



## Quarantine Charges for non-essential travel by Fijians

**12 March 2021:** Fijians around the world have had over one full year to return to Fiji with the full costs of their quarantine covered by the Fijian Government. Since March 2020, more than 12,800 Fijians have been repatriated through Fiji's COVID-safe quarantine protocols at a direct cost of over \$18 million to government to cover meals, accommodation, swab tests, transportation and personnel costs.

Fiji has safely reunited families and prevented community transmissions of COVID-19 while avoiding the long waitlists for quarantine facilities seen in other countries. Following reports of individuals repeatedly taking advantage of Fiji's government-funded quarantine arrangement, the Fijian Government will no longer cover the cost of non-essential repatriation from 29 March 2021. Fijians planning to repatriate for personal reasons, including to visit friends and family, will be required to self-fund the cost of the mandatory 14-day quarantine.

These charges are being implemented well after our neighbouring countries, including Australia and New Zealand, as well as other developed countries, who have similar border quarantine requirements.

The new charges apply to all Fijian passport holders, including Fijians who have been residing overseas and are dual passport holders or permanent residents of another country. The charges will include the cost of accommodation and meals, which will be directly payable to the quarantine facilities. These charges will depend on the quarantine facility and will average around \$2,200 for the entire 14-day quarantine. COVID-19 swab tests (minimum 2), transfers from airport to quarantine facility, monitoring and site surveillance, will continue to be paid to the Ministry of Health and Medical Services for all repatriating Fijians.

Exemptions from these charges will only be considered in exceptional circumstances and approved by the Quarantine Authority of Fiji, which is the Permanent Secretary for Health and Medical Services. Exemption criteria is as follows:

- Fijian citizens who have travelled outside of before 28 March 2020 and are now returning home;
- Students and their approved dependents on Government sponsored or Government endorsed scholarships returning after completion of studies;
- Patient and approved companion referred/supported by the Fijian Ministry of Health and Medical Services to seek medical assistance/intervention overseas;
- Fijian citizens employed under a Government-to-Government arrangement that the Fijian Government is a party to, such as workers returning under labour schemes; and
- Returning servicemen, Fijian Government officials, Fijian Diplomats (including spouse and children under the age of 18 years) who have travelled for official purposes.

Moving forward, the Fijian Government will continue to prioritise the health and safety of Fijians returning home while preventing misuse and abuse of the Fijian quarantine system.

More information will be provided by the Ministry of Health and Medical Services.

Ends.