

Special Direction—Extension of Visas Held By a Class of Onshore Persons Whose Visas are Expiring and Variation of Conditions of Those Visas to Manage Effects and Deal With Consequences of Measures Taken to Contain or Mitigate the Outbreak of COVID-19 or Its Effects

Under section 78A of the Immigration Act 2009 (“Act”), by special direction, I extend the visas held by the following class of people:

Every person who:

1. holds a Working Holiday Scheme or a Working Holidaymaker Extension temporary visa (“Working Holiday visa”) with an expiry date between 21 December 2020 and 30 June 2021 (inclusive); and
2. who is in New Zealand on 21 December 2020.

Visas held by this class are extended for a period of six months from the date on which they would otherwise expire (for example, if a visa has the recorded expiry date of 31 March 2021, it will be extended to 30 September 2021 and expire on the beginning of 1 October 2021).

In addition, under section 52(4A) of the Immigration Act 2009 (“Act”), by special direction, I vary the conditions of the visas held by the above class of people so that, in addition to the extension of their visas, on 21 December 2020 current restrictions on work will be varied to allow the visa holder to work in any employment except permanent employment.

I am satisfied that the making of this special direction is reasonably necessary to manage the effects, or deal with the consequences of, measures taken under the Act or any other enactment in New Zealand, and other measures taken elsewhere, to contain or mitigate the outbreak of COVID-19 or its effects. This special direction manages the ongoing effects on the labour market as a result of COVID-19, by allowing flexibility in immigration settings so that existing migrant workers can continue to fill labour shortages while border restrictions remain. I am satisfied that this will not disadvantage the class of persons to which it relates because it will relax the existing work related conditions of visa holders.

This special direction expires on **30 June 2021** unless cancelled earlier.

Dated this 17th day of December 2020.

HON KRIS FAARFOI, Minister of Immigration.

Explanatory Note

The effect of this special direction is to extend Working Holiday visas by six months from the date their visa would have been due to expire and to relax work restrictions on 21 December 2020 to persons in New Zealand on that day with Working Holiday or Working Holidaymaker extension visas expiring between 21 December 2020 and 30 June 2021 (inclusive).