

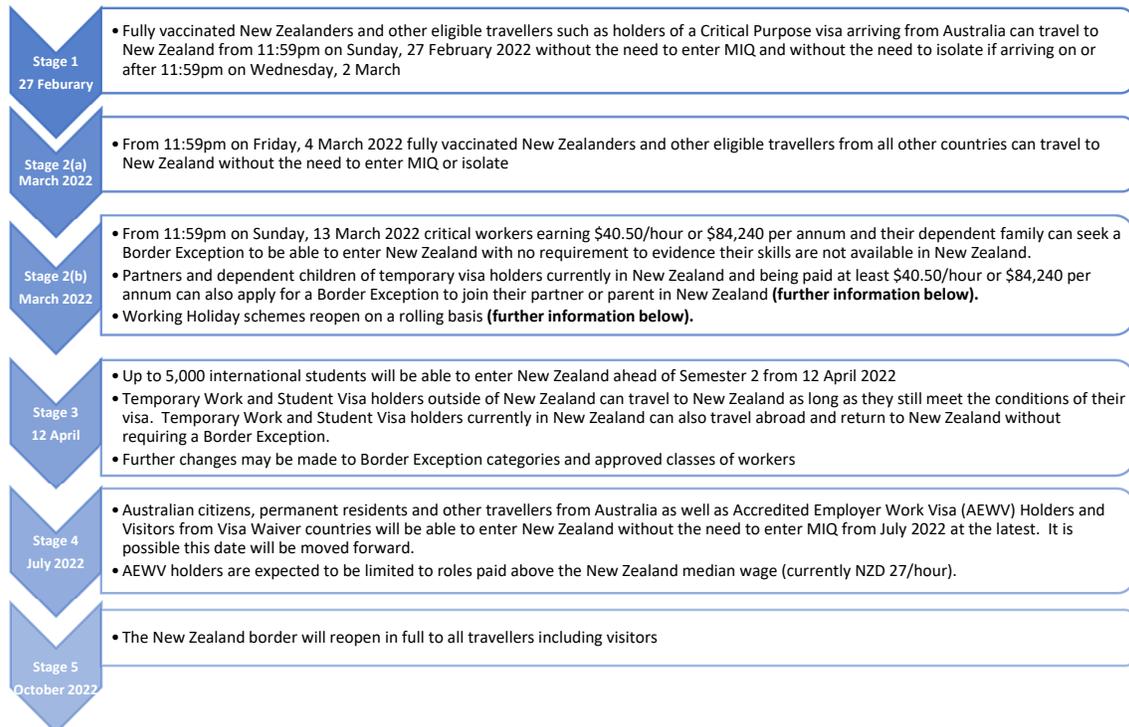


## MARCH 2022: NEW ZEALAND BORDER BEGINS TO REOPEN

The second stage of New Zealand's border reopening came into effect today, 14 March 2022. While this morning began with limited information on the operational instructions and policy to support the first stage, this has since been released and many are excited for the change and what for many employers, is the first opportunity they have had to bring skilled talent into New Zealand for almost 2 years.

As a reminder, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern announced on 3 February 2022 that Government Managed Isolation and Quarantine (MIQ) would be removed and replaced with self-isolation at home, in 5 distinct stages beginning on 27 February 2022 and finishing with a full reopening of New Zealand to the world by October 2022.

Since the Prime Minister's announcement, the need for self-isolation for eligible full vaccinated travellers who test negative on arrival has been removed. MIQ remains for unvaccinated New Zealanders. Pre-departure Covid-19 testing for all travellers to New Zealand, unless they have a medical exception also continues to be a requirement for entry. An up to date overview of the 5 stages of the border reopening is provided below.



## Accessing Critical Workers

From today, employers who have made a permanent or fixed term offer of employment for over 6 months, to an offshore employee with a remuneration of at least \$40.50 an hour (or \$84,240 per annum based on a 40-hour working week) can apply for a Border Exception to allow that skilled worker to enter New Zealand despite ongoing border restrictions.

Employers are no longer required to demonstrate that the skilled worker's skills are not readily obtainable in New Zealand. Therefore, labour market testing is no longer required.

Skilled workers who have a Border Exception request approved under these criteria will be invited to apply for a Critical Purpose Visitor Visa or Critical Purpose Variation of Conditions. Once the Critical Purpose Visa or Variation has been issued, they are free to travel to New Zealand. Dependent family can be included in the Border Exception and subsequent Critical Purpose application. Once onshore, individuals may choose to apply for longer term temporary visas to obtain work rights for partners, access to publicly funded health care etc.

It is important to note that Skilled workers travelling to New Zealand under the new Border Exception criteria will not be eligible to apply for Residence under the One-off 2021 Resident Visa category introduced late last year.

## Working Holiday Schemes Reopened

Working Holiday Schemes have begun to reopen from today, 14 March 2022, with applications opening from 10am this morning for nationals of the following countries:

Belgium	Germany	Norway
Canada	Ireland	Sweden
Denmark	Italy	United Kingdom
Finland	Japan	United States of America
France	Netherlands	

The reopening of Working Holiday schemes is expected to both support employers, especially those in hospitality and the primary sectors who are facing worker shortages and provide a boost to New Zealand's tourism sector ahead of the reopening of the borders more broadly to tourists later in the year.

In addition, Immigration New Zealand have granted new Working Holiday Visas to approximately 19,500 people who were previously granted a Working Holiday Visa on or after 20 March 2019 but have not been able to enter New Zealand and have not subsequently been granted a new visa under a different category. Those Working Holiday Visa holders who are offshore and continue to hold valid Working Holiday visas have also been granted an extension to their first entry before date conditions.

These people have been contacted directly by Immigration New Zealand and have until 13 September 2022 to enter New Zealand and validate their visas.

The remaining Working Holiday Schemes will re-open in the following order:

16 March	Malaysia	7 June	Israel
17 March	Portugal	14 June	Singapore
22 March	Mexico	23 June	Taiwan
30 March	Estonia	30 June	China
31 March	Philippines	6 July	Malta
5 April	Hong Kong	7 July	Lithuania
7 April	Slovenia	14 July	Thailand
20 April	Hungary	21 July	Turkey
21 April	Spain	4 August	Vietnam
3 May	Slovakia	10 August	Croatia
4 May	Austria	11 August	Peru
10 May	Luxembourg	18 August	Brazil
11 May	Poland	30 August	Argentina
17 May	Korea	6 September	Chile
24 May	Latvia	13 September	Uruguay
31 May	Czech Republic		

The demand for these Working Holiday schemes in the face of ongoing global uncertainty remains to be seen but Immigration Minister, Hon. Kris Faafoi has said that New Zealand's response to Covid-19 and low case numbers and deaths in comparison to the OECD is likely to make New Zealand an attractive place for working holidaymakers to visit.

If you have any questions on the updates provided or would like to discuss how you might support your offshore employees to enter New Zealand, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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