



ANZCCJ's Statement on the Re-entry Restrictions for Foreign Residents in Japan

The Australian and New Zealand Chamber of Commerce in Japan (hereafter ANZCCJ) wishes to express concerns regarding the Japanese Government's immigration policy that currently places limitations on the re-entry of non-Japanese nationals residing in Japan.

ANZCCJ supports the Japanese Government's many efforts to prevent the transmission of COVID-19, including the introduction of mandatory PCR testing and a 14-day quarantine period for overseas travellers entering Japan during this time. ANZCCJ also acknowledges the recent relaxations in this policy to incrementally permit the re-entry of foreign nationals who possess status of residence, currently extended to those categorised as "Permanent Resident", "Spouse or Child of Japanese National", "Spouse or Child of Permanent Resident" and "Long-Term Resident", who left Japan prior to the date from which their country or region was subject to denial of permission to enter Japan.

However, ANZCCJ respectfully urges the Japanese Government to consider further relaxation of these restrictions, to allow permanent residents, foreign residents with mid-long term status of residence, and those with immediate family members residing in Japan, to re-enter Japan under the same conditions applied to Japanese nationals, regardless of the date on which they chose to leave Japan.

Australia and New Zealand have also introduced strict re-entry conditions on citizens and residents to prevent COVID-19 transmission; however, in New Zealand, permanent residents, residents with valid travel conditions, and partners and dependent children of New Zealand citizens and residents (who hold a visa based on their relationship) are permitted re-entry into New Zealand without seeking special approval. Permanent residents and immediate family members of Australian citizens or permanent residents are permitted entry into Australia. ANZCCJ believes that it is reasonable to request reciprocal exemptions for foreign residents of Japan in the aforementioned categories to re-enter Japan, subject to the same public health protocols as Japanese nationals.

As a Chamber of Commerce representing the interests of Australian and New Zealand businesses and professionals in Japan, and Japanese businesses and professionals supporting the relationship between Australia, New Zealand and Japan, we believe it is imperative that the Japanese government recognise the many contributions made by foreign residents to Japanese society, including but not limited to the payment of local taxes and consumption of goods but also investment in achieving proficiency in the Japanese language, establishment of small- to medium-sized enterprises and of branch offices for large multinational companies, as well as extensive research and development collaboration between our education and industry sectors. We are concerned that the prolonged restrictions on re-entry for these foreign residents may significantly limit opportunities for future contributions and collaborations of this kind, as well as negatively affect Japan's long-standing reputation as a secure and reliable country for business investment.

As we work together to recover from the significant social and economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, ANZCCJ hopes that Japan will realise its potential to achieve even greater standing among the international business community as a regional business and financial hub in the post-pandemic future. We respectfully request that the Japanese Government consider ANZCCJ's concerns, and further relax the re-entry restrictions for foreign residents of Japan, subject only to the same public health protocols as Japanese nationals.