



Office of the Prime Minister
Press Release

30 April 2020

Official Statement – COVID-19 Amendment Bill Passed

The Prime Minister called a special session of Parliament to pass legislation to strengthen the government's ability to prevent people with the COVID-19 virus from entering the country.

The amendment to the current COVID-19 law will clarify that the notice currently requiring people to undergo a specified period of quarantine as well as health clearance before boarding a plane coming into the country, applies to Cook Islanders and Permanent Residents.

The COVID-19 Amendment Bill 2020 is designed to further protect the health and well being of Cook Islanders; over a third of whom are considered vulnerable and at a higher risk of serious illness, should they contract COVID-19.

Section 9A notices have been issued under the Entry, Residence and Departure Act 1971-72 and these notices have set out the requirements for entry to the Cook Islands. The amendment to the current COVID-19 law means these notices also apply to returning Cook Islanders and Permanent Residents, and this is necessary to help protect the Cook Islands from the COVID-19 virus.

The first people allowed back into the country since the border was closed on 25 March arrive in Rarotonga on Friday 8th May. They are Cook Islands citizens and residents who have spent 14 days undergoing Supervised Quarantine and Medical Clearance (SQMC), at an Auckland hotel. On arrival they will undergo a further 14 days of supervised quarantine and medical clearance before being allowed to join their families in their homes.

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