



Office of the Prime Minister
Press Release

COVID-19 Update

3 June 2020

On 16 April 2020, the Cook Islands was declared a COVID-19 free zone. New Zealand moving to Level 1 alert suggesting there is no community transmission, presents an opportunity for the Cook Islands to share a safe zone with New Zealand.

“It has been a challenging couple of months or more, and the continued safety and well-being of all our returnees, is testimony to the way we have worked together, in the face of this coronavirus threat. Three safe deliveries home, and the maintenance of our COVID-19-free status, is a comfort to us all, as we stay focused on the future, and how we must continue to pull together” Prime Minister Puna said in his address to the nation this evening while referring to the three groups of repatriated residents.

“It has been very encouraging, that the cooperative work over several weeks, has upheld a steady rate of progress, in terms of our public health and safety measures, internally and at the border. Te Marae Ora in particular, and the team of Health professionals involved in the discussions with the New Zealand authorities, have worked very hard, and under very trying conditions”, he continued.

The excellent progress in New Zealand, and the epidemiology resulting from the public health measures there, is presenting the Cook Islands with further opportunities to ease restrictions - working alongside New Zealand authorities, on the arrangements and requirements, for the mobility and travel of Cook Islands residents and workers.

The Prime Minister went on to announce that as from June 19 (Cook Islands time), the Government will open the border, to all Cook Islanders and work permit residents, who have been present in NZ for at least 30 days prior, and whose main purpose of travel is to return home, or to take up or resume employment.

From this date (June 19 Cook Islands time), and onwards, the flights arriving at Rarotonga International airport will be open to the above travelers, without the need for supervised quarantine upon arrival at Rarotonga. For those travelling from outside New Zealand, officials are confirming a process and will make it available as soon as is practicable.

Cook Islands government officials will continue to work alongside their New Zealand counterparts, to enable possible travel opportunities, for other New Zealand citizens in the near future.

Please visit the government www.covid19.gov.ck for travel advisory information.

To facilitate the above measures, Government is undertaking all necessary precautions and putting in place the necessary framework to ensure the public's safety.

COVID-19 continues to spread in many countries worldwide. As of 3 June 2020, over six million people across 188 countries have been infected and over 380,000 people have died. As a result, Te Marae Ora recommends the Cook Islands remains in Code Yellow, despite not having any COVID-19 cases.

Complementing the Government's efforts, Te Marae Ora advises the public to continue practising physical distancing to reduce potential transmission of COVID-19.

Safe zones, save borders, safe families and communities, safe quarantine, safe screening, safe testing, safe transportation, safe travellers, safe isolation, safe contact tracing, safe health systems, and safe health financing are the main criteria established by Te Marae Ora to permit the easing of travel restrictions.

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