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Trans-Tasman bubble to reopen to some states Sunday evening

ANNA WHYTE, 1 NEWS POLITICS REPORTER
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New Zealand will open back up to South Australia, ACT, Victoria and Tasmania from July 4 at 11.59pm.

Cabinet agreed in principle to lift the pause partially, Covid-19 Response Minister Chris Hipkins said today.

"We will extend requirements from people coming into New Zealand from Australia during the foreseeable future, to get a pre-departure test within 72 hours of when they are leaving Australia and of course that will need to be negative."

He said those states demonstrated there was robust contract testing and border controls against Covid-19.

Travellers will need pre-departure tests and they must have not been in NSW from 11.59pm June 22 and from QLD, NT and WA from June 26, 10.39pm.

On the states that are still closed - NSW, Queensland and WA, Hipkins said Cabinet would discuss the pause on Monday next week.

The changes apply to those in South Australia, ACT, Tasmania and Victoria, Chris Hipkins said. Source: 1 NEWS

On the potential for green light flights that could bring back New Zealanders stuck in the Australia, Hipkins said it depended on the level of lockdown and the control each state has over Covid-19.

MIQ spaces set aside could be utilised in this case.

The pause was originally scheduled to last until tonight at 11.59pm, after the bubble with the whole of Australia was paused Saturday night for at least three days as multiple Covid-19 cases in different states were emerging.

"The pause will give us time to look at if we need to impose additional measures and understand the situation in Australia," Hipkins said at the time.

Two mine workers in Australia's Northern Territory contracting the virus was a large influence in the entire trans-Tasman bubble being paused, as well as a flight attendant who tested positive for Covid-19 flew with passengers to and from Brisbane, Melbourne, Sydney and the Gold Coast.

Earlier today, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said she "dropped quick messages" to the Premiers of Victoria, NSW and Queensland to touch base and acknowledge her deferred trip to Australia.

She said Cabinet needed "to sequence so people have good forewarning of whether or not we're going to apply pre-departure testing, but what we're mindful of is first of all people need to know which states may reopen to".

"No point someone from a closed state going to get a pre-departure test."

Yesterday, Ardern said Cabinet was "very seriously considering" additional restrictions within the trans-Tasman bubble, such as pre-departure tests for people coming from Australia.

Ardern said considerations in re-opening the bubble could factor in the timeframe needed for people to get tests before travel.

Cabinet was considering whether Government would need to bring people home from states in Australia prior to re-opening the bubble, if the pause for some states last a longer period of time.

The Government enforced a rule last month for people travelling to New Zealand from Australia to get and pass a pre-departure Covid-19 test, if they were in Victoria in the days leading up to the state's bubble pause.

In January, New Zealand rolled out a requirement for most countries (at the time excluding Australia, Antarctica and most Pacific Islands) to present a negative pre-departure test before entering.

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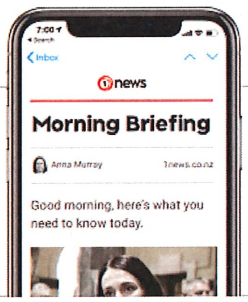

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