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(Verrall, 2022c)

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16 JUNE 2022

Pre-departure tests removed from June 20

**HON DR AYESHA VERRALL**(/MINISTER/HON-DR-AYESHA-VERALL)[COVID-19 Response \(/portfolio/labour-2020-2023/covid-19-response\)](#)

Travellers to New Zealand will no longer need a COVID-19 pre-departure test from 11.59pm Monday 20 June, COVID-19 Response Minister Dr Ayesha Verrall announced today.

"We've taken a careful and staged approach to reopening our borders to ensure we aren't overwhelmed with an influx of COVID-19 cases. Our strategy has worked and as a result it's safe to lift pre-departure test requirements much sooner than planned," Ayesha Verrall said.

"We had intended to remove the requirement for travellers to have a pre-departure test by 31 July. But with cases continuing to decline despite over 387,000 arrivals since borders reopened there is evidence this measure can now be lifted.

"Around 90 percent of international arrivals undertake their required testing once they are in the country, with only a 2-3 percent positivity rate. So we don't anticipate a significant increase in border cases once the requirement is lifted.

"In addition I'm advised the challenges pre-departure tests pose to visitors are now no longer outweighed by the public health benefits.

"Factors such as the availability of and cost of getting a test are increasingly becoming a barrier for people intending to travel here, especially as other countries wind back testing availability or the requirement for a test on entry themselves.

"While the pre-departure test requirements are being removed, we are keeping in place a set of border surveillance measures for detecting any possible new variants of COVID-19.

"In order to understand what new strains of COVID are arriving at the border travellers will still be required to self-test on Day 0/1 and again on Day 5/6. If the result of either test is positive, they must then get a PCR test.

"The end of pre-departure testing is just one of a number of changes that are being made to the COVID-19 Public Health Response (Air Border) Order to ensure our public health measures remain proportionate to the risk COVID-19 presents to the community.

"Also from Monday evening, passengers transiting through New Zealand will no longer need to be vaccinated, nor be required to complete a New Zealand Traveller Declaration.

"Travellers with COVID-19 like symptoms (e.g. Hayfever) will also be able to choose between showing a negative COVID test, or a certificate from a health professional — stating that they are unlikely to have COVID-19 — before travelling.

"Another change will see the maximum penalty for breaching the Air Border Order's vaccination requirement reduced from \$4,000, to \$1,000.

"These changes represent important progress in our ongoing management of COVID-19 and our reconnecting strategy," Ayesha Verrall said.