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Media release

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## Government must be flexible with self-isolation requirements

Today's [border reopening announcements](#) are welcome but the Government must be prepared to remove self-isolation requirements as soon as health risks lessen, says Tourism Industry Aotearoa.

TIA spokesperson Ann-Marie Johnson says the staged opening of the border announced by Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern is a positive step towards reconnecting friends and family, and the return of visitors on working holiday visas from March will be welcome news to many employers in tourism and other industries who are struggling to find staff.

But the Government's willingness to be flexible and remove self-isolation requirements ahead of schedule will be essential to the survival of the visitor economy. While these requirements are in place, New Zealand remains off the radar for international travellers.

"We are pleased that Prime Minister Ardern stated the potential to move dates forward as we move through each reopening phase. The sooner we can signal intentions and timelines for reopening without the requirement for self-isolation, the sooner the industry can get its preparations underway," says Ms Johnson.

In its latest visitor insights research, strategy company Angus & Associates found that despite the emergence of Omicron in the community, [the majority of Kiwis still support a reopening of the border now](#).

"The need for self-isolation is questionable, especially if Omicron becomes endemic in the community as modelling suggests. With risks equalised between New Zealand and overseas, the rationale for keeping self-isolation rules in place no longer exists."

In a letter to Tourism Minister Stuart Nash earlier this week, TIA noted that quarantine-free travel should be possible within the second quarter of 2022, once the health concerns from the Omicron wave have abated.

This would be a beacon of hope for the tourism industry, which otherwise faces another winter of difficult trading conditions.

"The single biggest issue for restarting international tourism is to remove the self-isolation requirements. Requiring international visitors to spend the first seven days in isolation will mean very limited arrivals. Most tourism operators will have to survive through another long winter before they can expect potential visitors," says Ms Johnson.

"Airlines and cruise operators that are part of the global systems need long lead times for scheduling and selling their routes and capacity."

TIA says continued targeted Government support for businesses in the visitor economy is needed until the requirements are relaxed, to ensure business' survival. Otherwise, the coming months will result in many more business closures and job losses.

### TOURISM INDUSTRY AOTEAROA

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#### KEY FACTS

- TIA is New Zealand tourism's peak industry body. We are the only independent association that represents all sectors of New Zealand's large and diverse tourism industry.
- TIA has about 1300 member businesses from across the industry, ranging from small owner/operators to large publicly listed tourism corporates and international hotel chains.
- TIA is deeply involved in discussions on recovery and what the future of tourism in New Zealand will look like.
- TIA leads implementation of the industry's **Tourism Sustainability Commitment** which aims to see every New Zealand tourism business committed to sustainability.
- TIA delivers a comprehensive and diverse range of industry events including TRENZ, New Zealand Tourism Awards, Discussing Tourism regional events and the Tourism Summit Aotearoa.

Visit [www.tia.org.nz](http://www.tia.org.nz) for more information

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