



## **MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND MEDICAL SERVICES**

*Date:* September 4th 2020

### **STATEMENT FROM THE ACTING PERMANENT SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND MEDICAL SERVICES**

Bula Vinaka.

Earlier this week we assured the public the arrival of repatriation flight GA7280 from New Delhi to Fiji on the 27<sup>th</sup> of August was dealt with in line with our border quarantine protocols — which are the most stringent anywhere in the world. As some of you may be aware, several New Zealand citizens on board that flight continued onwards travel after spending about 30 minutes on the tarmac of Nadi Airport. Five of those passengers went on to test positive for COVID-19 upon arrival to New Zealand. As per our infection control protocols, all areas of Nadi Airport accessible to passengers from that flight have been hygienically deep-cleaned.

As per Fijian border quarantine protocol, all disembarking passengers from that flight were tested for the virus. Following the confirmation of cases in New Zealand, we did expect some test results to return positive. Two passengers did indeed test positive for the virus. They are both male Fijian citizens, one is aged 55 and the other is 22. These confirmations bring Fiji's total number of active border quarantine cases to five.

Both gentlemen have been hygienically secured in the isolation ward at Nadi Hospital. Neither were displaying symptoms at that time of testing. Again, these tests were run as part of our standard border quarantine process.

All 83 other passengers on board the flight have returned negative results. These passengers have each been entered into mandatory 14-day quarantine period in a government designated quarantine facility under supervision from the Republic of Fiji Military Forces. If any develop symptoms, they will be tested for the virus. At the end of their quarantine period, we will test them once again. If they return negative results, they will be discharged.

The frontline border staff that were directly involved in the arrival of the passengers on this flight have also all tested negative for COVID-19.

Once again, I must emphasize: Our border quarantine and infection prevention control protocols are as strict as they come. So long as they are upheld there is no risk to the Fijian public from border quarantine cases.

Thank you.