



Office of the Prime Minister
Press Release

PRESS RELEASE

27 March 2020

Official Statement – post Address to the Nation

“We must remain vigilant”

Prime Minister Henry Puna tonight expressed relief that Cook Islands remains one of the few countries in the world to remain COVID-19 free but cautioned the nation against easing up on precautionary measures.

As of today, 90 swabs sent to New Zealand for analysis have all tested negative for the new coronavirus disease. The good news is tempered with the latest international figures, which show the pandemic has reached 500,000 confirmed cases and resulted in more than 25,000 deaths. Te Marae Ora expects more test results to be returned in coming days.

“We must be vigilant over the next couple of months while we fight this virus. This is not the time for us to relax the good public health measures we are all implementing,” said the Prime Minister.

He urged people to continue practicing personal hygiene measures like regular handwashing and covering coughs and sneezes, and important preventative measures like physical distancing and staying at home.

We must stay ahead of the virus, he said. “Let’s act like we have the virus, so we do more. Stay strong, stay disciplined, and stay safe. Let’s do what we do best and show our Kia Orana spirit by working closely with one another, as a community and as proud people of this nation.”

The Prime Minister spoke of his deep gratitude about the way community groups have risen to the occasion. He acknowledged the important work of the Puna, businesses, churches and Religious Advisory Council, traditional leaders, non-governmental organisations, Parliament and government workers. In a time of crisis, their collective efforts are helping protect the people of the Cook Islands when they need it most, he said.

“Gratitude is not just the greatest of virtues,” he said, “it is the parent of all others. It is during these times in our history, that the memories are stored in our hearts and not our minds.”

For regular updates and the latest information, visit www.covid19.gov.ck

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