National Coordination Mechanism
Managing Returns to Australia Working Group
Meeting Record

Date: Friday, 10 July 2020
Time: 1000 – 1015 (AEST)
Location: Teleconference
Chair: Tim Fitzgerald, Australian Border Force

1. Welcome and update on open action items
   - The Chair welcomed attendees to the 21st Managing Returns to Australia working group meeting, noting attendance by all jurisdictions except TAS and ACT.

2. Discussion / Decision points
   2.1 Discussion/decision on upcoming flight arrivals
   - The Chair noted incoming flights listed on the ABF Repatriation Tracker, and asked states and territories whether there were any concerns or issues, commenting on specific flight updates as per the below:

   **Government Facilitated Commercial and Private Charter Flights**
   - Sri Lankan Airlines will operate a positioning flight that will arrive in Melbourne on 11 July. This flight will collect 180 passengers in Melbourne, then fly to and collect a further 50 passengers in Sydney before departing Australia. The passengers from Melbourne will not disembark in Sydney, and accordingly, will not pose a health risk to NSW.
     - The ABF clarified for VIC that 
     - Sri Lankan Airlines will operate a positioning flight that will arrive in Melbourne on 11 July. This flight will collect 180 passengers in Melbourne, then fly to and collect a further 50 passengers in Sydney before departing Australia. The passengers from Melbourne will not disembark in Sydney, and accordingly, will not pose a health risk to NSW.
   - Singapore Airlines is scheduled to fly into Melbourne on 14 July with a positioning flight to take passengers out of Australia. While there may be up to 300 passengers on this flight, currently, 200 tickets have been sold.
     - VIC noted that for outbound international flights, they are not conducting any checks for breaching public health orders.
   - Mongolian Airlines flight is scheduled to fly into Perth on 20 July with an estimated 15 passengers onboard. A passenger manifest will be received in the coming days and will be sent to WA authorities when available.
Flights awaiting confirmation

- World Food Program Humanitarian Air Services Nauru Airlines is scheduled to fly into Brisbane on 30 July. There is an estimated 12 passengers onboard, and further information will be sent to QLD authorities when it becomes available.

- Myanmar Airways International is scheduled to fly into Sydney on 18 July with a maximum of 30 – 40 passengers onboard.
  - The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Cities and Regional Development (Infrastructure) have refused entry for this flight on the proposed arrival date of 18 July, noting that the NSW passenger entry cap has been exceeded on this date.
  - Alternative arrival dates are being sought to ensure the passenger caps are not exceeded on any given day. ABF are proposing arrival for 19 July, however, this has not yet been approved.
  - NSW confirmed that the passenger caps must be adhered to and there is no flexibility to exceed the cap.

- Air India have proposed a flight for Melbourne or Sydney, however, a date has not been confirmed. ABF are working with Infrastructure and the airline noting the daily passenger cap for NSW. Further information will be provided as it becomes available.

- Home Affairs noted that data on quarantine occupancy and capacity remains critical and thanked states and territories for continuing to provide updates (Email: abf@gov.au).

2.2 Emerging Issues and Other Business

- VIC sought to confirm if the international flight restrictions for VIC would be extended beyond the 14 July timeframe, and commented that any decision would have flow-on effects to other jurisdictions, their planning, and accommodation arrangements.

- ABF and the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet noted that it is unclear as to when a decision on the international flight restrictions would be made, however, the process would remain similar to the first request. The VIC Premier would have to approach the Prime Minister and Infrastructure with a request to extend the restrictions.

- In the instance that a passenger cap is approved for other states or territories, WA requested clarification on the notification timeframes that airlines would be provided.

- ABF stated that they would seek clarification, however, noted that they would anticipate a 48hr timeframe would be provided to ensure that sufficient advance notice could be given to travelling passengers.

3. Actions and action owners

The Chair thanked all participants for their attendance, noting that further information and updates will be distributed as they become available.
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National Coordination Mechanism
Managing Returns to Australia Working Group
Meeting Record

Date: Saturday, 11 July 2020
Time: 1100 – 1130 (AEST)
Location: Teleconference
Chair: Tim Fitzgerald, Australian Border Force

1. Welcome and update on open action items
   - The Chair welcomed attendees to the 22nd Managing Returns to Australia Working Group meeting, noting attendance by all jurisdictions.
   - The Chair noted that this meeting had been called to specifically discuss outcomes from the National Cabinet meeting held on 10 July 2020 regarding the introduction of caps to the number of returning international travelers across all states and territories.

2. Discussion / Decision points
   2.1 Update following National Cabinet decision to cap numbers of returning international travellers
      - The Chair noted that as a result of many commercial airlines recommencing flights into Australia, and due to the temporary suspension of all international flights into VIC, states and territories have been experiencing pressure on their hotel quarantine and health services capacity.
      - The Chair then invited Infrastructure to provide an update on the outcomes of the National Cabinet meeting.
      - Infrastructure noted that the Prime Minister had made public announcements yesterday following the National Cabinet meeting in relation to the implementation of a national framework for managing international passenger arrivals for the next month.
      - Based on the information provided by states and territories regarding their quarantine capacity, Infrastructure worked through what this would mean on a per flight basis.
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- QLD and WA caps will apply from 1201am Monday 13 July 2020.
- NSW will maintain its existing cap of 450 passengers per day.

The Chair then invited comments from states and territories on the information provided.

- VIC questioned whether the capacity numbers provided by states and territories took into account domestic travellers who were required to quarantine.
  - ACT noted that the numbers they provided were based on a scenario where the domestic borders remained open. Whilst people returning to ACT from VIC are required to quarantine, the ACT will have no capacity to accept international flights.
  - The Chair emphasised that for ACT, SA and NT, Infrastructure and ABF would work with these jurisdictions on a case by case basis where an airline seeks to organise a flight.

- ABF NT noted that they will work with NT Government colleagues to get the required information to Infrastructure as soon as possible, noting that the only suitable facility in NT is Howard Springs.
- NT Health noted that without the significant refurbishment work being done, Howard Springs has a capacity of around 500 people.

- QLD noted that the cap numbers seem reasonable. As their borders are now open to all states and territories (except VIC), QLD is not worried about hotel capacity being taken up with domestic travellers.
  - Following questions from QLD, Infrastructure confirmed that the current intent, where airlines seek to negotiate a flight cap, is to remain within the weekly caps noted above.
DFAT noted that Smart Traveller has been updated with advice for Australians overseas on the new arrangements for incoming flights. If any enquiries are received, people can be directed to the Smart Traveller website for the most up to date information.

The Chair reiterated that the ABF and Infrastructure will continue to work with airlines and states and territories to resolve any issues, and negotiate any requests for changes to caps, or additional flights into SA, ACT or NT.

3. Actions and action owners

The Chair thanked all participants for their attendance, noting that further information and updates will be distributed as they become available.
National Coordination Mechanism

29.08 Managing International Arrivals

Key outcomes

Meeting Date: Tuesday, 14 July 2020

1. Overview of sector

The meeting, chaired by Deputy Secretary, Marc Ablong PSM and co-chaired by A/g Deputy Commissioner, Kylie Rendina, discussed the National Cabinet decision to cap incoming international passenger numbers.

2. Current preparedness activities/sector update

2.1 Update from Co-Chairs

2.2 National Cabinet decision to cap numbers of returning international travellers

The Chair highlighted the announcements made following National Cabinet on Friday 10 July 2020.

- The Prime Minister noted that a review of hotel quarantine arrangements would be conducted by Jane Halton AO PSM.
- The Prime Minister also announced the introduction of passenger caps for international flights coming into all states and territories.

3. Actions and action owners

1. **NCM** to distribute the quarantine exemption categories (authorised by the AHPPC) and the circumstances where exemptions for non-citizens/permanent residents to enter Australia may be authorised by the ABF Commissioner (noting these are assessed on a case-by-case basis).
National Coordination Mechanism
Managing International Arrivals
Meeting Record

Date: Tuesday, 14 July 2020
Time: 1230 - 1300 (AEST)
Location: Teleconference
Chair: Marc Ablong PSM, Deputy Secretary, Home Affairs
Co-chair: Kylie Rendina, A/g Deputy Commissioner, Australian Border Force

1. Welcome
The Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting and thanked participants for their attendance.

2. Discussion / decision points

2.1 Update from Co-Chairs

2.2 National Cabinet decision to cap numbers of returning international travellers
The Chair noted that following National Cabinet on Friday 10 July 2020, the Prime Minister made announcements regarding international arrivals and hotel quarantine.

- The Prime Minister noted that a review of hotel quarantine arrangements would be conducted by Jane Halton AO PSM.
- The Prime Minister also announced the introduction of passenger caps for international flights coming into all states and territories.
The Co-Chair noted that the operational working group met on Saturday 11 July 2020 to work through the implementation of the caps. As airlines have sought exemptions to the passenger caps, ABF and Infrastructure have been engaging with working group members to ensure that exemptions are considered where the weekly passenger caps would not be exceeded.

Since the suspension of flights into VIC, the majority of flights have been converted to freight, and then used to take passengers out of Australia.

The ABF is currently working through getting states and territories early visibility of passenger numbers, including numbers of those who will not be considered as part of the cap due to their exempt status (e.g. Diplomats).

The Chair then opened up the meeting to states and territories to raise any issues or concerns associated with the caps.

QLD questioned whether the returning ADF personnel were considered exempt in terms of the caps.

- The Co-Chair confirmed that ADF personnel are not exempt from hotel quarantine and so are included within the caps.
- The Co-Chairs agreed that current exemption lists would be disseminated to meeting attendees. This includes the list of those who are exempt from quarantine arrangements (authorised by the AHPPC) and the circumstances where exemptions for non-citizens/permanent residents to enter Australia may be authorised by the ABF Commissioner. Refer to Action 1.

NSW provided an update on current circumstances in the state.

- There are still 5,000+ people in hotel quarantine in NSW. They are split between 22 police run hotels and 5 health hotels.
- There has been some alleviation of pressure on quarantine capacity with the reduction in repatriation flights, but the 450 per day cap still leaves the state with quite a burden.
- Some hotels have pulled out of the hotel quarantine program, and NSW is trying to consolidate arrangements to ensure a manageable model moving forward.
- Following the closing of the NSW/VIC border, there has been additional pressure placed on NSW Police, with 450 – 500 police officers working at various border crossings each shift. The ADF is greatly assisting in this regard.
- As of 18 July 2020, incoming passengers will be required to pay for hotel quarantine, noting there will be some exemptions to this.
- NSW noted that following the QLD announcement regarding hotel quarantine cost recovery arrangements, NSW saw a marked increase in incoming passengers from QLD. NSW highlighted that it would be interesting to monitor the statistics following NSW’s implementation of fees to see if there is any similar shift elsewhere.
  - Following questions, the Chair noted that whilst national consistency in cost recovery arrangements was desirable, the decision was one for each state and territory to make.
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2.3 Issues arising from the 'Managing Returns to Australia working group'

The Chair then invited the Co-Chair to provide an update on any issues or concerns raised in the 'Managing Returns to Australia Working Group'.

- The Co-Chair noted that there is currently very limited capacity for facilitated returns, s. 34(3).
- The number of those who have registered has remained fairly stable since the crisis began, meaning as people return, more register.

2.4 Other Business

- The Chair noted that in relation to outbound passengers, s. 34(3).
- The Chair noted that a further meeting may be called within the next 1-2 weeks, depending on developments.

3. Actions and action owners

1. **NCM** to distribute the quarantine exemption categories (authorised by the AHPPC) and the circumstances where exemptions for non-citizens/permanent residents to enter Australia may be authorised by the ABF Commissioner (noting these are assessed on a case-by-case basis).

Links to this information can be found here:

Quarantine Exemptions:

Travel Exemptions determined by the ABF Commissioner:
National Coordination Mechanism
Managing Returns to Australia Working Group
Meeting Record

Date: Friday, 17 July 2020
Time: 1000 – 1015 (AEST)
Location: Teleconference
Chair: Australian Border Force

1. Welcome and update on open action items
   - The Chair welcomed attendees to the 24th Managing Returns to Australia working group meeting, noting attendance by all jurisdictions except ACT and NSW. The Chair commented on the open action items from the previous meeting:

1.1 NSW to advise ABF if passengers who booked international flights to Sydney prior to 12 July, that are subsequently cancelled and rebooked at a later date, are able to have their hotel quarantine charges waived.
   - The Chair commented that this question was particularly in relation to the Air India passengers that had been booked to return to Australia, but then were unable to travel due to passenger cap cancellations. NSW have confirmed that should these passengers succeed in returning to Australia in the future, their quarantine charges will be waived.

1.2 ABF to investigate whether there is an existing mechanism to discuss maritime crew issues and provide details to the group.
   - The Chair commented that Maritime Crew Exemption fact sheets had been provided to the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications (Infrastructure) and remarked that the exemptions for crew are applied differently in each state and territory. Noting the inconsistencies, this matter will be raised with the AHPCC, and further information will be provided to the working group as it becomes available.
   - The Chair clarified for SA that Maritime Crew are currently exempt, and that it remains at the state or territory’s decision for crew quarantine or transfer direct to their ship.
   - Infrastructure requested that where possible, airlines should identify the number of passengers that they are carrying as maritime crew so that Infrastructure can confirm if the crew are included in the daily passenger caps.
   - The current Maritime Crew Exemption fact sheets will be distributed with these minutes.
2. Discussion / Decision points

2.1 Discussion/decision on upcoming flight arrivals

- The Chair noted incoming flights listed on the ABF Repatriation Tracker, and asked states and territories whether there were any concerns or issues, commenting on specific flight updates as per the below:

**Government Facilitated Commercial and Private Charter Flights**

- Air India is scheduled to fly into Sydney on **18 July** and will have 50 passengers onboard. Infrastructure confirmed that this flight’s passenger volume is accounted for in the NSW daily passenger cap.
- Myanmar Airways International is scheduled to fly into Sydney on **18 July** as a positioning flight with zero passengers onboard.
- Air India is operating a number of positioning flights into Melbourne that will have zero passengers on board. These flights will arrive on **18, 19, and 20 July**. These flights are intended to take Indian nationals out of Australia.
- Mongolian Airlines is scheduled to fly into Perth on **20 July** with a maximum of 15 passengers, however, there is likely only to be 8 passengers onboard.
- Solomon Airlines is scheduled to fly into Brisbane on **24 July** with 20 passengers who will be required quarantine, and a further 15 who intend to transit. This flight is under consideration in relation to the QLD passenger cap. DFAT, ABF, Infrastructure and QLD will continue discussions offline regarding this flight.

**Flights awaiting confirmation**

- The World Food Program is operating a Humanitarian Air Services flight with Nauru Airlines and will fly into Brisbane on 20 or 21 July with 9 passengers onboard. As this flight is predominantly a humanitarian uplift, ABF, QLD, and Infrastructure will continue discussions offline regarding the ability to accommodate this flight.

2.2 Emerging Issues and Other Business

- The Chair noted that stakeholders were communicating effectively in regards to the decisions on passenger cap exemptions.

3. Actions and action owners

The Chair thanked all participants for their attendance, noting that further information and updates will be distributed as they become available.
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National Coordination Mechanism
Managing Returns to Australia Working Group
Meeting Record

Date: Friday, 24 July 2020
Time: 10:00 – 10:17 AEST
Location: Teleconference
Chair: Tim Fitzgerald, Australian Border Force

1. Welcome and update on open action items

The Chair welcomed attendees to the 26th Managing Returns to Australia working group meeting, noting attendance by all jurisdictions.

The Chair provided the following commentary regarding the open action items from the previous meeting.

1.1. States and territories to provide feedback requested by Infrastructure to @homeaffairs.gov.au on [s. 34(3) s. 34(3)]

The Chair requested that states and territories provide their input to the national coordination mechanism in order to [s. 34(3) s. 34(3)], noting that ACT had provided their feedback.

1.2. NCM to distribute to states and territories information on daily passenger caps.

The Chair noted that this had been sent with the previous meeting’s minutes and considered this action item closed.

2. Discussion/Decision points

2.1. Discussion/decision on upcoming flight arrivals

- The Chair noted incoming flights listed on the ABF Repatriation Tracker, and asked states and territories whether there were any concerns or issues, commenting on specific flight updates as per the below:

  Government Facilitated Commercial and Private Charter Flights

- Solomon Airlines is scheduled to fly into Brisbane on 24 July with 16 passengers on board, none of whom will require quarantine. Of the total, two passengers are Australian government officials, and the remaining 14 passengers will remain less than 8hrs in transit.

- Silk Air are scheduled to fly into Perth on 25 July. This is a positioning flight with no inbound passengers, and will depart Australia with 141 passengers on board.

- Garuda Indonesia is scheduled to fly into Perth on 26 July with 50 passengers on board. This flight has been included in the WA [s. 34(3) s. 34(3)] weekly passenger caps.
Phenix Jet has been approved to fly into Brisbane on 28 July, however, the three passengers on board have not been accounted for in the daily passenger cap. The Chair noted that they will engage with QLD offline regarding their ability to accept this private charter flight.

**Flights awaiting confirmation**

- Solomon Airlines has requested to fly into Brisbane on 29 July, however, the passenger capacity for Brisbane for this day and week is full. DFAT is working with the airline to identify other suitable dates. Currently, this flight will be an inbound freight flight with no passengers on board. ABF will work with QLD offline regarding this flight.
- The World Food Program is operating a Humanitarian Air Services flight with Nauru Airlines that QLD have agreed to accommodate in principle. An arrival date has not yet been confirmed, however, the flight is currently anticipated to have 11 transit passengers on board. The WFP has requested whether there is scope to have a couple of passengers disembark for quarantine in Brisbane. ABF will engage with QLD offline to discuss quarantine capacity, and passenger caps.
- Mongolian Airlines is listed on the tracker as an arrival on 30 July, however, ABF have confirmed that it will arrive on 29 July. This will be an inbound positioning flight and when it departs Australia it will have 250 passengers on board.

### 2.2. Emerging issues and other business

- The Chair noted that in regards to SA that there are a number of Air India flights that have negotiated to arrive in Adelaide. Currently, these flights are listed to arrive on 27 and 31 July, and 4 August. The Chair noted that there is a fourth flight that will be negotiated to arrive in the second half of August.
  - s. 33(a)(iii)
  - s. 47B(a)
  - s. 34(3)
  - s. 47E(d)
- ABF and DFAT will continue to engage offline with SA regarding the Air India suite of flights.

- The Chair thanked the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications (Infrastructure) specifically for their management and implementation of the passenger caps across all jurisdictions in Australia.
  - Noting that the caps have reduced the volume of flights that are arriving in Australia, the Chair requested that the Working Group meeting be reduced to a once-per week meeting on Tuesdays, until such a time that the caps are reviewed, and international flights increase.

- Infrastructure requested that all jurisdictions provide their feedback to the email that was sent yesterday (23 July) on s.47E(d)
  - Infrastructure has requested that all feedback be received by COB Tuesday 28 July 2020 to @infrastructure.gov.au

### 3. Actions and action owners

The Chair thanked all participants for their attendance, noting that further information and updates will be distributed as they become available.
1. Welcome and update on open action items
The Chair welcomed attendees to the 27th Managing Returns to Australia working group meeting, noting attendance by all jurisdictions except ACT.

The Chair provided the following commentary regarding the open action items from the previous meeting.

1.1. States and territories to provide feedback requested by Infrastructure to
Infrastructure have received a number of submissions from industry leaders who have felt the impacts of the passenger caps on their operations, and the ability to bring passengers back to Australia.

- Regarding the transit timeframes, Infrastructure would welcome additional comments from states and territories noting that they have received information from Air New Zealand that outlines that they have 1500 passengers booked on flights who have a transit time that would exceed the 8hrs transit window.

- The issue is predominantly in Sydney and Brisbane where passengers arrive early in the morning with an Air New Zealand flight in order to board a connecting Qatar Airways or Emirates flight in the evening.

2. Discussion/ Decision points

2.1. Discussion/decision on upcoming flight arrivals
- The Chair noted incoming flights listed on the ABF Repatriation Tracker, and asked states and territories whether there were any concerns or issues, commenting on specific flight updates as per the below:
Government Facilitated Commercial and Private Charter Flights

- Mongolian Airlines is scheduled to fly a positioning flight into Sydney on 29 July, this flight will have zero passengers on-board, and will consequently not impact on NSW quarantine requirements.

- Private charter company Phenix Jet is scheduled to fly into Brisbane on 29 July and will have 3 Australian permanent resident passengers on-board. The manifest for this flight has been received and sent to QLD authorities for planning and quarantine purposes.

- Myanmar National Airlines is scheduled to fly a positioning flight into Sydney on 02 August, this flight will have zero passengers on-board, and will consequently not impact on NSW quarantine arrangements.

Flights awaiting confirmation

- The World Food Program is operating a Humanitarian Air Services flight with Nauru Airlines with Brisbane listed as the port of arrival. An arrival date has not yet been confirmed, noting the organisers of the flight were hoping for a late July or early August timeframe. This flight will not have any passengers on-board.

- Solomon Airlines is scheduled to fly into Brisbane on 29 July. ABF will receive confirmation of this flight later today and will provide confirmation to QLD authorities for planning purposes. There will be 1 passenger on-board and they will require quarantine. This flight and passenger has been approved within the daily passenger caps for QLD.

- Nauru Airlines scheduled to fly into Sydney on 30 July. This flight is awaiting confirmation.
  - ABF and Infrastructure provided some additional background detail to this flight noting that the flight was due to arrive last week, however there was insufficient availability within the NSW daily caps for all passengers to travel.
  - Remaining passengers are scheduled to travel on 30 July, and the aircraft has a passenger cap of 50 currently provided. ABF will work with NSW offline to confirm passenger numbers, manifests.

- Solomon Airlines scheduled to fly a positioning flight into Brisbane on 30 July. This flight will have zero passengers on-board, and will be a cargo flight on the inbound leg, and take passengers out of Australia on the outbound flight. This flight will not impact on QLD passenger caps or quarantine numbers.

- Air Nepal is scheduled to fly a Priority 2 Government Facilitated Flight into Sydney on 3 or 4 August and will have 10 – 20 passengers on-board.
  - Infrastructure confirmed that 4 August has some availability within the daily passenger cap, and therefore this date would be preferable. Currently, there is sufficient availability to accommodate 20 passengers on this date without exceeding capacity limits.

- Malaysian Airlines is scheduled to fly a private charter into Adelaide on 01 August with 150 passengers on-board. SA have agreed to accommodate this flight, and ABF are confirming passenger details and will provide to SA when they become available.

- Singapore Airlines is scheduled to fly a positioning flight into Melbourne on 05 August, this flight will have zero passengers on-board and will not impact on any current flight restrictions.

2.2. Emerging issues and other business

- The Chair commented that there are two flights that are not yet on the Flight Tracker.
  - Air India is scheduled to fly into Adelaide on 04 August and will have 150 passengers on-board. Confirmation of this flight and passenger manifests will be sent to SA authorities as and when they become available.
  - Air India have formally applied to operate a second flight into Adelaide to arrive on 07 August. ABF and Infrastructure will work with SA offline regarding the details of this flight.
3. Actions and action owners

The Chair encouraged participants to continue to raise any emerging issues via the National Coordination Mechanism (at homeaffairs.gov.au) or via the Repatriation team (at abf.gov.au).

The Chair thanked all participants for their attendance, and reminded participants that as discussed last week, meetings will reduce to once per week. The next meeting will occur on 04 August at 10:00hrs AEST.