

Update from INZ/MFAT/MSD on current topics

1. When will it be possible for RSE employers to submit ATR applications (single and/or joint) for September start?

You may submit now, just be aware processing of these will take second priority to processing current VOCs and ATRs. Submit both hard copy and email it to Immigration NZ.

2. Will visa fees be refunded where the borders closed stopping travel?

This is a complicated and on-going piece of work Immigration NZ is still working on. A part in the new amendment bill around possibility to extend visas offshore may go somewhat to addressing the 'refund' issue.

3. What progress has been made with the removal of the five-month stand down period between working in New Zealand?

Our work with Policy on this continues. We are gathering data on the numbers of workers who will be over their allowed time in NZ. A couple of options are to remove the requirement for the offshore stand down or extend the time allowed here.

4. What progress has been made with the removal of the 30 hour a week rule for RSE workers who have finished their programmed RSE work?

A clarification here – Industry would like the 30 hour a week rule completely taken out rather than just a reduction in hours. INZ needs to work out the surplus of workers here now who will not have enough work. We will require some input from industry on this.

5. Can RSE employer status re-approvals now be submitted?

Yes, and this was always the case, we just didn't have the ability to retrieve mail and open applications. Please email the RSE Unit with confirmation that you have submitted the application in the mail.

6. Will it be possible to extend the three-month limit per employer for a WHS visa holder?

The RSE Unit is not able to extend WHS visa conditions. Policy have advised us it is not on their work programme at the moment. They believe it would not be a highly viable option right now and would likely require a consultation period with MSD.

Pacific border update

Key messages from MFAT

- The New Zealand Government (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade) is talking with Pacific Governments to understand their planning and priorities for the return of their citizens. Pacific Governments are turning their attention to this issue.
- However, border restrictions are expected to remain in place for some time in most countries. Work remains to be done in several countries to improve Covid-19 testing and quarantine facilities prior to border restrictions being lifted.
- Once border restrictions ease, flights are likely to be limited due to constraints in testing and quarantine. Priority for return is likely to be given to the most vulnerable nationals.
- New Zealand government agencies will continue to be responsive to the evolving situation and the needs of employers and Pacific workers in New Zealand.

Tropical Cyclone Harold

New Zealand is continuing to provide support to Vanuatu, Fiji and Tonga in the wake of Tropical Cyclone Harold.