



MP for Mana

Minister of Broadcasting, Communications
and Digital Media

Associate Minister of Housing (Public Housing)

Minister for Government Digital Services

Minister of Commerce and Consumer Affairs

Minister of Immigration

01 SEP 2020

MPOL 548

Patricia Dallas
Gulf Harbour Radio
Ghradio@xtra.co.nz

Dear Patricia

Thank you for your letters sent 30 June 2020 to the previous Minister of Immigration, Iain Lees-Galloway, suggesting an extension of visas for visiting cruisers. As I am now responsible for the immigration portfolio, I am replying to your correspondence.

COVID-19 has had a disruptive effect on many people temporarily in New Zealand, and I appreciate that many of them, such as those on overseas cruising yachts, are facing uncertainty in this difficult time.

Yacht crews who are not New Zealand citizens or residents are usually granted visitor visas. As long as an individual holds a current visa and is in New Zealand, they can apply for another visitor visa and, if granted, this can include an extension to cover the South Pacific hurricane season.

In parallel I am considering whether there is a need to extend any further visa classes where INZ processing capacity may still be constrained or changes are necessary to support visa holders' status given COVID-19 impacts beyond their control. I expect to make a decision shortly.

Applications will be determined on a case-by-case basis. I am advised that Immigration New Zealand will apply discretion and flexibility to individuals already in New Zealand.

Listeners of your radio programme may also be interested in the wider regulations we have for yachts at this time. The rules covering the entry of foreign-flagged vessels to New Zealand are set out in the COVID-19 Public Health Response (Maritime Border) Order 2020, which sets out the types of vessels and reason that they can enter New Zealand and the isolation and quarantine requirements for maritime crew.

I would note that, if a ship leaves New Zealand, they may not be able to re-enter the country. Yachts, fishing and other vessels (and their associated crew) can only enter New Zealand if there is a compelling need for the vessel to travel to New Zealand, including delivery of vessels for non-minor repair, refit or refurbishment or the running of a business, re-provisioning, replacement of crew, discharge of catch, or for humanitarian or other compelling reasons. Crew must be essential for the operation of the yacht to travel to New Zealand.

Applications for permission for a yacht to come to New Zealand, including under the humanitarian or compelling reasons, can be made to the Director-General of Health ([further details are available on the Ministry of Health's website at: https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-information-specific-audiences/covid-19-resources-border-sector/covid-19-maritime-sector#exemption](https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-information-specific-audiences/covid-19-resources-border-sector/covid-19-maritime-sector#exemption)).

The maritime border exception would be unlikely to enable the granting of visas and entry to foreign nationals on yachts for situations relating solely to financial loss, or to vessels travelling primarily for pleasure or convenience such as tourists or 'wintering over'. People in vessels travelling to New Zealand to 'winter over' (for example, to avoid hurricane/cyclone season in the Pacific) may have other genuine humanitarian reasons or other compelling needs for coming, which would need to be demonstrated to qualify for an exception. I hope that this information is helpful to you. Thank you for writing.

I hope that this information is helpful to you. Thank you for writing.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Kris Faafoi', written over the typed name and title.

Hon Kris Faafoi
Minister of Immigration