



Cabinet

Minute of Decision

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Additional Item: Government Response to Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19): Update

Portfolio **Health**

On 17 February 2020, Cabinet:

Previous decisions

1 **noted** that on 1 February 2020 Cabinet:

- 1.1 noted the updated public health advice provided by officials on the novel coronavirus outbreak and the proposed enhanced border measures;
- 1.2 noted the advice provided by officials regarding the economic impact of the proposed enhanced border measures;
- 1.3 noted the recommendation from the Ministry of Health to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, recommending a change in official travel advice for China to Level 4, “do not travel to any part of mainland China”;
- 1.4 noted that Australia is taking further measures to enhance its border controls in response to the outbreak and that officials will provide further advice to the group of Ministers with Power to Act;
- 1.5 noted that a precautionary health-based approach will be taken to manage the response;
- 1.6 authorised a group of Ministers comprising the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Tourism, Minister of Finance, Minister of Education, Minister of Health and Minister for Trade and Export Growth to have Power to Act to take decisions on New Zealand’s response to the novel coronavirus outbreak and proposed enhanced border measures;

[CAB-20-MIN-0015]

2 **noted** that on 2 February 2020 the group of Ministers with Power to Act:

- 2.1 agreed that the following border measures be implemented to strengthen the New Zealand border response:
 - 2.1.1 extend the travel history in the case definition for novel coronavirus infection to include travel to mainland China (previously this was Hubei province in China, particularly Wuhan);

- 2.12 entry to New Zealand to be denied to people who have left or transited through mainland China from 2 February 2020, with the exception of:
 - 2.1.2.1 New Zealand citizens (including those from the three countries of the Realm);
 - 2.1.2.2 permanent resident visa holders; or
 - 2.1.2.3 resident visa holders granted in New Zealand; or
 - 2.1.2.4 resident visa holders arriving in New Zealand for a second or subsequent time as the holder of the visa;
 - 2.1.2.5 partner and spouses, dependent children or legal guardians who are travelling with the above;
 - 2.1.2.6 airline and maritime crew;
 - 2.1.2.7 an Australian citizen or Australian permanent resident who, prior to 2 February 2020, had their primary place of residence in New Zealand;
 - 2.1.2.8 citizens of Pacific Island countries (to enable them to return to home countries);
- 2.13 all flights from mainland China to be met by public health staff;
- 2.14 all travellers arriving out of mainland China to be asked to self-isolate for a period of 14 days from the time they leave mainland China, including New Zealand citizens and permanent residents returning to New Zealand;
- 2.2 agreed that these measures be put in place for an initial 14 day period and reviewed every 48 hours.

[CAB-20-MIN-0015]

- 3 **noted** that on 4 February 2020 the group of Ministers with Power to Act agreed that a region-wide exemption for Pacific citizens is not enforced, but rather, considered on a case-by-case basis, and rescinded the decision referred to in paragraph 2.1.2.8 above;

Review of temporary border measures

- 4 **noted** that on 14 February 2020 the group of Ministers with Power to Act:
 - 4.1 **noted** that temporary additional border measures that were enacted in response to the COVID-19 outbreak will expire at 23.59 on Sunday, 16 February 2020;
 - 4.2 **noted** the advice that there is a continued high threat to public health, and that this threat outweighs any increased economic or foreign relation impacts that result from the temporary additional border measures;
 - 4.3 **noted** the advice that the understanding of the virus epidemiology and wider global situation is expected to deepen, which will guide future advice about border measures, including their extent and the length of time measures might remain in place;
 - 4.4 **agreed** to retain the current temporary border measures for an additional 8 day period, expiring at 23.59 on Monday, 24 February, but limited to cover people who have been in or transited mainland China in the 14 days prior to boarding;

- 4.5 agreed that the temporary border measures be reviewed every 48 hours, and that officials will provide immediate advice should any information emerge that has a substantial impact on these measures;
- 4.6 invited the Minister of Immigration to give effect to the decision in paragraph 4.4 above through issuing Immigration Instructions;
- 4.7 noted that key messages have been developed to support the public communication of the decision in paragraph 4.4 above;
- 4.8 noted that the Minister of Health will issue a media release announcing this decision;
- 4.9 noted that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade will inform China and key Pacific partners of the decision in paragraph 4.4 above ahead of public communication;
- 4.10 noted that the Ministry of Health will inform Australia and the World Health Organisation of the decision in paragraph 4.4 above ahead of public communication;
- 4.11 noted that officials are preparing advice for Ministers with Power to Act on potential further actions based on the developing global situation and understanding;

Membership of group of Ministers with Power to Act

- 5 **agreed** that the group of Ministers with Power to Act referred to in paragraph 1.6 above also include the Minister of Immigration;

Economic impacts

- 6 **noted** the update from the Minister of Finance on the economic impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak;
- 7 **noted** that the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on the tourism sector was considered in a separate paper under CAB-20-SUB-0037;
- 8 **noted** the update from the Minister of Forestry on the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on the forestry sector and that a paper on possible initiatives to support the industry will be considered by the Cabinet Economic Development Committee at its meeting on 19 February 2020.

Michael Webster
Secretary of the Cabinet

Hard-copy distribution:

Prime Minister
Deputy Prime Minister
Minister of Health
Minister of Immigration