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3 FEBRUARY 2022

Border to reopen in stages from 27 February

COVID-19 Response Immigration

- Border will reopen to vaccinated New Zealanders from Australia at 11.59pm 27 February
- Reopens to New Zealanders in the rest of the world on 13 March
- MIQ removed for most travellers in phased reconnection, replaced by self-isolation and tests on-arrival
- MIQ to remain for the unvaccinated
- Five- step plan prioritises returning New Zealanders and brings forward the reopening of key visa categories in just over 5 weeks' time in order to address worker shortages.
- Further visa categories reopen throughout the year to help accelerate economic recovery

The New Zealand border will reopen to vaccinated Kiwis and other current [eligible travellers](https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/covid-19/border-closures-and-exceptions/entry-to-new-zealand/border-entry-requirements) (https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/covid-19/border-closures-and-exceptions/entry-to-new-zealand/border-entry-requirements) from Australia at 11.59pm on 27 February and to the same groups from the rest of the world only two weeks later on 13 March, COVID-19 Response Minister Chris Hipkins and Immigration Minister Kris Faafoi announced today.

The Government's reconnecting plan will see all New Zealanders and key visa holders able to start to enter the country over the coming three months, assisting with the economic recovery and immediately address worker shortages.

"This is a very carefully developed plan that replaces MIQ for the vast majority of travellers while ensuring we maintain ongoing measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in our community from recent arrivals," Chris Hipkins said.

"With 94 percent of our population fully vaccinated, and 92 percent of those over 18 now eligible for a booster by the end of February it's time to shift gears in our COVID-19 response to focus on reconnection and recovery.

"By reducing the gap to get boosted to three months we're ensuring we reach our highest possible boosted rates before fully reopening.

"By the time we start to reopen our border, we'll be one of the most vaccinated and most boosted countries in the world and the COVID-19 Protection Framework will be well established in helping to manage COVID outbreaks.

"Our plan has built in protections to help manage risks such as future variants. A phased approach to reopening reduces the risk of a surge of cases, while prioritising the return of New Zealanders and much needed entry of skilled workers.

"Having MIQ for every traveller was a temporary setting for when none of us had protection. New Zealanders need to reconnect with one another. Families and friends need to reunite. Our businesses need skills to grow. Exporters need to travel to make new connections," Chris Hipkins said.

Steps

STEP	TIMING	TRAVELLERS
STEP 1	From 11.59pm, Sunday 27 February 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reopen to New Zealanders and other eligible travellers under current border settings (e.g. people with border exceptions) from Australia
STEP 2	From 11:59 pm, Sunday 13 March 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reopen to New Zealanders and other eligible travellers under current border settings from the rest of the world• Open to skilled workers earning at least 1.5 times the median wage• Open to Working Holiday Scheme visas
STEP 3	From 11:59 pm, Tuesday 12 April 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Open to current offshore temporary visa holders, who can still meet the relevant visa requirements,• Open to up to 5000 international students for semester two• Further class exceptions for critical workforces that do not meet the 1.5 times the median wage test will be considered
STEP 4	By July 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Open to anyone from Australia• Open for visa-waiver travel• The Accredited Employer Work Visa will open, meaning the skilled and health worker border exception can be phased out
STEP 5	October 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Border fully reopens to visitors from anywhere in the world, and all visa categories fully reopen.

Steps 1 and 2

“From 27 February, vaccinated New Zealanders and eligible travellers from Australia will be able to enter New Zealand without staying in MIQ and two weeks later from 13 March, New Zealanders and eligible travellers from the rest of the world will be able to come home,” Chris Hipkins said.

“While travellers will no longer need to stay in MIQ we are maintaining border measures to reduce the spread of the virus.

“The self-isolation requirements for travellers will mirror the way we treat contacts of cases in New Zealand. That means a current requirement of 10 days, but that will drop to 7 days when we move to phase two of our pandemic plan as cases rise.

“Isolation requirements will be kept under constant review, and we do expect them to reduce. The reopening to visa free tourists is also likely to be brought forward, with July being the latest date we anticipate this happening.

“All arrivals will be provided three rapid antigen tests at the airport, one for use on day 0/1, and one for use on day 5/6, with one extra for backup. This approach means we will continue to identify cases that enter through the border and limit their wider contact with the community.

“In addition we will continue to whole genome sequence all returnees who test positive to rapidly identify and respond to new variants,” Chris Hipkins said.

Steps 3 to 5

“This plan represents a significant step forward in addressing skills and labour shortages and accelerates our economic recovery,” Immigration Minister Kris Faafoi said.


“Reopening of the border to a range of visa holders is a critical part in our plan to rebuild from COVID.

“From 13 March, just over 5 weeks away, we will start re-opening Working Holiday Visa schemes. This will supply urgently needed workers for the tourism, hospitality, wine and horticultural sectors as well as providing some much-needed visitor spending.

“Also from 13 March, we’re simplifying the application process for the critical worker border exception. Skilled workers with job offers paying at least 1.5 times, instead of double, the median wage will be able to come in without the need to demonstrate that their skills aren’t readily obtainable in New Zealand.

“Before COVID, New Zealand was issuing over one million visitor visas per year. What’s being announced today is about gearing up in manageable steps to fully re-open as safely as possible to enable us to live with COVID but not be overwhelmed by it,” Kris Faafoi said.

Related Documents

 Immigration Table - Steps 1-5.pdf (<https://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2022-02/Immigration%20Table%20-%20Steps%201-5.pdf>)
(439.08 KB)

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