that workers are able to enter New Zealand as soon as possible;
- 9 **noted** that Immigration New Zealand will reprioritise resources to facilitate the fastest possible processing of these border exceptions;
- 10 **noted** that MIQ advises that an additional 25 rooms can be allocated to primary sector industries in late-February 2022, and an additional 50 rooms in early March 2022;
- 11 **noted** that the Ministry for Primary Industries will provide MIQ with the names of workers who require MIQ space no later than five working days before date of travel (provided entry is not before 28 February 2022);

Ensuring a guaranteed pay rate in the red meat and seafood sectors

- 12 **noted** that as the meat and seafood sectors structure their pay based on minimum base rates plus piece rates, employers will need to guarantee in employment agreements that each worker under the class exception is paid on average \$27 per hour over a pay period;
- 13 **agreed** that, in order to recognise piece rates, the employee's guaranteed minimum remuneration for a pay period (as per their employment agreement) may be averaged over the number of hours worked in that pay period to determine the job's pay rate;
- 14 **agreed** that the pay period must be no longer than one month;

Bringing forward implementation of other class exceptions

- 15 **agreed** that the class exception for up to 300 dairy farm assistants (plus partners and dependent children), for up to 12 months, open for processing from 13 March 2022 (Step 2);
- 16 **agreed** that the class exception for up to 30 qualified 'able-bodied seafarers', for up to 12 months, open for processing from 13 March 2022 (Step 2);
- 17 **agreed** that the class exception for up to 100 advanced manufacturing specialists (plus partners and dependent children) for up to 12 months, earning at least the median wage plus \$1 per hour (currently \$28), open for processing from 13 March 2022 (Step 2);
- 18 **agreed** that additions to the government-approved events list be implemented from 13 March 2022 (Step 2).

Michael Webster
Secretary of the Cabinet