# We should roll out the welcome mat too

Mike Yardley05:00, Oct 06 2020

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Mike Yardley writes that Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison has shown "a far greater sense of impetus" than his New Zealand counterpart, Jacinda Ardern, in announcing quarantine-free travel from New Zealand to several Australian states and territories from October 16. (File photo)

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**OPINION:** You've got to hand it to Australia. The Lucky Country has seized the opportunity to make quarantine-free trans-Tasman travel a reality next week, for arrivals from New Zealand.

What a pity it only applies for west-bound flights and not the home run.

Let's keep moving? Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison seems to have snatched and breathed life into the New Zealand Labour Party's campaign slogan, with far greater intent than its authors across the sea.

t week's breakthrough for the long-discussed trans-Tasman bubble, albeit one-is just one prong in an arsenal of federal government initiatives geared to

swiftly re-energise the Australian economy's growth footing.

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* Qantas and Jetstar quickly start selling flights from New Zealand following trans-Tasman bubble news
* Covid-19: Judith Collins questions if Kiwis are ready for trans-Tasman bubble
* Australian minister talks up trans-Tasman travel 'by end of year' - but it could be one way

Tuesday night's mini-budget in Canberra will also see the Morrison government make a massive investment in expanding domestic manufacturing and declare this year's Covid-induced temporary tax cuts a permanent fixture.

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But it's the new travel arrangements, which take effect in Australia on October 16, that starkly illustrate the fundamental difference in our respective risk and reward appetites.

Scott Morrison's government is displaying a far greater sense of impetus and drive to forge ahead. The trans-Tasman travel bubble has been a prospect that has kept frothing up, only to be subsequently popped by Jacinda Ardern, when it looks to be in reach.

She's emphatic that we will not reciprocate, doubling down on her insistence that New Zealand won't open up until Australia, or specific states and territories, record a month without community transmission cases.

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The announcement comes after talks between Scott Morrison and Jacinda Ardern and means flights across the Tasman can start in just weeks.

It's a far cry from Australia's threshold for quarantine-free travel. Travellers from New Zealand must not have been in a designated Covid-19 hotspot in the 14 days before they fly across the Tasman. A hotspot is defined as having a rolling three-day average of three cases a day.

New South Wales and the Northern Territory have now been joined by the ACT in the quarantine-free inbound travel bubble, while South Australia is likely to be the next cab off the rank this week.

Over the weekend, Qantas and Jetstar confirmed they will initially offer flights on the Christchurch-Sydney and Auckland-Sydney routes, with additional routes to follow as more states open up. Qantas Group CEO Alan Joyce is celebrating the announcement, saying "the first phase of a travel bubble with New Zealand is the best news the industry has had in months" – and for the airline, "it means we'll be able to get more planes back in the sky and more of our people back to work".

New Zealand's current criterion of insisting on 28 days free of community transmission in an Australian state seems unnecessarily stringent. After all, our country has only met that threshold once, before the Auckland cluster brought down the house in August.

Currently, New Zealand has clocked up no community transmission cases for 10 days in a row. But so has New South Wales. We can freely fly between Christchurch and Auckland without having to quarantine. What is the difference in flying between Christchurch and Sydney? On what basis is there any greater risk? Fundamentally, they're one and the same. Whether you're circulating in Mangere or Manly, the same basic health and hygiene precautions apply.

Based on the New Zealand Government's requirements, October 23 would be the first possible day that New South Wales crosses the 28-day threshold of no community transmission cases. But is anyone seriously expecting our Government to press go on two-way quarantine-free trans-Tasman travel on October 24?