



Government of the Cook Islands
Te Kauono Tutara e te Mana Tiaki
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration

Tuesday 24 March 2020 – 21:00

Covid-19 - Cook Islands Government elevate border entry requirements

From midnight tonight, Tuesday 24th March 2020, every person seeking entry to the Cook Islands, including returning Cook Islanders and Cook Islands residents will be required to meet a minimum of 14 days quarantine in New Zealand.

The 14 days count commences from the confirmation by Te Marae Ora – Ministry of Health of quarantine arrangements. Those arrangements will be confirmed by Te Marae Ora within 48 hours.

Delivering this announcement via livestream and Cook Islands Television this evening, Prime Minister Henry Puna said “Ultimately this is the only decision that can be taken at this time to further strengthen the protection of our people from the dreadful effects of Covid-19. We cannot and must not take any further chances.”

Te Marae Ora will within the next 48 hours articulate quarantine arrangements for the 14 days in New Zealand.

In the meantime, Cook Islands residents affected by these restrictions are urged to contact Te Kauono Tutara e te Mana Tiaki - Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration (MFAI) headquarters in Rarotonga on email chere.arthur@cookislands.gov.ck or phone 29 347 and 79254 and the Cook Islands High Commission in Wellington on firstsec@cookhicom.org.nz or phone +64 4 472 5126 and +64 021 273 1299

Speaking from Rarotonga this evening, Foreign Secretary Tapaeru Herrmann sought the understanding of Cook Islanders and Cook Islands residents affected by tonight’s announcement, “Please be patient and assured that officials are working as quickly and efficiently as possible to deal with all enquiries and to provide support to those affected as soon as best we can. We encourage all those affected to make contact with us as soon as possible to register, which will thereafter allow us to provide further clarifications and support as available.”

In his announcement tonight, the Prime Minister referenced emergency funding which is expected to be passed by Parliament during their sitting tomorrow, “As part of our immediate support to those impacted by Covid-19 restrictions, through the Administered Funds COVID-19 Response Fund, \$4.5million has been appropriated in the Supplementary Budget to be tabled in Parliament tomorrow.” Details of specific possible financial assistance available to those Cook Islands residents now required to remain in New Zealand for the 14 days Te Marae Ora administered quarantine period will be availed via MFAI platforms within the next 48 hours.

MFAI through headquarters in Rarotonga as well as the High Commission in Wellington have for some days now been engaged with both New Zealand Government agencies and Cook Islands communities in New Zealand, working collectively to provide support as able to those impacted by Covid-19 travel restrictions. The Prime Minister acknowledged in his remarks that support, “we acknowledge with great pride and appreciation the voluntary actions of our Cook Islands communities in New Zealand and beyond who continue to assist those in need during these most challenging and uncertain times.”

Those who wish to provide additional support in partnering with the Cook Islands Government to support those affected by travel restrictions are also invited to register with MFAI headquarters or the High Commission in Wellington

MFAI plan within the next day or two to issue information relating to support possible to those now needing to quarantine in New Zealand. Updates on this will be posted to MFAI facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/mfaicookislands/> as well as that of the Cook Islands High Commission <https://www.facebook.com/thecookislandsinnewzealand/>

The Prime Minister's announcement can be viewed at <https://www.facebook.com/pmoffice.gov.ck/videos/1038694509837354/>

This information is correct as at 21:00 hours Tuesday 24 March 2020

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