



BRIEFING

Decisions on self-isolation pilot operational design matters

Date:	6 October 2021	Priority:	High
Security classification:	In Confidence	Tracking number:	2122-1284

Action sought		
	Action sought	Deadline
Hon Chris Hipkins Minister for COVID-19 Response	Indicate your decisions on a number of self-isolation pilot operational design matters.	8 October 2021

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)			
Name	Position	Telephone	1st contact
Christina Sophocleous-Jones	General Manager, Self-Isolation Pilot	s 9(2)(a), s 9(2)(g)(ii)	✓

The following departments/agencies have been consulted

Minister's office to complete:

Approved

Declined

Noted

Needs change

Seen

Overtaken by Events

See Minister's Notes

Withdrawn

Comments

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Date:	6 October 2021	Priority:	High
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Purpose

To seek your decision on a number of self-isolation pilot operational design matters.

Recommended action

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) recommends that you:

- a **Agree** that the self-isolation pilot proceed in Auckland if Auckland remains at Alert Level 3.
 Agree / Disagree
- b **Note** that MBIE requires your final decisions on the selection of Ministers and government officials attending overseas events as New Zealand government delegates by Saturday 9 October, when the Expressions of Interest (EOI) process closes.
Noted
- c **Agree** that self-isolation pilot places be evenly split across Auckland and Christchurch.
 Agree / Disagree
- d **Note** that given current EOI numbers (505 applicants for Auckland and 94 applicants for Christchurch as at 10am Wednesday 6 October), it may be appropriate for Ministers and government official participants to self-isolate in Christchurch.
Noted
- e **Agree** that MBIE set aside 10 pilot places for businesses (including sole traders) of significant economic or national interest to New Zealand.
 Agree / Disagree
- f **Agree** to decide on the allocation of these 10 places, following the ballot, by 15 October.
 Agree / Disagree
- g **Indicate** whether applicants who currently hold a MIAS voucher be rendered ineligible for participation in the self-isolation pilot. *They should be ineligible if their current MIQ booking could not be re-allocated in time. If it can be re-released into the next lobby then that's no issue.* ~~Yes / No~~
- h **Note** that you will be provided with drafted amendments to the COVID-19 Public Health Response (Isolation and Quarantine) Order 2020 for your approval next week, in order to give legal effect to the self-isolation pilot.
Noted

- i **Note** that you will be provided with final operational plans for the self-isolation pilot for your approval in the week of 18 October.

Agree Disagree



Christina Sophocleous-Jones
General Manager, Self-Isolation Pilot
Managed Isolation and Quarantine, MBIE

06 / 10 / 2021



Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister for COVID-19 Response

08 / 10 / 2021

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Background

1. On 27 September, Cabinet agreed to the design parameters of the self-isolation pilot [CAB-21-MIN-0386 refers]. Cabinet also authorised you to take a number of decisions on design matters, and agreed that final operational plans be approved by you.
2. This briefing seeks your decision on a number of design matters. Drafted amendments to COVID-19 Orders to give legal effect to the pilot will be put to you for your approval next week, and final operational plans the week after.

Decisions on operational design matters

Auckland Alert Levels

3. On the advice of the Ministry of Health (MOH), we proposed to Cabinet that the self-isolation pilot be located in Christchurch, and be suspended in the event of an Alert Level change to 3 or 4 in Christchurch.
4. Cabinet agreed that the pilot be located in Auckland and Christchurch, that participants self-isolating during an Alert Level change to 3 or higher will remain self-isolating, and that other participants overseas or yet to depart during an Alert Level change to 3 or higher be guaranteed MIQ entry on return [CAB-21-MIN-0386 refers].
5. We seek your clarification as to whether the self-isolation pilot should proceed in Auckland if it remains in Alert Level 3 (where Cabinet's decisions stated above apply if Auckland moves down Alert Levels, but subsequently changes to an Alert Level of 3 or higher).
6. While the arrival window does not open until Saturday 30 October, we will need to provide clarity to successfully balloted applicants on Friday 15 October (who, for example, may not wish to procure rental accommodation necessary for participation if there is any uncertainty).

Selection of Ministers and government officials for participation

7. Cabinet agreed to extend participation in the self-isolation pilot to Ministers and government officials attending overseas events as New Zealand government delegates [CAB-21-MIN-0386 refers]. Cabinet authorised you to take decisions on:
 - a. How many pilot places should be reserved for official delegation participants, and
 - b. The selection of official delegation participants.
8. We understand that your office is arranging for you to receive nominations for official delegation participants. We will require your final decisions on who these participants are, and whether they intend to isolate in Auckland or Christchurch, by 9 October (when the EOI closes) to proceed with balloting.
9. You have been provided separate advice by MBIE regarding an MIQ allocation for Ministerial travel [MBIE-BR-2122-1253 refers], which you may wish to consider in parallel.

Split of participants between Auckland and Christchurch

10. As of 10am Wednesday 6 October, 489 Expressions of Interest (EOIs) had been received by MBIE for a total of 599 participants. Of these EOIs:
 - a. 505 people have applied to self-isolate in Auckland, and
 - b. 94 people have applied to self-isolate in Christchurch.
11. The EOI closes at 5pm Saturday 9 October.

12. We advised Cabinet of the significant strain on the Auckland public health workforce, in dealing with the current community COVID-19 outbreak. We outlined our concerns that including Auckland in the self-isolation pilot could undermine its delivery, cause operational disruption across health and MIQ workforces, and increase the risk of spread of COVID-19.
13. For this reason, but also having regard to current EOI figures, we propose that self-isolation pilot places be evenly split across Auckland and Christchurch.
14. Given these current EOI figures, it may be appropriate for Ministers and government officials attending overseas events as New Zealand government delegates to self-isolate in Christchurch.

Prioritisation

15. We advised Cabinet that we are unable to run an assessment and prioritisation process due to the very tight timeframes for the self-isolation pilot. [REDACTED] s 9(2)(h) [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
16. Cabinet agreed that MBIE ballot eligible EOIs in a way that ensures an even spread across the travel window [CAB-21-MIN-0386 refers]. However, Cabinet also authorised you to take decisions on criteria to be used by MBIE for prioritising the EOIs.
17. MBIE did not collect information via the EOI process that could be used for the purposes of prioritisation (beyond business name). Any prioritisation would involve desktop review of the business by MBIE, without regard to the purpose of applicants' travel.
18. If you would like certain EOIs to be prioritised (outside of the agreed ballot), we propose to:
 - a. Set aside 10 pilot places for businesses (including sole traders) of significant economic or national interest to New Zealand,
 - b. Compile a list of remaining EOIs once the ballot has taken place (having set aside these 10 places, and places for Ministers and government officials selected by you), and
 - c. Provide you with this list of remaining EOIs for your decision on the allocation of these 10 places, for your decision by 15 October.

Cancellation of MIAS vouchers held by successful applicants

19. The business community has suggested that people who currently hold MIAS vouchers should be ineligible for the self-isolation pilot, on the basis that such people have already secured opportunity to travel overseas (albeit noting such travel may not be for business purposes).
20. Rendering people who currently hold MIAS vouchers ineligible was not put to Cabinet for its decision. This is because MBIE intends to cancel any MIAS vouchers that apply during the pilot's time period that are held by successfully balloted applicants, upon their final acceptance into the self-isolation pilot. These vouchers will then be released back into the general MIAS pool.¹ Accordingly, applicants were not required to indicate in their EOI whether they currently hold a MIAS voucher.
21. We seek your decision as to whether applicants who currently hold a MIAS voucher should be ineligible for the pilot.

¹ As agreed by Cabinet, MIQ contingency will be reserved for all 150 pilot participants [CAB-21-MIN-0386 refers].

22. If you decide to render applicants who currently hold MIAS vouchers ineligible, we can exclude these participants from the ballot process.

Next steps

23. Next week, we will seek your agreement to drafted amendments to the COVID-19 Public Health Response (Isolation and Quarantine) Order 2020 to give legal effect to the self-isolation pilot.
24. In the week of 18 October, we will provide you with final operational plans for the self-isolation pilot for your approval. These plans will detail the end-to-end participant journey, including details of the testing regime agreed with MOH, and procured monitoring technology.

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