



OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER
HON MARK BROWN
GOVERNMENT OF THE COOK ISLANDS

MEDIA RELEASE

COOK ISLANDS AND NEW ZEALAND AGREE NEXT STEPS TOWARDS
QUARANTINE-FREE TRAVEL
11 DECEMBER 2020

Following a joint release earlier this morning with New Zealand Prime Minister Rt. Hon Jacinda Ardern, Prime Minister Hon Mark Brown welcomed New Zealand's commitment for the removal of mandatory quarantine for Cook Islands arrivals into New Zealand. Both governments will confirm the timing for when removal of mandatory quarantine will take effect early next week.

Prime Minister Brown said "We welcome the commitment of New Zealand for the removal of mandatory quarantine for Cook Islands arrivals into New Zealand as a first step in a phased approach to the full resumption of two-way quarantine free travel (QFT) between our countries.

The health and wellbeing of our people remains our foremost priority, and this interim arrangement enables us to ensure that those in need of non-critical but still urgent medical treatment and those who serve in our judicial and education sectors are able to do so without the stress and cost of quarantine".

"Socially and economically, it is vitally important that we move meticulously, but at pace, to enable our people and businesses to regain some form of normality and confidence in their lives and businesses. We are fortunate that New Zealand has all but eliminated the virus, and for this we are grateful.

"The Ministry of Finance and Economic Management is now developing Phase 3 of the Economic Response Plan (ERP) to continue support to businesses and employees and I will be able to update the general public on ERP 3 towards the end of this month" he said.

Prime Minister Brown stated "In the coming weeks, Cook Islands officials will provide insights into the recent technical exchange of officials between the two countries; QFT

readiness work; and agreed further areas to be progressed such as testing capabilities, contact tracing and contingency planning and resourcing. A comprehensive communication strategy will be implemented to inform the Cook Islands community on border requirements and the Cook Islands readiness relating to health infrastructure and the industry.”

The work of officials will continue through the Christmas period with both governments working to a timeframe of the first quarter in 2021 to operationalise full two-way quarantine free travel between New Zealand and the Cook Islands.

ENDS.

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