



NEW ZEALAND INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

MEDIA RELEASE

Baby steps on the road to recovery

A promising development for the return of international students to Aotearoa

New Zealand

Issued by NZISA on 12th October 2020

The New Zealand International Students' Association (NZISA) is pleased to announce Cabinet's decision to approve the first cohort of international students, PhD and postgraduate international students, to return to Aotearoa New Zealand following several months of careful and persistent meetings and consultations with the Ministry of Education, Education New Zealand, ISANA NZ, and regional international student

representatives from NZISA's Representative Council. The public announcement was made on Monday 12th October 2020 by the Minister of Education, Hon. Chris Hipkins. The initial exemption is a positive development with potential to lead to exemptions for undergraduate international students who have also had their studies disrupted due to the travel ban and border closures.

The New Zealand Government first announced a travel ban on any person travelling from or through China in early February, preventing the entry of many returning and new international students. In March, the New Zealand Government announced the border closures to anyone except citizens and permanent residents. NZISA has covered the impacts of the initial travel ban on international students and the export education sector in our previous [media release](#). Since these announcements, international students have been unable to enter or leave the country. All onshore international students have been and are still advised to stay in New Zealand over the summer period if they are continuing study in 2021.

NZISA's COVID-19 strategic response has employed consistent communication with government agencies and with key stakeholders, including international student leaders and representatives from around Aotearoa in addition to engaging in cross-sector discussions on border recovery. NZISA will continue to work on feasible solutions and outcomes with key stakeholders, with an approach that showcases that international students are not the problem; we are the solution. As in the past, NZISA will pursue international students' wellbeing and mental health as key priorities moving forward, with consideration for wraparound support that is needed for international students entering and leaving the quarantine and managed isolation framework. NZISA wants to see this

initial exemption pave the way for the entry of undergraduate international students, many of whom have had their studies disrupted and will need to return to New Zealand to complete their study.

NZISA supports the decision to bring in international PhD and postgraduate students as an initial priority cohort and recognises that PhD and postgraduate students have faced immeasurable difficulties as a result of COVID-19, including research setbacks and financial hardship. Welcoming back postgraduate and PhD international students is a sensible first step to recovery for the sector given their contributions to New Zealand's advancement of knowledge. NZISA hopes that these PhD and postgraduate students will receive an adequate level of pastoral care which has often been lacking from providers.

NZISA seeks to advance the existing progress by continuing to work closely with government agencies through an exchange of perspectives and a series of meetings with our key stakeholders to ensure that the international student voice is heard.

For more information for tertiary international students on the border exemptions, please visit the [Ministry of Education website](#).

Media Contacts

Sabrina Alhady

National President

president@nzisa.co.nz

Ryan Wei

Public Relations Officer

publicrelations@nzisa.co.nz