

It's Far From Over

Amid the euphoria of the first cohort of controlled repatriation of Cook Islanders stranded in New Zealand arriving back on Friday, health authorities are reminding people that COVID-19 is still circulating the globe and infecting those who have lacked the ability to protect themselves. Tens of thousands of people are continuing to contract the virus daily, and the death toll as of Sunday evening had surpassed 280,000.

Secretary of Health – Dr Josephine Aumea Herman – says, “While our country is currently one of the very few in the world that is currently COVID-19 free, many of us have worked very hard, and have had to take some very tough decisions and impose some tough measures, to reach that status; and we can’t afford to drop our guard now, or into the future, otherwise all that good work will come tumbling down.”

That’s why the people who arrived back last weekend – and their relatives and friends who are keen to have them back home, have to adhere to the quarantine rules because if there is a slip up, as we’ve seen overseas, the virus will quickly exploit this gap and people will get infected and risk premature death. So abide by the agreement you entered into in order to take advantage of the opportunity to get home sooner rather than later. The

world has been changed by this pandemic. Many things we took for granted like carefree travel may have gone forever; at the very least it will be months – maybe years – before borders we once crossed with relative ease will open up again. Economies around the world have been brought to their knees and countries are being pushed to reimagine new

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norms through innovative lens which embrace the uniqueness of their people and society.

Countries like ours which the virus has not touched yet, and places like New Zealand and Australia – which have done well to largely contain COVID-19 – will still not be completely safe until a vaccine or other treatment has been found to defeat the contagion; and nobody knows when that might be, it could be months to years away.

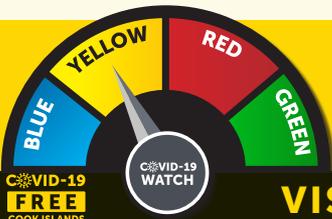
In the meantime we need to keep up the public health measures; physical distancing (2 metres) as practically possible, regular and thorough handwashing with soap and water; sneezing and coughing into your elbow or top, avoid touching your face, eyes, nose and mouth, and regularly disinfecting frequently used surfaces.

Finally, because the last few months have been such a whirlwind of bad news and activity, it might be worth reminding ourselves about the swathe this pandemic has taken around the world since it was first recorded in the city of Wuhan in Hubei province in China in December 2019.

It is interesting to note the rapid spread of infection that has been reported:

- **Globally this virus was detected in December 2019**
- **2 April (over 3 months later)**
– INFECTIONS REACHED 1 MILLION
- **15 April (barely 2 weeks later)**
– INFECTIONS REACHED 2 MILLION
- **27 April (less than 2 weeks later)**
– INFECTIONS REACHED 3 MILLION
- **8 May (less than 2 weeks later)**
– INFECTIONS REACHED 4 MILLION

Stay safe, stay alive, We are all in this together, Keep the Cook Islands COVID-19 free.



STAY VIGILANT

PHYSICAL DISTANCE • WASH YOUR HANDS • HYGENIC PRACTICES

VISIT WWW.COVID19.GOV.CK FOR UP TO DATE INFORMATION

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