

## **Trans Tasman Travel Arrangement**

- News release by Mr A J Grassby, Minister for Immigration on 4 February 1973.
- Joint press release by Mr A J Grassby, Minister for Immigration and Mr F M Colman, NZ Minister for Immigration on 15 March 1973.
- Joint press release by Mr M R J MacKellar, Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs and the Air Commodore T F Gill CBE DSO, NZ Minister for Immigration on 20 February 1976.
- News release by Mr I McPhee, Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs on 24 April 1981.

**News release by Mr A J Grassby, Minister for Immigration on 4 February 1973.**

The Minister for Immigration, Mr A J Grassby, announced tonight that two special emissaries of the Australian Government would visit New Zealand from tomorrow until the ninth of February to arrange the details of the implementation of the open door policy between Australia and New Zealand agreed upon by the Australian and New Zealand Prime Ministers at their recent meeting.

Mr Grassby said the two officers would be Mr G E Hitchins and Mr T A Smith of the Department of Immigration.

He further announced that he had invited, with the support and endorsement of the Prime Minister, Mr Whitlam, the new New Zealand Minister responsible for Immigration, Mr F M Colman, to visit Australia and confer on the open door policy at top level.

Mr Grassby also announced that the Prime Minister had approved his own visit to New Zealand as Australian Immigration Minister to seal the continuing contact between the two countries.

Mr Grassby said the relationship between Australia and New Zealand was unique in the world - the doors between the two sovereign states were now as wide open to each other's citizens as between any two sovereign states anywhere else in the world.

He said he was most anxious to pay his respects personally to the Government and the people of New Zealand and ensure the closest co-operation at all levels and at all times.

CANBERRA

4 February 1973.

**Joint press release by Mr A J Grassby, Minister for Immigration and Mr F M Colman, NZ Minister for Immigration on 15 March 1973.**

The Minister for Immigration (New Zealand), the Honourable F M Colman, and the Minister for Immigration (Australia), the Honourable A J Grassby in Canberra today reviewed the revised travel requirements between the two countries introduced on 1 March and expressed their pleasure that the arrangements were working smoothly.

The review was made by the two Ministers during the visit to Australia by Mr Colman who arrived from New Zealand on Wednesday accompanied by Mr J Fouhy, Divisional Officer (Immigration), Department of Labour in New Zealand, Mr P Thomson, Private Secretary to the Honourable F M Colman MP, and Mrs Colman.

Mr Colman during the course of his visit was the guest of honour at a reception at Parliament House on Wednesday, 15 March and attended question time.

Mr Colman before returning to New Zealand is due to visit Melbourne on Friday and will inspect language training facilities, hostel accommodation and emergency interpreter services. Mr Colman and his party return to New Zealand on Sunday from Sydney at 10 am.

The Minister described the steps taken recently to find common grounds in their respective fields of immigration as a tangible recognition of the strong ties which exist between New Zealand and Australia.

The Minister expressed particular satisfaction that the officers of the two countries had been able to work out quickly the details and implement the policies which were announced in the joint communique of the Prime Minister of New Zealand and the Prime Minister of Australia on the occasion of Mr Whitlam's recent visit to New Zealand.

The Ministers recalled that under the relaxed procedures passports and prior authority to enter are not required for direct travel between Australia and New Zealand by:

(1) Citizens of Australia or New Zealand;

(2) Citizens of other Commonwealth countries who have been granted permission to reside indefinitely in either Australia or New Zealand;

It was also announced that in addition to the relaxed requirements for crossing the Tasman all holders of New Zealand passports would in future be permitted to travel to Australia without prior authority. All Australian passport holder travelling to New Zealand from any part of the world have been able to enter New Zealand without prior authority for the past two years.

With the implementation of the complete open door policy and to afford both Governments the opportunity of gaining a fuller appreciation of all aspects of each others operations in the field of immigration the Ministers considered that a continuing interchange of officers of their respective departments over a period of some months would be of great benefit. It was agreed that to put in train the necessary administrative arrangements to implement such a scheme.

CANBERRA

15 March 1973

**Joint press release by Mr M J R MacKellar, Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs and the Air Commodore T F Gill CBE DSO, NZ Minister for Immigration on 20 February 1976.**

Ministers considered that there was no need to change the present arrangements for Trans-Tasman travel.

This emerged in talks in Canberra today between New Zealand's Minister of Immigration, Air Commodore T F Gill CBE DSO and Australia's Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, Mr M J R MacKellar.

“We do not feel there is evidence of sufficient malpractice to justify dumping the freedom of movement between our two countries which Australians and New Zealanders now enjoy,” the Ministers said.

In wide-ranging discussions, Ministers exchanged information on immigration policies and procedures, the need to develop population policies and the proposal in Australia to undertake demographic studies.

Ministers re-affirmed that the special relationship and understanding that had been developed over the years would continue and that discussions would be held from time to time as the need arose.

Ministers agreed that there would be consultation between officials to develop means of facilitating the increasing movement across the Tasman.

“Emphasis will be on improving facilitation techniques and the service to travellers at ports of entry to both countries,” the Ministers said.

CANBERRA

20 February 1976.

**News release by Mr I McPhee, Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs on 24 April 1981.**

All people entering Australia will be required to carry a passport as from 1 July 1981 the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, Mr Ian McPhee announced in Canberra today.

This measure is intended to curb abuses of the existing Trans-Tasman Travel Arrangement. Under this arrangement Australian and New Zealand citizens and certain other people with resident status in the two countries have been able to cross the Tasman without passports.

The Australian Royal Commission of Inquiry into Drugs and Australian police, security and immigration authorities have drawn attention to the ease with which the existing arrangement can be exploited.

People involved in terrorism, drug trafficking or other illegal activities, can too easily pass themselves off as Australian or New Zealand citizens under the existing arrangement. This represents a significant threat to society.

The existing arrangement has also been exploited by people who have abducted children from Australia. They will no longer be able to freely adopt false identities for themselves and the abducted children for purposes of leaving Australia.

The new measures will also prevent people from other countries circumventing Australia's normal migration requirements. It will significantly curb the ability of people to falsely represent themselves as Australian or New Zealand citizens.

"The new measures will preserve a uniquely privileged position for New Zealanders in Australia's immigration policies in allowing them to enter Australia without visas", the Minister said.

"The passport requirement represents the option involving least delay and inconvenience to travellers among the various approaches which might have been taken to close off this loophole in Australian entry controls", the Minister said.

The Government considered and rejected the alternative of instituting intensive interrogation and baggage search of people crossing the Tasman. The passport will ensure that genuine trans-Tasman travellers are immediately recognised as such and are cleared quickly and without suspicion through customs and immigration controls.

We will be developing arrangements for special lines at major airports exclusively for Australian and New Zealand citizens, further facilitating the traditional right of Australians and New Zealanders to travel freely between the two countries.

Recent surveys have shown that a substantial proportion of Australians travelling to New Zealand already have passports.

The Minister urged all residents of Australia planning a holiday in New Zealand to ensure that they have a passport for their return journey. Residents who did not hold Australian or New Zealand citizenship should also ensure that they held return endorsements, available at any office of the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs in Australia. In this respect the procedures were precisely the same as those for holidays in other countries.

Mr McPhee emphasised that the decision, which has been under examination for a long time, has been taken purely on the above grounds. There was no foundation whatever for reports which had reached Australia about allegations in the New Zealand press that the travel documents decision was in some way related to other issues.

24 April 1981.