

Subject: INZ Update
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To: Undisclosed recipients;

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The current COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a number of challenges on the ability for Immigration New Zealand (INZ) to receive and process visa applications.

With international travel severely restricted for the foreseeable future, and with countries significantly affected by the COVID-19 outbreak, it does not make practical or humanitarian sense to offer residence visas to individuals who are unlikely to be able to activate their visa in time.

We also don't want to create any potential public health risk by encouraging travel by individuals while we are at a heightened alert level.

As a result, the Government has decided to defer a number of visa programmes. This includes the ballot registrations for the Samoan Quota and Pacific Access Category, which were due to open on 1 April 2020, and the 19 capped working holiday scheme arrangements that were due to open in the next six months.

Selections for Expressions of Interest (EOI) in the Skilled Migrant Category (SMC) and the Parent Category have also been suspended.

INZ acknowledges that there is a lot of interest in these EOI selections and that this will be disappointing for a number of applicants. The deferrals are a temporary measure in response to the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak.

The deferral of these programmes will help manage expectations from the public at a time when INZ's capacity is limited due to COVID-19, provide fairness to applicants, and enable INZ to focus available resources on towards urgent COVID-19 related activities.

More information on the deferral of these programmes is available on [our website](#).

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