



Monday 23rd March 2020.

Dear Members,

Advisory Note to Members on the State of Play under the announced COVID-19 State of Emergency.

This morning representatives from a cross sector of business groups met with the Minister for Police, Hon. Bryan Kramer MP, as sanctioned by Prime Minister, Hon. James Marape to obtain views of business in the implementation of the State of Emergency (SOE).

This note serves to advise members of our private sector associations and businesses more broadly on the key aspects of how the State is managing this National Security issue, and clarify the operating environment under the SOE, announced by PM Marape.

Update on first confirmed case of COVID-19

The confirmed case was uplifted from PNG on the 23 March 2020. Technically, at this point there are now no confirmed carriers of COVID-19 in PNG.

The Minister advised that the *carrier*, thus far, appears to be recovering without the need for any serious medical intervention. We found this report to be consistent with WHO, and foreign press reports, on the pattern of infection and recovery of persons with no underlying medical conditions.

Actions taken by the State on containment (Identification & Monitoring Persons of Interest).

The Government has traced the movement of the first *carrier* and has identified and contacted all persons of interest (those with direct and secondary contact). As a result of this tracing exercise, these people have been isolated and shall be monitored for 14-days.

The Minister noted that WHO advisors stated the majority of confirmed cases display symptoms between 2 and 5 days from infection. Each of those in contact with the first confirmed case are now past this point, with no signs of infection. We are mindful that

each progressing day up to the 14-days with no symptoms becomes more and more positive that containment measures worked.

Consistent with the *PNG Preparedness and Response Plan COVID-19*, PNG escalated from Code Green (no confirmed cases in PNG) to Orange (confirmed cases in PNG), on the obtaining a positive test result.

In conjunction with the tracing and monitoring of Persons of Interest, the Government, yesterday announced a SOE – which among other things places restrictions on trade and movement of persons.

We attach a copy of the PM's Statement announcing the SOE. The SOE Controller is the Commissioner for Police David Manning. As per point 13 of the Announcement, the SOE Controller will publish the rules of the SOE (*which at the time of writing are yet to be released*).

The Minister advised that the SOE, approved by NEC, will last for 14-days only, as per our Constitution. For an extension, Parliament must convene to determine necessary forward measures – which will require at least a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority in favour of said measures.

The Government has established a 24/7 National Operations Center (NOC19) to manage our National response to this crisis. The NOC19 is an inter-ministerial, interagency with co-opted professional member framework. The Minister advised today that we will have a representative on the NOC19 as well.

What does the SOE mean to Business Operations

The Minister, when noting the SOE Controller would soon publish the rules and operational restrictions of the SOE, highlighted the specific measures agreed by NEC yesterday.

Agreed restrictions, for the next 14-days, were:

- Restrictions on inbound passengers – from all Destinations (only approved persons may enter PNG)
- Restrictions on inter-Provincial travel – public transport (air, sea, road) of persons is prohibited
- Restrictions in previous Determinations (such as the Gazettal) remain in play.

The SOE has not:

- Introduced a curfew, or controlled movement of persons within Provinces; *thus allowing continued operation of PMV's within Provinces*
- Identified any businesses that must cease or minimise their operations;
- Placed any restrictions on the domestic movement of goods (food, freight etc);

Members are advised, that in the event that their supply chains are disrupted by this SOE, by Government Officers attempting to enforce restrictions contrary to the SOE restrictions noted above, to email info@pngmade.com, so that we may assist.

Should there be no further reported cases during this 14-day period of the SOE, it is feasible that PNG will revert to Code Green.

We ask that you continue to promote awareness and encourage good hygiene, social distancing, and early detection/ immediate reporting of suspected cases.

For those businesses that have not yet done so, they are encouraged to review their operations and develop plans for any escalated controls measures.

In anticipation of any increased measures, your chambers are working with Government and financial institutions on possible measures to minimise the impact to your business.

Lastly, for POM and Central Members, the Minister and Governor Parkop advised today that for the SOE controls NCD and Central are treated as one province (meaning travel between the two zone is not subject to the restrictions above)

We will continue to keep all informed.



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