



AIDE MEMOIRE

5 February 2020

RPT 20/016

Customs' advice on reopening eGates for flights from Australia, Singapore and the United States of America

Key messages

- eGate processing of passengers arriving on flights from Australia, Singapore and the United States of America will restart from early-afternoon 5 February 2020.
- Australia, Singapore and the United States all introduced travel restrictions similar to New Zealand's, prior to our restrictions being put in place.
- The Ministry of Health is satisfied that flights arriving from Australia, Singapore and the United States pose minimal risk of carrying anyone who has been exposed to the Novel Coronavirus and is asymptomatic.
- Re-opening eGates to passengers with eligible passports arriving on these flights will result in quicker processing, reduced delays to passengers and a lessening of the impact on frontline resources.
- The re-opening of eGates is endorsed by the Director General of Health.
- This decision aligns with the 48 hour review period that was instigated at the time of the travel restriction announcement.

Passengers from Australia, Singapore and the United States pose minimal risk of carrying anyone exposed to the Novel Coronavirus

- Over half of all passengers currently arriving into New Zealand come on flights from these three countries.
- Australia, Singapore and the United States are applying their restrictions to both arriving and transiting passengers and we consider the risk that presents from passengers travelling from these countries is lower than from other countries of origin.
- The Ministry of Health is satisfied that flights arriving from Australia, Singapore and the United States pose minimal risk of carrying anyone who has been exposed to the Novel Coronavirus and is asymptomatic.
- Public health officers are not currently attending flights from these countries, based on its assessment of the risk being low.

Manual processing has led to expected delays at airports

- The 2 February 2020, decision to close eGate processing to all passengers arriving in New Zealand led to some expected delays at airports as a larger proportion of passengers than usual are being processed manually.
- Delays are being managed for the time being through the rostering on of additional staff; however this will become less sustainable in the longer term.
- On 3 February 2020, 21,725 arriving passengers were processed and on 4 February 2020 this number was 18,686. Under normal circumstances approximately 65% of these passengers would be processed through eGates.

Operation of reopening eGates – further information

- The eGate software does not allow flight-specific processing. This means that when flights are arriving from multiple countries at once, officers will have to monitor eGate entrances to ensure that only passengers arriving from Australia, Singapore and the United States of America are allowed through to the eGates.
- This is expected to result in slight delays at eGate than normal but will be quicker than manual processing. Ministry of Primary Industries officers will be available to assist.

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We will continue to review eGate access and operations

We are continuing to review access to eGate processing for passengers from all countries and, if necessary, will modify eligibility if the situation changes.