

Update 5: Operation Turou Managed Return of Stranded Cook Islanders and Cook Islands Residents 14 October 2021 (CKT)

Kia Orana

Te Marae Ora (TMO) wishes to provide the following update:

Earlier today the second repatriation flight this month of stranded Cook Islanders and Cook Islands residents departed Auckland. It is due to land at 2.30pm. All 238 passengers have returned a series of negative COVID-19 tests results over the past 14 days.

Pre-departure medical checks took place at Auckland Airport before passengers were cleared to board the flight.

Once the plane lands, a Te Marae Ora Health Official and a representative of the Cook Islands Police will board the plane and give the passengers a briefing on what to expect both upon exiting the plane and during their Managed Isolation and Quarantine (MIQ) stay at the Edgewater Resort.

The Cook Islands Government has laid out strict protocols for the arrival of the repatriated passengers at Rarotonga Airport and their transfer to a MIQ facility, where they will complete 14-days of supervised quarantine, including further testing for the virus. Only once all criteria are met will these individuals be allowed to join their loved ones and friends.

As with last week's repatriation flight, the entire process has involved the coordination of almost a dozen ministries and government agencies, ensuring public health and safety remains the utmost priority.

Below you can find details on how we're handling the repatriation process to maintain our COVID-19 free status.

Upon arrival at Rarotonga International Airport

- All passengers will disembark the plane as per instructions of designated officials from Te Marae Ora Ministry of Health.
- The 238 passengers will be processed at Rarotonga International Airport before being transported to the MIQ facility (Edgewater Resort and Spa)
- They will clear Immigration before collecting their luggage and clearing Customs and Biosecurity

- Duty-free shops in the terminal will not be open. However, we understand pre-orders have been made available. These can be collected upon completion of the MIQ period
- Carry-on baggage will be disinfected by health officials within the arrivals hall
- Checked in baggage will be disinfected by health officials before being placed on the carousel.
- Once passengers have their luggage and have cleared Customs and Biosecurity they will then progress through the exit into the arrivals terminal and directly onto waiting buses.
- At no time will arriving passengers and the general public, have the opportunity to come into contact with each other. Cordons will be in place, separating the returnees from the general public.
- Throughout the process, personal protective equipment (PPE) will be provided to those at risk of coming into close contact with arriving passengers and/or their baggage.
- Only front-line staff from the various Border Agencies and transport companies who are fully vaccinated will be working.

Upon arrival at MIQ Facility – Edgewater Resort

Upon arrival at the MIQ facility, returnees will be pre-checked and will be escorted to their respective rooms.

There will be strict rules at the facility. Returning residents are required to abide by the quarantine requirement during their stay.

As part of the government-funded programme, meals will be provided, and individuals will be given the opportunity to exercise outdoors, however no swimming is permitted. This is to ensure no-one comes to harm while swimming, putting others at risk and requiring medical attention. Further should anyone catch a cold or chill whilst swimming, it may initially be hard to determine whether those symptoms are cold/flu related or COVID-19 symptoms.

Laundry service will be provided along with laundry facilities being made available for those with further needs.

The returnees will receive daily health checks to ensure their wellbeing, and for the wellbeing and health of others. Full cooperation is needed to ensure health checks can be completed effectively.

Health officials will be on standby should any of those undergoing managed quarantine begin feeling unwell, such as experiencing symptoms of fever, a cough, difficulty breathing, or sore throat. These individuals will be quarantined in their rooms to receive further medical care.

While guests won't be able to have physical contact with their family and loved ones whilst in MIQ, family and friends who wish to, may drop off food and personal items, not alcohol, at the

facility (Edgewater Reception). Items will be inspected prior to delivery to rooms. Hotel Security or Police will ensure that the items do not contain or present a health and safety risk.

Any items being dropped off for returnees can be dropped off from Friday 15 October. All daily drop-offs must be made by 5pm.

To avoid congestions, when dropping off items, please park in the carpark on the right-hand side of the driveway and walk the short distance to reception.

Absolutely NO items can be left by returnees for family/friends to collect – this includes medication being carried for someone else.

Please ensure any food deliveries are in solid containers that will not leak and can be washed and then taken home. This will help reduce the amount of rubbish staff will have to deal with, as will bringing nu in plastic bottles.

Edgewater staff will make deliveries to guests around mealtimes only – 7am, 11am, 5pm – so please ensure any deliveries are at Reception before these times.

Any breach of the quarantine requirements may result in prosecution and a term of imprisonment of up to 12 months or a fine not exceeding \$10,000.

Apart from family members and friends dropping off items for returning passengers, the Edgewater is a closed facility. NO members of the public will be permitted entrance to any other part of the facility.

Upon completion of 14 days of managed quarantine at the facility, a health professional will confirm all returning residents meet a certain set of criteria prior to release.

This includes confirmation individuals have followed strict protocol and been in managed quarantine for at least 14 days, have no symptoms consistent with COVID-19, and have produced a series of negative test result for COVID-19.

Once all criteria are met and approval is granted by Te Marae Ora, returning Cook Islanders will be permitted to leave the MIQ facility and be reunited with their family and friends.

ENDS: For more information, please visit www.health.gov.ck or contact Jaewynn McKay; jaewynn.mckay@cookislands.gov.ck +682 55486