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"A Different Light"

A Different Light – 26th July 2025 – “Jason Momoa eyes NZ citizenship, praises Kiwi culture visit”

Jason Momoa. He's a celebrity stud. He's 6 foot 4, green eyes, with a physique like The Rock, both having ties to Hawaii. He's been in Aquaman, FastX and played an ultimate alpha male warrior in the Game of Thrones. He appeared in our news this week. Apparently he wants to make Aotearoa his home.

He told One News, "I'm just waiting for you guys to let me in, I saw in one of your newspapers we brought in like \$1.3 billion in the last year and a half so like, well! If that doesn't get you citizenship, I don't know what does!"

He went on to say, how wonderful our country is, "I love to be able to be in the ocean. I love to be up in the mountains. I love that the culture is embraced. I love that the people who are Kiwis and Māori, that they still embrace each other's language."

Internal Affairs Minister Brooke van Velden said "Mr Momoa must apply for citizenship through the appropriate channel, which is the Citizenship Office in the Department of Internal Affairs."

But hang on, lets not get ahead of ourselves. While he looks to be in tip top condition, New Zealand has a harsh set of acceptable standards of health that one must pass in order to immigrate to New Zealand and become a citizen.

Has he got Hep B or C? Any malignancies of the skin now or in the past? Any musculoskeletal diseases or disorders, such as osteoarthritis? Any progressive neurological disorders including but not limited to: Alzheimer's disease, cerebrovascular disease, paraplegia, quadriplegia, Parkinson's disease, Motor Neurone Disease, Huntington's disease, Muscular Dystrophy, or God help us Cerebral Palsy! The list goes on: physical disability, intellectual disability, autistic spectrum disorders, brain injury and on!

The Acceptable Standards of Heath is part of an immigration policy that puts a filter on people who can apply for permanent residency in Godzone. This was designed to stop people who would be a 'burden', on our society and the

taxpayer, from sucking us dry. Included in the criteria is a section on health issues, so that in particular non-New Zealand residents would not be able to drain our much coveted free health service.

It seems to me that Immigration New Zealand decides what 'significant support' entails. This is a somewhat nebulous concept. Everyone will require significant support at some stage in their life, especially at the start and the end of our lives. It is part and parcel of the human condition. In New Zealand we have the Human Rights Act which outlaws discrimination on the grounds of gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual preference and disabilities. However, this law is full of loopholes when it comes to government and national interests.

I'm sure Momoa will saunter through the Immigration process -his mana precedes him.

And in this country, our disabled community have their own unique mana. People who live with courage, adaptability, and resilience every day—not for fame or applause, but because the world isn't yet built for everyone. They don't need Hollywood muscles to be strong, or blockbuster roles to be seen. Their leadership in fighting for equity, accessibility, and inclusion adds strength to the fabric of our society.

So if Jason Momoa does become a citizen, I hope he brings all his mana to the table—and I hope he listens to the mana already here. Because in the end, being a true New Zealander isn't about having perfect health. It's about standing with others, lifting each other up.

Jonny Wilkinson is the CEO of Tiaho Trust - Disability A Matter of Perception, a Whangarei based disability advocacy organisation.