

New Zealand to stay closed to visitors until April 2022



New Zealand is set to keep its borders closed to most international travellers for another five months [File: Phil Walter/Getty Images]

Auckland, November 24 (RHC)-- New Zealand will keep its borders closed to most international travellers for a further five months, the government said on Wednesday, outlining a cautious easing of border curbs that have been in place since COVID-19 hit in March 2020.

Along with its geographic isolation, the South Pacific country enforced some of the tightest pandemic restrictions among OECD nations, limiting the spread of COVID-19 and helping its economy bounce back

faster than many of its peers.

But an outbreak of the highly contagious Delta variant earlier this year has forced a shift in strategy, with the main city of Auckland now only gradually opening up as vaccination rates climb.

Fully vaccinated international travellers will be allowed to enter the country from April 30, 2022, onwards with the re-opening staged over time, COVID-19 Response Minister Chris Hipkins told a news conference.

Fully vaccinated New Zealanders and residence visa holders in neighbouring Australia can travel to New Zealand from January 16, while vaccinated New Zealanders and residence visa holders from most other countries will be allowed in from February 13th.

“A phased approach to reconnecting with the world is the safest approach to ensure risk is carefully managed,” Hipkins said. “This reduces any potential impacts on vulnerable communities and the New Zealand health system.”

Travellers will no longer be required to stay at state quarantine facilities, he said, but other measures will be put in place including a negative pre-departure test, proof of being fully vaccinated, and a COVID-19 test on arrival.

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