



Report

Date: 13 April 2021

Security Level: IN CONFIDENCE

To: Hon Carmel Sepuloni, Minister for Social Development and Employment

Establishing the amended COVID-19 New Zealanders Stranded Overseas Support Programme

Purpose of the report

- 1 This report seeks your agreement to sign the attached *COVID-19 New Zealanders Stranded Overseas Support Amendment 2021*. This Amendment Instrument amends the expiry of the COVID-19 New Zealanders Stranded Overseas Support Programme (the Programme), from 27 April 2021 to 31 August 2021.

Recommended actions

It is recommended that you:

- 1 **note** that on 20 April 2020 the COVID-19 New Zealanders Stranded Overseas Support Programme commenced, and is due to expire on 27 April 2021
- 2 **note** that on 7 April 2021, the Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee (SWC), having been authorised by the Prime Minister to have Power to Act:
 - 2.1 agreed to extend the expiry of the Programme for a further four months, to 31 August 2021
 - 2.2 agreed that the operating balance impact and net core Crown Debt impact of the expenses incurred as a result of this extension (\$12.1 million net total) be charged against the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund established as part of Budget 2020
 - 2.3 noted that the amended programme would be established by you with immediate effect, prior to the expiry of the current programme on 27 April 2021 [SWC-21-MIN-0045 refers]
- 3 **note** the attached *COVID-19 New Zealanders Stranded Overseas Support Amendment 2021* has been drafted to reflect the SWC's decisions
- 4 **sign** and date the attached *COVID-19 New Zealanders Stranded Overseas Support Amendment 2021*

Agree / Disagree
- 5 **agree** to waive the 28-day rule for the *COVID-19 New Zealanders Stranded Overseas Support Amendment 2021*, so that it can have immediate effect prior to the expiry of the current programme on 27 April 2021

Agree / Disagree


- 6 **note** that pending your approval to recommendations 4 and 5, the attached amendment instrument will come into force on the day after it is signed
- 7 **note** that officials will arrange for publication of the amending instrument in the New Zealand Gazette and on the Ministry of Social Development's website (in accordance with section 102 of the Social Security Act 2018)
- 8 **direct** your Office to arrange for a copy of the amending instrument to be tabled in the House of Representatives as soon as practicable (in accordance with section 102 of the Social Security Act 2018)

Yes / No



Lynne Cousins
Policy Manager
Seniors and International Policy

13-6-2021
Date



Hon Carmel Sepuloni
Minister for Social Development and Employment

13/4/21
Date

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Cabinet has agreed to extend the COVID-19 New Zealanders Stranded Overseas Support Programme

- 2 The Programme commenced on 20 April 2020. Under the Programme, special financial assistance is provided to Ministry of Social Development (MSD) clients who are unable to return to New Zealand because of the impact of COVID-19. Payments made under the Programme are equivalent to the rate of New Zealand Superannuation (NZS), Veteran's Pension (VP), main benefit or supplementary assistance the client would have received had they been in New Zealand.
- 3 Initially established for a six-month period, the Programme was originally due to expire in October 2020. A further six-month extension to 27 April 2021 was agreed to in September 2020, as people continued to rely on the Programme for financial support and continued to face issues returning home because of COVID-19 [CAB-20-MIN-0452 refers]. As at 22 March 2021, there were 1,298 MSD clients receiving payments under the Programme.
- 4 You agreed to extend the Programme on 28 February 2021 [REP/21/2/154 refers]. On 7 April 2021, the Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee (SWC), having been authorised by the Prime Minister to have Power to Act:
 - 4.1 agreed to extend the expiry of the Programme for a further four months, to 31 August 2021
 - 4.2 agreed that the operating balance impact and net core Crown Debt impact of the expenses incurred as a result of this extension (\$12.1 million net total) be charged against the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund established as part of Budget 2020
 - 4.3 noted that the amended programme would be established by you with immediate effect, prior to the expiry of the current programme on 27 April 2021 [SWC-21-MIN-0045 refers].
- 5 The attached Amendment Instrument enables this extension, adjusting the expiry of the Programme from 27 April 2021 to 31 August 2021.
- 6 Without an extension to the Programme, eligible clients who are unable to return to New Zealand before 27 April 2021 may be left without Government support, potentially risking their welfare and wellbeing.

We seek your approval and signature for the attached Amendment Instrument

- 7 The attached *COVID-19 New Zealanders Stranded Overseas Support Amendment 2021* reflects what Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee agreed to on 7 April 2021.
- 8 As Minister for Social Development and Employment, you have legislative authority to make this amendment to the Programme. We are seeking your approval of this instrument to enable its commencement.

We seek your agreement to waive the 28-day rule for this Amendment Instrument

- 9 Your agreement to waive the 28-day rule for the *COVID-19 New Zealanders Stranded Overseas Support Amendment 2021* is being sought so that it can have immediate effect prior to the expiry of the current programme.
- 10 Your intention to waive the 28-day rule was noted by the Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee on 7 April 2021 [SWC-21-MIN-0045].

Next steps

- 11 Pending your approval and signature, the *COVID-19 New Zealanders Stranded Overseas Support Amendment 2021* will commence on the day after it is signed.

- 12 Once you have signed the attached instrument, officials will arrange for it to be notified in the New Zealand Gazette and published on MSD's website as soon as practicable.
- 13 Officials will also work with your office to arrange for a copy of the instrument to be tabled in the House of Representatives as soon as practicable.

Reference number: REP/21/4/342

Author: ^{9(2)(a)} Graduate Policy Analyst, Seniors and International Policy

Responsible manager: Lynne Cousins, Policy Manager, Seniors and International Policy

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COVID-19 New Zealanders Stranded Overseas Support Amendment 2021

I certify that this instrument is in order for signing by the Minister


Lauren Smith
Team Manager,
Advisory Team,
MSD Legal
13/04/2021

This instrument is made under section 101(1) of the Social Security Act 2018 by the Minister for Social Development and Employment.

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4	Clause 17 amended (Expiry)	1

Instrument

- 1 Title**
This instrument is the COVID-19 New Zealanders Stranded Overseas Support Amendment 2021.
- 2 Commencement**
This instrument comes into effect on the day after it is signed.
- 3 Principal programme**
This instrument amends the COVID-19 New Zealanders Stranded Overseas Support Programme¹ (as established and approved on 17 April 2020) (the **principal programme**).
- 4 Clause 17 amended (Expiry)**
In clause 17, replace “on 27 April” with “at the close of 31 August”.

Minister for Social Development and Employment

Signed at this day of April 2021

¹ New Zealand Gazette, 21 April 2020, notice 2020-go1713.

COVID-19 New Zealanders Stranded Overseas Support Amendment 2021

This instrument is made under section 101(1) of the Social Security Act 2018 by the Minister for Social Development and Employment.

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- 1 Title**
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- 2 Commencement**
This instrument comes into effect on the day after it is signed.
- 3 Principal programme**
This instrument amends the COVID-19 New Zealanders Stranded Overseas Support Programme¹ (as established and approved on 17 April 2020) (the **principal programme**).
- 4 Clause 17 amended (Expiry)**
In clause 17, replace “on 27 April” with “at the close of 31 August”.



Minister for Social Development and Employment

Signed at Wellington this 15th day of April 2021

¹ New Zealand Gazette, 21 April 2020, notice 2020-go1713.

Explanatory Note

This note is not part of the instrument, but is intended to indicate its general effect.

This instrument, which comes into effect on the day after it is signed, amends the **principal programme** made under section 101(1) of the Social Security Act 2018 to extend the programme until the close of 31 August 2021.

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