

This document answers frequently asked questions about the upcoming suspension of QFT with all Australian states and return flights

This information applies from 23 July 2021 following the public announcement

Information can be used for any government, agency, local government or relevant sector and business communications.

This is a living document, updated frequently. Information that changes or is added between versions will be highlighted.

Please ensure you are using the most up to date version.

This version was current at 12:30pm (NZT) Friday 23 July 2021.

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Travel suspension between NZ and all Australian states

Q: What is happening?

Quarantine-Free Travel (QFT) from all Australian states and territories is suspended. From 11:59pm, 23 July 2021 (NZT), at least a 7-day travel window will be open for people who meet the eligibility criteria to return home.

The New Zealand Government will be upgrading its travel advice for everyone in New Zealand to not travel to Australia.

Q: Why is this happening?

Australia is now in a vastly different position from when we opened QFT.

The decision to suspend all QFT to New Zealand from Australia follows a public health assessment of the escalating situation in several Australian states, and the increasing risk of the highly contagious Delta variant of the virus spreading further to other states or territories.

Q: What is the difference between a pause and suspension?

Suspending trans-Tasman QFT means QFT from Australia will be stopped for an extended period of time and will no longer be evaluated on a regular basis, as has been done previously when pauses have been announced.

Q: Why is travel being suspended from Australian states where there is no evidence of COVID-19 in the community in NZ?

The risk of the virus spreading further to other states has increased, as shown by the spread of cases from NSW to other states. The risk of QFT to public health in NZ has become increasingly high from all Australian states.

Q: How long will these arrangements be in place?

Quarantine-Free Travel will be suspended for at least 8 weeks and reviewed at the end of September. Any resumption of QFT will be dependent on public health advice that it is safe to do so.

Returning home from Australia

Q. What is the advice for New Zealanders currently in Australia?

Return to New Zealand. There is a 7-day window to allow NZ citizens, residents and visa holders to return home

People that meet the eligibility criteria will need to return home in the next 7 days. Once the travel window closes there will be limited opportunity to return home for several weeks and possibly months after.

Q: What do I need to do to return home from Australia?

For travellers from **Queensland, Northern Territory, South Australia, Tasmania, Western Australia, ACT, Norfolk Island** and **Victoria**, book a return (green) flight with your airline. For travel from these states with the exception of Norfolk Island, you must arrange a Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) [Pre-Departure Test](#), taken within 72-hours of your intended travel to New Zealand.

You will need to complete the [Nau Mai Ra declaration for travel to NZ](#), (a new one if you flight to NZ has changed), complete a health check to confirm you have not been in a location of interest in the past 14 days, you are not a contact of a COVID-19 case or have COVID-19 symptoms. You will not need to enter MIQ.

Q: What else do I need to do if I am travelling from Victoria?

Eligible people from **Victoria** or travellers from other states/territories who transit through Victoria after 23:59 on 23 July can return without going into MIQ provided they meet the above criteria and also:

- adhere to lockdown measures while in Victoria
- once in New Zealand, self-isolate in your place of residence for 3 days, get a COVID-19 test on day 3 and continue to self-isolate until a negative result has been received
- travel directly home, wear a face mask and not have anyone visit them at home until they get a negative result.

Travellers from Victoria will also be contacted on day 1 and day 3 by the Ministry of Health after their return, to check on their health, wellbeing and ensure the day 3 test has been completed.

Eligible people from New South Wales do not require a pre-departure test and will continue to return on existing managed return flights. Returnees on these flights will be required to enter a managed isolation facility for at least 14 days on arrival in New Zealand.

Those in Victoria and NSW are advised to travel to the departure airport wearing facemasks and by safe travel method, i.e. not public transport.

The arrangements vary between different Australian states to reflect the different levels of risk faced by returnees from each state.

Q: What do I do if I am travelling from New South Wales?

For travellers from **New South Wales**, you will need to come home on managed return flights, which are continuing for a limited timeframe. It's important to note you must enter a managed isolation facility for at least 14 days on arrival in New Zealand, and bookings are subject to availability.

If you are not booked on a managed return flight from New South Wales, register on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Safe Travel website, sign up to subscribe to the United Against COVID-19 update for your state, and call 09 952 1695 or 04 830 3599 from Australia, or 0800 537 726 from New Zealand

Q: Who can return to New Zealand on return flights?

Traveller eligibility for return flights, without MIQ on return, would be those who are 'ordinarily resident' in New Zealand which includes:

1. New Zealand citizens and holders of residence class visas;
2. Holders of temporary visas and Australian citizens, who last departed New Zealand after 5 April 2021;
3. Holders of current permanent residence visas (including a resident return visa) issued by the Government of Australia who last departed New Zealand after 5 April 2021; and

4. Relevant family members of people listed in the above categories. (Relevant family member means: a spouse, civil union partner, or de facto partner, a dependent child; or a parent of a dependent child. Parent, in relation to a dependent child, means a person on whom the child is dependant)

Q: I do not want to or are unable to return home in the next 7 days. What do I do?

We advise you to register on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Safe Travel website and subscribe to the United Against COVID-19 travel notification service. For further assistance, call 09 952 1695 or 04 830 3599 from Australia, or 0800 537 726 from New Zealand.

Q: Can I get back into New Zealand if I leave after the 7-day window?

Yes – eligible travellers (including NZ citizens and residents) will be able to return on a red flight and enter MIQ upon arrival into New Zealand for 14 days. The availability of these flights may be limited and a flight may not be able to be secured immediately after the suspension begins.

Temporary visa holders and Australian citizens (not resident of NZ) that leave New Zealand after the 7-day window will not be able to return to New Zealand until QFT resumes.

Q: How can I travel to New Zealand after the suspension begins and after the 7- day return travel window?

From 11:59pm on Friday 30 July 2021 eligible New Zealanders in Australia will only be able to return to New Zealand on red flights and will need to go into MIQ for 14 days. This is equivalent to the requirements for returnees from all other non-QFT countries.

These red flights may not begin straight away after the suspension begins.

After the suspension begins, traveller eligibility criteria for flights through the red zone will reflect pre-QFT settings and will be consistent with the eligibility criteria for travellers from all other non-QFT jurisdictions.

In addition to those eligible for non-QFT red flights (including New Zealand citizens and residence class visa holders and their families), there will be an exception for travellers who are considered "ordinarily resident" in New Zealand who despite their best efforts and intentions could not secure a flight in the window of opportunity to return, e.g., because they had been in a location of interest and therefore were not eligible to travel. In addition to those who meet the eligibility criteria for red flights, this exemption will include:

1. holders of temporary visas and Australian citizens, who last departed New Zealand after 5 April 2021 (but before Saturday 24 July 2021)

2. holders of current permanent residence visas (including a resident return visa) issued by the Government of Australia who last departed New Zealand after 5 April 2021 (but before Saturday 24 July); and
3. relevant family members of people listed in the above categories (relevant family member means: a spouse, civil union partner, or de facto partner, a dependent child; or a parent of a dependent child. Parent, in relation to a dependent child, means a person on whom the child is dependant).

Q: Who do I contact about my travel from Australia to NZ?

If you have questions about your booking, please contact your airline.

For questions about New Zealand Government requirements, check the COVID-19.govt.nz website. If you have further questions around requirements for travel from Australia to NZ, call 09 952 1695 or 04 830 3599 from Australia, or 0800 537 726 from New Zealand

Q: Why are there further requirements for people travelling from Victoria and New South Wales?

Protecting the people of New Zealand against COVID-19 is our priority.

Additional requirements for travellers from Victoria and New South Wales are proportionate to the extended lockdowns and higher COVID-19 risk in those states compared to other parts of Australia.

Q: Will my PDT be checked on the return flights?

In the period until the suspension begins, Immigration New Zealand will undertake to ensure 100% checking of travellers' PDT documentation at the Australian border prior to departure for New Zealand. Travellers will also be subject to additional checks on arrival in New Zealand.

Q: If there are no rooms in MIQ, how will people get home?

Returnees in all states except NSW, and who meet eligibility criteria, will have seven days to return to New Zealand from 23 July. They will not need to enter MIQ for 14 days if they return in this period.

There is significant demand for space in MIQ with very limited space available.

Travellers should monitor the Unite Against COVID-19 website for up-to-date information.

Q: What is the situation with MIQ?

There is currently limited capacity in MIQ due to New Zealanders returning from New South Wales having to go into MIQ along with travellers from the rest of the world. This has seen facilities booking into their contingency allocations to support people coming into NZ while the borders are closed.

The latest release of MIAS vouchers on 7 July saw more than 3,000 rooms fully booked within three hours. While in April and May there were spaces that could be booked in MIQ currently there is significant demand for vouchers.

With new variants of COVID-19 MIQ is aware of the importance of maintaining our strong processes to ensure that returnees, workers and NZ communities continue to be protected from COVID 19.

MIQ is working through options and timing for when further MIQ rooms will come available with the current high bookings and significant demand.

Travellers should monitor the Unite Against COVID-19 website for up-to-date information.

Q: If I do not come home within the 7-day window, will I have to pay for MIQ?

Decisions on whether travellers will need to pay is still being looked at.

Q: Will I need to pay for MIQ if I am returning from NSW on a managed return flight?

People returning from NSW on a managed return flight, will not have to pay for MIQ – in line with the government’s announcement on 9 July.

Q: How much capacity will there be in MIQ to take travellers from Australia?

From 15 August there may be some capacity to continue with approximately 500 rooms a fortnight which was set aside when Quarantine Free Travel was announced.

Q: We are hearing that it’s almost impossible for people to get into MIQ as it is - how are you possibly going to get people home in the next 7 days if there are not MIQ spots

Returnees in all states except NSW, and who meet eligibility criteria, will have seven days to return to New Zealand from 23 July on green flights. They will not need to enter MIQ for 14 days. Depending on demand this could be extended for a short period.

After the 7-day return flight window people will need to book their own MIQ space and red-flight when they come available. They will need to go into a managed isolation facility for 14 days.

This means there are going to be some New Zealanders who may have to seek shelter in Australia for an extended period of time.

Q: When will MIQ space come available?

MIQ have released all available vouchers for July and there is very limited space available for August. We are currently assessing options for availability of rooms for September to November. Vouchers for December will be released once airlines have confirmed their schedules.

Q: Can returnees' transit through other States, including those in lockdown, to return to New Zealand? Consider locations like ACT that may not have direct flights to NZ.

You will need to check the appropriate state Government advice advising if you can travel to and from a state or territory prior to any travel. Generally, you should ensure you avoid any locations of interest and don't transit through New South Wales as NZ Customs will detect this when you arrive in NZ and you may be subject to a stay in MIQ as well as fines.

Q: How will we know that they have followed health and immigration requirements/How will we know people have self-isolated in Australia and then in NZ?

Travellers to New Zealand bear the responsibility of ensuring they meet all immigration and travel requirements prior to travel. This is imperative to keep all of us safe and prevent COVID-19 spreading across the Tasman.

Travellers are legally required before departure to:

2. Have evidence of a negative - PCR or RT-PCR - Pre-Departure Test, within 72 hours of the flight.
3. Completed health declaration confirming they have not been at a location of interest for the past 14 days and do not have COVID symptoms
4. Complete the Nau Mai Rā contact information

Serious penalties apply for anyone who don't meet all these requirements and could include a fine being imposed as well as being required to stay in a Managed Isolation Facility upon arrival in New Zealand at their own cost.

Checks are carried out both by airline staff in Australia and by border officials in New Zealand.

In the period until the suspension begins, Immigration New Zealand will undertake to ensure checking of 100% of travellers' PDT documentation at the Australian border prior to departure for New Zealand. Travellers will also be subject to additional checks on arrival in New Zealand. Keeping COVID-19 out of New Zealand relies on all of us ensuring we do everything possible to stop the spread of the virus.

Q: What happens to people who do not meet the public health criteria to return home? i.e. people who have been in a place of interest and have to stay in Australia for 14 days and miss the 7-day travel window – how can they then return?

You will have to wait until travel is appropriate and allowed given your current circumstances. When quarantine free travel ends, if you're returning to New Zealand, you legally must complete at least 14 days of managed isolation or quarantine. You also must meet all eligibility and entry criteria.

Q: What if my pre-departure test returns a positive result?

You must follow the advice of Australian health authorities. Contact your airline once you are eligible to travel.

Q: What assistance is available to New Zealanders in Australia?

It is travellers' own responsibility to manage any COVID-19 related travel disruption and to meet any associated financial costs.

If you require urgent assistance to return home, please call call 09 952 1695 or 04 830 3599 from Australia to discuss your situation.

Information about consular support available to New Zealanders overseas is at www.safetravel.govt.nz . If you require consular assistance, please contact the [Embassy, High Commission or Consulate](#) closest to you or CONS@mfat.govt.nz. For emergency consular assistance, please contact +64 99 20 20 20 (if overseas) or 0800 30 10 30 (within NZ).

Q: What happens if people in Australia need to come to New Zealand for emergency reasons after the suspension is in place?

For information on time sensitive applications for MIQ visit [Time sensitive travel allocation requests | Managed isolation and quarantine \(miq.govt.nz\)](#)

You may be able to travel to New Zealand while the border is closed if we consider you have a critical purpose to travel.

[Critical purpose reasons to travel | immigration.govt.nz\(external link\)](#)

Most people who are not New Zealand citizens or residents legally must get approval from Immigration NZ before travelling to New Zealand. Some people do not need to request to travel.

Information from Immigration NZ:

- [Immigration during COVID-19\(external link\)](#)
- [New Zealand border entry requirements\(external link\)](#)

Q: Do you promise to get NZers home who are now stranded in Australia?

Travellers are strongly encouraged to return within the 7-day window. New Zealand cannot influence or guarantee another country or airline's entry, exit or transit requirements. We also cannot help you book a commercial flight.

Consular help by calling:

+64 99 20 20 20 if you're outside New Zealand

0800 30 10 30 if you're in New Zealand.

Q: Why is travel being suspended from Australian states where there is no evidence of COVID-19 in the community?

Health officials are concerned about the rate of COVID-19 transmission in Australia, including cross-border transmission (despite closed state and territory borders), and the associated public health risk to New Zealand. This is exacerbated by the increased transmissibility of the Delta variant and that controls in New South Wales have not been able to contain community outbreaks.

Q: Will there be QFT again in the future?

The aim is to restart travel with Australia in the future. Further information will be provided.

How will you get everyone back from Australia in a week?

We will constantly review uptake and extend the period for a short period if we need to.

Is this an overreaction?

No. We have planned for a wide range of scenarios.

The QFT objectives agreed by Cabinet include that QFT is safe and ensures that public health requirements are met, including that travellers to New Zealand do not have (or are very unlikely to have) COVID-19.

It was for precisely this kind of scenario (multiple cases of unknown origin) that the option to suspend was included in the QFT framework we announced on 6 April (operational from 19 April).

We remain committed to travel with Australia but safety comes first. A strong health response remains the best economic response.

Why don't you close the border and not bring them back?

New Zealand citizens and those who ordinarily reside in New Zealand have a right to return home from Australia given the new risk assessment.

Travel to Australia

Q: Why are you advising not to travel to Australia?

The New Zealand Government advises against people in New Zealand travelling to any part of Australia unless they are a normal resident of Australia and are returning home.

More information

Q: Where can I find more information?

The best sources of accurate and reliable COVID-19 information are the Unite Against COVID-19 and Ministry of Health websites and trusted sources such as DHBs or health providers. More information can be found on the [Unite Against COVID-19 website](#).

Q: What should I do if I see mis-or dis-information?

If you see something about COVID-19 that doesn't seem right, if it's on social media report it to the platform – anything else [report it to CERT NZ](#) or call 0800 2378 69.

Key contacts for official advice**Accessible information**

Information and advice in other formats for people with accessibility needs <https://covid19.govt.nz/updates-and-resources/accessible-information/>

Healthline 0800 358 5453 or +64 9 358 5453

Immigration

Visit www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/covid-19 or call the Immigration Contact Centre (6am – 10pm, Monday – Friday (NZST) from landlines only on 0508 558 855, or Auckland 09 914 4100, Wellington 04 910 9915, or from overseas +64 9 914 4100

All New Zealanders overseas are encouraged to see the advice and register on www.safetravel.govt.nz

If you require consular assistance, please contact the [Embassy, High Commission or Consulate](#) closest to you or CONS@mfat.govt.nz. For emergency consular assistance, please contact +64 99 20 20 20 (if overseas) or 0800 30 10 30 (within NZ).

Pacific communities

For information to support Pacific communities, visit <https://www.facebook.com/MinistryforPacificPeoples/>

Translations

For resources in other languages, visit <https://covid19.govt.nz/updates-and-resources/translations/>

Transport

For information on transport go to www.transport.govt.nz/about/covid-19 or email essentialtravel@transport.govt.nz

Unite Against COVID-19

Website www.covid19.govt.nz

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/UniteAgainstCOVID19/>

LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/company/uniteagainstcovid19/>

Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/uniteagainstcovid19/>

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