

2 September 2020

UPDATE: BRINGING PRODUCTION CAST, CREW AND ASSOCIATED TRAVELLERS TO NEW ZEALAND

1. Background and NZFC role

After New Zealand borders were closed to overseas travellers due to COVID19 in March 2020, NZFC provided information about the film industry and its benefits for the New Zealand economy to the Ministry for Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE).

This led to a provision for productions to apply to the Minister for some critical workers to be permitted to come to New Zealand to start or restart international productions stalled by the COVID19 pandemic. The aim was to trigger a significant spend and jobs for New Zealanders and the New Zealand economy. The process is relevant for any production – international or local - that requires some limited international crew or cast to trigger production.

This phase resulted in seven major productions getting up and running.

Since then, responsibility for approval of these critical worker exemptions has moved to Immigration New Zealand. Immigration New Zealand does not share applications it receives with NZFC, and NZFC advice is not sought on specific applications. NZFC can supply some advice on what is typically considered in any submission, but does not influence or play a role in the approval or feedback process.

NZFC can provide support to international clients and New Zealand line producers as they go through these processes, noting again that we do not play a role in the approvals process. Contact philippa.mossman@nzfilm.co.nz if you are starting the process for a production and would like further advice beyond this fact sheet.

2. Applying to bring film personnel to New Zealand

New Zealand's border is currently closed to all but two groups of travellers:

- people to whom the border closure doesn't apply - returning New Zealand citizens and residents, for example
- people who Immigration New Zealand considers have a critical purpose while the border is closed. This group includes some film cast, crew and associated travellers.

Productions (ie. employers) can apply for border exemptions to bring critical workers to New Zealand using the online form at <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/forms/help/employer-request-for-critical-worker>.

Productions can put in one border exemption request for all the employees they believe to have a critical purpose to come into New Zealand. This includes cast, crew and associated travellers (eg. partners, dependent children).

In the assessment of applications, Immigration New Zealand will determine if the employees you have applied for meet a 'less than/more than 6-month' criteria. If your application states that your employees are undertaking a time-critical role for work which brings significant wider benefits to the national or regional economy, the assessment will consider the amount of economic stimulus your production will bring for New Zealand. This includes, but is not limited to, an assessment of how many people you would like to bring into the country in relation to the number of jobs the production will create for New Zealanders, and in relation to how much money the production is likely to spend in New Zealand.

You're welcome to speak with the NZFC about including supplementary information in your application – please email philippa.mossman@nzfilm.co.nz.

- To enter the country, productions (employers) must apply for and be granted a critical worker exemption for incoming cast, crew, and other travellers. **This process is currently taking around five weeks.**
- Workers whose employers receive approval for a border exemption will be contacted by Immigration New Zealand and invited to apply for a Critical Purpose Visitor Visa with work rights or a Critical Purpose Variation of Conditions visa to allow for travel to New Zealand – a [Visa to enter the country](#). **This process is taking less than two weeks for most applications received.** NB: This classification of visa does not require a letter of non-objection (LONO) from a Guild. A LONO may be useful to support a Critical Worker application for those skill sets that might appear available in NZ, but it is not compulsory under the critical worker request or for the visitor visa with work rights.

New Zealand citizens or permanent residents do not need to complete this process.

3. Mandatory managed isolation and accommodation

Upon entry to New Zealand, your cast, crew and other travellers are required to enter 14 days managed isolation or quarantine at an approved government facility. **You will be required to pay for your travellers' quarantine** – see section 4 for more information on charges.

Recent changes at MIQ mean placement into a managed isolation facility will now be based on room availability, which means on arrival in New Zealand, individuals could theoretically be placed in any of the Auckland managed isolation facilities **OR** in any of the other regional managed isolation facilities in Hamilton, Rotorua, Wellington or Christchurch. This means that, like returning New Zealanders, your travellers won't know which hotel they will be placed in before they arrive.

All managed isolation hotels are 4-star or higher, meet all public health requirements, and provide 3 suitable meals a day, laundry services and wifi. You can find a list of managed isolation facilities here <https://www.miq.govt.nz/being-in-managed-isolation/isolation-facilities/facility-locations/>

MIQ asks that individuals or their representatives don't approach managed isolation facilities/hotels directly to book accommodation, or with any special requests. Any bookings or requests sent directly to the facilities will now be redirected to MIQ.

NZFC no longer collates traveller information from productions for MIQ.

There is a process to consider whether appropriate arrangements for individuals should be made if there is a public health risk. This could include high profile individuals, such as recognisable actors. For more information contact philippa.mossman@nzfilm.co.nz.

4. Charges for managed isolation

The Government will now be directly charging critical workers for managed isolation costs. That means each individual traveller will receive an invoice at the end of their stay which includes information on how to pay. You will generally have 90 days to pay unless staying in New Zealand for a shorter period than that.

These invoices can't, at this point, be generated in bulk for an employer. If an employer has multiple employees staying at a managed isolation facility and wants to pay for them on their behalf, this will have to be done individually. MIQ is working on group- and third-party invoicing, and NZFC will let you know when that becomes available.

More information on the fees can be found here: <https://www.miq.govt.nz/being-in-managed-isolation/charges-for-managed-isolation/>

All travellers are tested for COVID19 twice while in managed isolation – usually around day 3 and around day 12 of quarantine.