

Covid-19 Immigration NZ – Industry questions

1 Explanation of the process to transfer RSE workers to employers where there is no existing ATR.

Process has been emailed out.

2 Progress with removal of the five month stand down between working in New Zealand.

We have a designated Operational Policy person working with us on this. We continue to work on it.

3 Progress with VOCs and backpacker mobility.

WHS holders

<https://www.business.govt.nz/covid-19/workplace-operations-covid-19-alert-levels/>

States that businesses can hire workers at any alert level. It is the restriction on regional travel by these lockdowns that is preventing working holiday visa holders to move to regions for work.

Visitor visa holders

MSD needs to declare a labour shortage. This would be the more expedite route as a consultation period between INZ and MSD to change this policy would be lengthy.

Supplementary Seasonal Employer visa – SSE

There are a number of hurdles that make this not a viable option for us at this time:

- we would need to go through the prioritisation approval process
- dedicate more staff (both IOs and Support Officers)
- set up a new electronic process for these visas as they are paper based
- auditing the criteria required for an individual to get this visa.

The whole organisation (not just the RSE Unit) has limited capacity. There are a lot of industries that are calling out for workers to have their applications approved but can't because we've still got a very limited number of staff working from home and we are trying to grapple with the priority order of applications.

4 Progress with removal of the 30 hour a week rule for RSE workers who have finished their programmed RSE work.

Also working with Operational Policy on this. Some questions have come back from them around why this is needed. Mike Chapman will give us some clarity around this.

5 Flights back to the Pacific.

No flights in the immediate future for passengers back to the Pacific. MFAT and INZ will be working with HortNZ to understand what repatriation would look like for RSE workers.

6 Government support for out of work RSE workers.

RSE employers can access the wage subsidy for their workers who are out of work.