

Questions from industry 22 May 2020

The questions are:

1. Does an employer that (1) has an existing ATR, or (2) a new ATR redeploying workers, need to provide a travel plan to transfer between regions?
No travel plans are required by MBIE under Alert Level 2.
2. What is the turn-around time for ATRs at present?
Expect 3 weeks as a turn-around time as consultation periods are taking up to 10 days before the processing can start.
3. How's progress with removal of the 5 month stand down between working in New Zealand?
Policy paper is being prepared, aiming to send to Ministers next week for their consideration.
4. How's progress with removal of the 30 hour a week rule for RSE workers who have finished their programmed RSE work?
Flexibility around work is included in the policy paper mentioned in question 3.
5. Will it be possible for a WHS visa holder having completed the allowed 3 months with that employer get a further 3 month extension with that same employer?
This is not on Immigration NZ's work programme. Also, this is not in our remit as we work with only RSE Limited Visas.
6. From MSD – progress with support packages for unemployed RSE workers?
No update on support packages for unemployed RSE workers?
7. Can MFAT provide a Pacific border update?
 - The New Zealand Government (MFAT) is continuing to work with Pacific governments to further clarify their planning and priorities for the return of their citizens.
 - Border restrictions remain in place. Pacific governments are in varying stages of readiness. While some (for example, Fiji) have return process and operational quarantine facilities in place, others are still confirming their arrangements.
 - Once border restrictions ease, we expect passenger flights will continue to be limited, due to constraints in managed quarantine facilities. Priority for return will vary and likely to depend on priorities as well as how countries opt to manage bookings. MFAT will continue to provide updates as arrangements are known.
 - We encourage employers to maintain ongoing communication with workers to keep them updated of the border restrictions and to progress any concerns through to their industry representatives and MBIE.
8. Also question for MFAT: Is there a possibility to fund further Vakameasina training for RSE workers who are unable to return home?
We welcome more information on the regions/locations where there is interest for more Vakameasina services. We also encourage employers to reach out to their regional Vakameasina representatives in the first instance to register interest – happy to provide more information on this if not known. We are continuing to have discussions with Vakameasina about how best to support workers at this difficult time.