



COVID-19 NewsBrief – 8 May 2020

This week saw some very encouraging numbers in terms of new cases and recoveries resulting in only a handful people in hospital by Friday. New Zealand's statistics in the management of the virus are the envy of the rest of the world and while we are not out of the woods just yet, we appear to have come off rather lightly by comparison.

Here is the week that was, in summary.

Alert Stage 2

The big news on Thursday was that Cabinet will meet on Monday to decide on relaxing restrictions to stage 2. The emphasis now has to be on moving away from the stringent virus containment measures that were so necessary, to getting people back to work and the economy moving again.

The tone of the PM's media briefing on Thursday seems to indicate that we will see that further relaxation early next week. Her message though was underscored by the words "PLAY IT SAFE".

The official position as of this afternoon was:

- All businesses can open if they can do it safely. This will help to get people back to work.
- We can go in-store at local businesses.
- Tertiary education facilities, schools and early learning centres will be open.
- We can travel between regions.
- We can safely connect and socialise with close friends and family.
- We can visit local restaurants, cafes and bars.
- We can return to our regular recreation activities.
- We can celebrate life's important moments with our loved ones such as weddings, funerals, birthdays and anniversaries.
- Small religious gatherings and ceremonies can be held with public health measures in place.

The official safeguards are:

- We need to maintain physical distancing.
- Tight controls will be kept in place at our borders.
- Wide-scale testing will continue.
- The authorities will find and self-isolate anyone who is unwell together with their close contacts.
- There will be measures in place to allow some safe travel and socialising.
- Only small, controlled gatherings will be permitted.
- Early childhood centres, schools and tertiary organisations will see most people returning — with controls in place.
- Physical distancing, hygiene standards and contact registers will make businesses safe.

Legislative amendments

An omnibus Bill was introduced in Parliament on Tuesday to provide clarity around various measures including:

- The business debt hibernation scheme
- The safe harbour for directors
- The government guaranteed business finance scheme
- Changes to commercial property law and
- Changes to the parental leave provisions

We covered this in a bit more detail in our NewsBrief of 6 May.

We also made reference in that NewsBrief to the small business cashflow scheme to be administered by the IRD.

Remember that applications for that scheme will open on Tuesday the 12th and anyone interested in participating should get their applications in as soon as possible because we understand there to be a relatively small window of opportunity.

We are encouraged by the message that came from the Finance Minister today that there will be additional government aid measures still to come, just with a likely change in emphasis from crisis management to an approach of more sustained assistance to help businesses get back on their feet.

As always, remember that we are here for you to assist you through these troubled times in any way we can.

Please enjoy the weekend with your families, in the hope that next week we will see a return of yet more personal freedoms, but please do stay safe.

At Ecovis KGA we're privileged to have a team of experts with in-depth knowledge to assist with many of the challenges which businesses are facing right now. Please remember the firm is fully operational and we are here to help in any way we can - we are just a phone call or email away.

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