



MEETING BRIEF

MINISTER: Peter Dutton

ADVISER: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Ms Zali Steggall MP - Travel Exemption Issues

31 August 2020, 12:15 – 12:45pm, MG46

Person/ Organisation

Ms Zali Steggall OAM, Federal Member for Warringah

Has the Minister met with this person/organisation in the past?

There are no records of a previous meeting between Minister Dutton and Ms Steggall.

Purpose of Meeting

Ms Steggall seeks to raise:

- issues outlined in Ms Steggall's letter, dated 20 August 2020, about Australia's travel restrictions and the process of managing travel exemption requests (**Attachment C**).
- a specific matter on behalf of one of Ms Steggall's constituent, s. 47F(1), whose parents, s. 47F(1), have previously sought and been refused an exemption from Australia's inwards travel restrictions (**Attachment D**).

What are the Government's objectives?

- To outline the Australian Government's current position with regards to Australia's travel restrictions, the exemptions process and caps on international arrivals.

Key Messages

- From 1 February 2020, the Prime Minister, the Hon Scott Morrison MP, progressively announced travel restrictions to curb the introduction and spread of COVID-19 in Australia.
- From 20 March 2020, travel restrictions have been in place prohibiting travel into Australia of all foreign nationals, unless exempt.
- The travel restrictions have been successful in slowing the spread of COVID-19 in Australia and were implemented on the advice of the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC). These measures are temporary and are reviewed regularly.
- Decisions to grant exemptions must be balanced against the Government's intent and the potential health risks posed to the Australian community by international travellers.
- The national framework for managing international passenger arrivals into Australia was introduced following a request from States and Territories to assist in managing the quarantine capacity issues they were encountering.
- I note that the Department is currently assessing over 99 per cent of travel exemption requests within 7 days (for inwards requests) and 48 hours (for outwards requests).
 - Thank you for your suggested improvements to the client user experience for travel exemptions processing.
 - I have passed your suggested changes to the website and user experience to my Department for their consideration.

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Background

Overview of Australia's travel restrictions

- From 20 March 2020, travel restrictions have been in place prohibiting travel into Australia of all foreign nationals, unless exempt.
- From 25 March 2020, travel restrictions have been in place prohibiting Australian citizens and permanent residents from leaving Australia, unless exempt.
- A detailed overview of the exemption categories are provided at **Attachment B**.
- The ABF Commissioner or authorised Departmental and ABF decision makers may consider requests for travel on a case by case basis where there are compelling circumstances. The request must be accompanied by appropriate documentary evidence to support the claimed circumstances.

Timeframe and Expectations

- The travel exemption process has gone from an emergency response in February and March to a high volume business process, with strong expectations from clients and key stakeholders about responsiveness and transparency.
- The Department and the ABF have made it easier to submit and track travel exemption requests with a new purpose-built service delivery platform available since 17 July.
- The Department and the ABF have significantly reduced the number of requests currently on hand, and are finalising requests quickly. In the week ending 26 August:
 - 99 per cent of all inwards travel exemption requests were finalised within 7 days
 - 99 per cent of all outwards travel exemptions requests were finalised within 48 hours.

Criteria – Immediate Family Members

- Immediate family members of Australian citizens, Australian permanent residents, and New Zealand citizens usually resident in Australia, are exempt from Australia's travel restrictions.
- Temporary visa holders must provide proof of their relationship to the Department before seeking to travel to Australia.

Caps on International Arrivals

- On 10 July the Prime Minister announced the establishment of a national framework for managing international passenger arrivals into Australia. This framework supports the level of available national quarantine capacity in all Australian States and Territories.
- The following passenger caps are in place to 24 October:
 - Melbourne – no incoming passenger arrivals
 - Sydney – limit of 350 passenger arrivals per day
 - Brisbane – limit of 500 passenger arrivals per week
 - Perth – limit of 525 passenger arrivals per week
 - Canberra, Adelaide, to be discussed with airlines on a case-by-case basis.
- Within these limits, individual airlines are provided with a passenger ceiling for each flight, with a view to maximising utilisation of available capacity each day. Close engagement with the international airlines remains a core part of our strategy to help Australians return home since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The ABF continues to work with States and Territories to maximise the number of returning Australians, particularly those Australians considered vulnerable or suffering hardship. This was recently evident in the return of Australians from Lebanon, after the Beirut explosion, where NSW agreed to exceed passenger caps for approximately 350 Australians and permanent residents impacted by the explosion.

s. 47F(1)



List of Attendees

Ms Zali Steggall MP

Consultation

- Border Measures COVID-19 Division
- Australian Border Operations Centre

Clearance

Clearance officer: Peta Dunn, First Assistant Secretary, Immigration Programs Division Phone: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) Date: 27 August 2020	Contact officer: s. 22(1)(a)(ii), A/g Assistant Secretary Division: Immigration Programs Division Branch: COVID-19 Border Measures Mobile Phone: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
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Attachments:

- A: Biography (including photo)
- B: Overview of Australia's travel restrictions
- C: Letter from Zali Steggall MP regarding s. 47F(1)
- D: Letter from Zali Steggall MP regarding travel restrictions

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Attachment A: Biography



Name: Zali Steggall MP
Title: Federal Member for Warringah
Organisation: MP

Brief work history:

Parliamentary service

- Elected to the House of Representatives for Warringah, New South Wales, 2019.

Committee service

- Joint Select: Australia's Family Law System from 14.10.2019.
- House of Representatives Standing: Environment and Energy from 22.7.2019.

Personal details (if known):

Qualifications and occupation before entering Federal Parliament

- BA (Media & Comms) (Griffith University).
- DipLaw (Legal Practitioners Admission Board).
- Professional Athlete (Alpine Skiing) from 1990 to 2002.
- Barrister from 2008 to 2019.

Electorate

Name: Warringah

Location: Warringah covers an area from Neutral Bay, Mosman and Manly in the south to Curl Curl and Frenchs Forest (part) in the north. Bound by Middle Harbour, Military Road, Falcon Street, Bent Street, Forsyth Park, Montpelier Street, Eaton Street, Rawson Street, Kurraba Road, Anderson Park and Neutral Bay in the west. The main suburbs include Allambie Heights, Balgowlah, Brookvale, Cremorne Point, Curl Curl, Fairlight, Forestville (part), Frenchs Forest (part), Killarney Heights, Manly, Manly Vale, Mosman, Neutral Bay, Queenscliff and Seaforth.

Electors enrolled: 104,995 (at 7.6.2019)

Industries: Manufacturing; construction; retail; professional, scientific and technical services; health care and social assistance; service and leisure industries.

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Attachment B: Australia's travel restrictions

Outwards

The travel restrictions for persons departing Australia do not apply to:

- temporary visa holders, however they will require an exemption to re-enter Australia
- an Australian citizen or Permanent Resident ordinarily resident in a country other than Australia
- airline and maritime crew and associated safety workers
- a New Zealand citizen holding a Special Category (subclass 444) visa
- a person engaged in the day-to-day conduct of inbound and outbound freight
- a person whose travel is associated with essential work at an Australian offshore facility, or
- a person who is travelling on official government business, including members of the Australian Defence Force

Situations that could warrant an exemption include:

- travel which is as part of the response to the COVID-19 outbreak, including the provision of aid
- travel which is essential for the conduct of critical industries and business (including export and import industries)
- travel to receive urgent medical treatment that is not available in Australia
- travel for urgent and unavoidable personal business
- travel for compassionate or humanitarian grounds, or
- travel in the national interest.

Inwards

The travel restrictions for persons coming to Australia do not apply to:

- an Australian citizen or a permanent resident of Australia
- an immediate family member of an Australian citizen or permanent resident
- a New Zealand citizen usually resident in Australia and their immediate family members
- a diplomat accredited to Australia (holding a subclass 995 visa) (effective 11 July 2020)
- a traveller transiting Australia for 72 hours or less (effective 11 July 2020)
- airline crew
- maritime crew including marine pilots
- recruited under the Government approved Seasonal Worker Program or Pacific Labour Scheme.

Situations that could warrant an exemption include:

- a person travelling at the invitation of the Australian Government or a state or territory government authority for the purpose of assisting in the COVID-19 response
- a person providing critical or specialist medical services, including air ambulance, medical evacuations and delivering critical medical supplies
- a person with critical skills required to maintain the supply of essential goods and services (such as in medical technology, critical infrastructure, telecommunications, engineering and mining, supply chain logistics, agriculture, food production, and the maritime industry)
- a person delivering services in sectors critical to Australia's economic recovery (such as financial technology, large scale manufacturing, film, media and television production and emerging technology), where no Australian worker is available
- providing critical skills in religious or theology fields
- a person whose entry would otherwise be in the national interest, supported by the Australian Government or a state or territory government authority
- military personnel, including those who form part of the Status of Forces Agreement, Commonwealth Armed Forces, Asia Pacific Forces and Status of Armed Forces Agreement
- a student completing year 11 and 12, with support from the relevant state or territory government
- travel for compassionate and compelling reasons.

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