

## Immigration NZ update

- A total of 5,638 RSE workers have had their visas extended to 25 September. Please note that if you have a worker whose visa expires on 10 July or later, this will still be the case.
- To date, Immigration NZ has authorised the travel of 576 workers under existing joint ATRs or internal transfers.
- Immigration NZ is still issuing travel authorisations for those employers with existing joint ATRs and internal transfers. The sending employer is still required to submit the travel plan and accommodation plan on behalf of both the receiving and sending employer.
- For those requiring VOCs and new ATRs – this process is still being finalised however, the receiving employer is to submit the joint travel plan and their accommodation plan on behalf of the sender and themselves. If you are receiving in the South Island, please email the plans to [oiko.mchantung@mbie.govt.nz](mailto:oiko.mchantung@mbie.govt.nz) and if you're receiving workers in the North Island, please email the plans to [tony.jensen@mbie.govt.nz](mailto:tony.jensen@mbie.govt.nz). (Note: Immigration NZ do not want to receive separate plans from both senders and receivers.)
- Employers need to consult with their workers on the new arrangements and deductions on offer from the proposed receiving employer. Immigration NZ's brief signed by the minister is that the 'employee should be no worse off'. We understand there are regional differences in accommodation and transport costs, and under normal circumstances these are not questioned. However, under today's circumstances, the arrangements need to be close to what workers are charged at the place they are leaving. Workers have the option to not work or want to work for someone offering a more palatable deal.
- Tony and Oiko from the Ministry of Social Development will be collecting information on those employers who have accessed the MSD wage subsidy on behalf of their RSE workers. Only those employers who have accessed the subsidy need to respond and please advise how many workers are on the subsidy. This information is particularly important to notify Pacific countries of the status of their workers in New Zealand.

## Q&As for the horticulture sector

**Q What is happening with VOCs for RSE workers to transfer to employers where there is no existing ATR?**

**A** Immigration NZ's ability to do this has been signed off. The first lot of VOCs have been processed to test the system. The process will then be finalised, and communication will come out next week. Applications will be prioritised with the most urgent processed first.

**Q Has the five month stand down between working in New Zealand been removed?**

**A** We have requested legal and operational policy advice on this. There are two options; either finding a legal way to waive the five month stand down for the rest of this year, or an instructional change is required. There should be an update on this soon.

**Q Are there any flights back to the Pacific yet?**

**A** There are no flights taking people to the Pacific at this stage. The only flights are sending cargo or repatriating people from the Pacific to New Zealand.

**Q What government support is available for out of work RSE workers?**

**A** The Ministry of Social Development has not made a new announcement around support for temporary migrants out of work. A paper has gone to the Government however, a decision has not been made.

**Q Can you tell us about VOCs and backpacker mobility?**

**A** Immigration NZ is aware of the greater flexibility required by temp migrant visa holders to enable them to work in other areas, including essential services. As the country lowers its Covid-19 Alert Levels (to 2 and 1) and people can move regions, this will become even more important.

### **Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade information**

For your reference, here is the link to the embassies and high commissions in New Zealand that appear on the MFAT website: <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/embassies/#rep-F>

### **RSE Facebook page reminder**

It would be appreciated if employers could ensure their workers are aware of the RSE Facebook Toso Vaka O Manu page which provides immigration information, health information and links to translations: <https://www.facebook.com/Toso-Vaka-O-Manu-Information-Page-101097578230937/>