



Office of the Prime Minister  
Press Release

# Update on Cook Islands and New Zealand Quarantine-free travel Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> August, CI Time

The Prime Minister of the Cook Islands has joined New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern in welcoming the completion of phase one in the establishment of quarantine-free travel between New Zealand and the Cook Islands.

“Negotiations on the text of an *‘Arrangement to Facilitate Quarantine-Free Travel between the Cook Islands and New Zealand’* are at the point of conclusion and this was reported to the Cook Islands Cabinet on Thursday and the New Zealand Cabinet, earlier today.” said Prime Minister Puna.

The Arrangement outlines the health and border requirements for each country to meet in order to commence quarantine-free travel, and annexes provide further detail on the implementation, including border and travel protocols.

Phase two (the verification phase) will see health and border officials from both countries undertake quality assurance and system test checks to ensure requirements as stipulated in the Arrangement can be implemented on the ground in both countries.

Once assurance is confirmed, phase three the “confirmation phase” requires a decision from the respective Cabinets that the Arrangement and on the ground measures can be started safely, and quarantine-free travel can occur between countries.

Both Governments are hoping for quarantine-free travel to be in place as soon as it can be safely achieved.

“This Arrangement recognises the constitutional relationship and special ties between New Zealand and the Cook Islands and provides the framework to support quarantine-free travel between countries”.

Prime Minister Puna said that the free movement of people between the Cook Islands and New Zealand was vitally important to sustain economic and social connections.

“We are moving forward together in a way that balances these needs with the importance of maintaining strong public health efforts in both our countries, and cooperation with travel sectors to implement safe travel protocols.

“As part of its COVID-19 response, the Cook Islands closed all air and sea borders in March. We have been COVID free to this day. The elimination by New Zealand of community transmission of COVID-19 100 days ago is encouraging.

“Since 19 June, the Cook Islands resumed weekly quarantine free travel from Auckland for Cook Islands residents and permit holders who met Cook Islands health and border entry requirements including 30 days prior residence in New Zealand.

“We look forward to once again welcoming family and visitors from New Zealand without the restriction of quarantine on both ends, when all the appropriate measures are in place, Prime Minister Puna said.”

There will be a report back on progress in two weeks' time.

The two Prime Ministers will sign the Arrangement once the conditions for safe travel to recommence are in place. Officials will continue to work closely with industry to progress this work.

**ENDS**

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