

Preparing for Friday's arrivals 1 September 2020 Media Release

Those arriving on the flight from Auckland on Friday 4th September, must have tested negative for COVID-19 before boarding, and undergo supervised quarantine in their pre-approved residence for 14 days in Rarotonga. Any household members sharing their accommodation will have to quarantine with the arriving passengers as well.

Family members intending to meet the flight are being told not to, because the international arrivals will undergo checking and arrival procedures inside the terminal, and will be taken from there directly to their homes. Transport will be provided.

That's how serious the government is taking matters since the new outbreak of coronavirus in New Zealand in recent weeks.

If the international arrivals are able to keep separated from other household members already here – for example in a separate unit – that may be permitted. Otherwise the entire family including children must separate themselves from the rest of the community. That means children can't go to school and people cannot go to work.

Te Marae Ora, Cook Islands Ministry of Health will be leading the supervised quarantine process supported by Cook Islands Police, the Puna and community. The COVID-19 Act 2020 gives the Secretary of Health the legal power to order and enforce this supervised quarantine. Penalties for any breach carries a maximum of 12 months imprisonment or a \$10,000 fine.

The Prime Minister – Henry Puna – says, “We are taking these very serious measures in order to protect our people and to control and keep this deadly disease away from our shores.

“It is in the interests of all of us to abide by the rules to keep all of us safe. I know we have been feeling a little relaxed lately in our COVID-free paradise. But this disease has re-emerged in the NZ community. I'm asking us all to double our efforts to keep COVID-19 at bay. Step up our hygiene practices, maintain physical distances and avoid crowded places; and be kind to each other, remember we're all in this together.”

“These are our families coming home. Let's extend a warm welcome to them all” added Secretary of Health Dr Aumea Herman.

“We have been working steadily with our border agencies and our Puna, Pa Enea and communities since March, and we have continued to strengthen our relationships and trust regarding processes to ensure our communities are protected. We kindly request the assistance of our families and communities to help us support those who will be undertaking

supervised quarantine. The success of this programme is critical to ensure that our people overseas can continue to travel home.

The pre-approved residences where the approximately 60 arrivals will complete supervised quarantine in will have a yellow flag on the road boundary. The reason for this is not to stigmatise but to alert visitors that they cannot visit. Any yellow flagged property should be considered out-of-bounds until 2pm on Friday 18th September.

Families who will need to go into supervised quarantine with passengers arriving on Friday, need to use the time before they arrive, to prepare to ensure there is adequate food and household supplies, medication and school work for children.

All arrivals will have two COVID tests whilst in quarantine.

For up to date information visit www.covid19.gov.ck

ENDS: Enquiries to Jaewynn McKay +682 55486