


COVID-19: Domestic response, operational updates regarding AL 4 and 3 in effect
Level 4 will extend in Auckland until 14 September; everywhere else is currently under Alert Level 2.

Date: 10 September 2021, 1400hrs

National Response Group meeting

All time markers recorded in NZT

Public health and other operational updates

1. The Chair invited the Ministry of Social Development and the Ministry for Pacific Peoples to provide an update on welfare issues within Auckland –
 - 1.1. Noted that significant work was being undertaken to understand the granularity of the issues; to align agencies; and ensure demands were being met. There is a lot of interest in these efforts, and agencies are working on providing an end-to-end view to NRLT to provide assurance that these issues had been gripped up by Tuesday.
 - 1.2. Noted that there was also increased need outside of Auckland, and this too needed to be resolved.
 - 1.3. The Chair reiterated the offer of support for the system and noted that it was critical that these issues were resolved.
2. The Chair invited Michael Lovett, Department of Internal Affairs, to provide an update on engagement with local government. He noted that engagement was tracking well.
3. Ruth Fairhall, DPMC Covid-19 Policy, gave an update on the Cabinet Paper and further work –
 - 3.1. Work is being progressed on an AL3/2 boundary, and what permissions and exemptions would look like.
 - 3.2. Work is being progressed on advice regarding individuals crossing the boundary, and testing requirements.
 - 3.3. Noted that there will be a couple of options for Ministers to consider in the Cabinet Paper on Monday.
4. The Chair reiterated that the focus for the system needs to remain the outbreak in Auckland, and the importance of the current contact tracing work occurring.
5. Section 6(a) 
6. Eric Tibbott, NZ Police, queried whether MSD and MPP were linked in with Police regarding support for food delivery. MSD noted that they were.
7. Eric Tibbott, NZ Police, noted that Police and Ministry of Health were progressing providing additional support from Police for the contact tracing process.
 - 7.1. PSC offered to support this process and noted the importance of capturing system learnings, where applicable, from this arrangement.
8. MIQF provided an update –
 - 8.1. Good current quarantine capacity. Fairly comfortable with where the numbers are tracking.

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- 8.2. Noted that 100 rooms capacity would be a good redline for implementing further contingency planning for quarantine rooms.
9. Terry Brown, Customs, noted that:
 - 9.1. the arrival of international fishing crews is recommencing; and
 - 9.2. the Rio De La Plata is arriving into Tauranga Port next week.
10. The Chair told members that the Northland mayors were concerned about the upcoming yacht season. Customs noted that they were happy to be connected into this group to provide assurance.
 - 10.1. David Taylor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, noted that there was value in putting out some further communications on yacht arrivals. Customs to provide an update to NRG on this work on Monday.
11. Liam McNamara, Ministry of Health, provided an update:
 - 11.1. Public Health Risk Assessment will be occurring first thing on Sunday morning.
 - 11.2. 3% of cases are not epi-linked. This remains key cause for concern.
12. The Chair discussed cadence over the weekend. NRG agreed to not meet on Saturday, with a placeholder for Sunday. Cadence for coming weeks will be revised on Monday.
13. The Chair noted the continued and significant work that was taking place throughout the system. He acknowledged the success of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade in their role in today's arrival of additional vaccines.
14. The Chair closed the meeting.

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COVID-19: Domestic response, operational updates regarding AL 4 and 3 in effect
Level 4 will extend in Auckland until 14 September; everywhere else is currently under Alert Level 2. Cabinet to make a decision on Alert Levels at 1600 today.

Date: 13 September 2021, 1400hrs

National Response Group meeting

All time markers recorded in NZT

Public health and other operational updates

1. The Ministry of Health provided an update –
 - 1.1. As at 9am there were 33 new cases, the majority of which are known close contacts. As at 11am, there was only 1 unlinked case. Noted that these numbers are to be expected.
 - 1.2. Are seeing some cases leave it late to seek medical assistance. This is of significant concern.
 - 1.3. There is a level of disgruntlement from the public who are unable to secure personal exemptions to cross the Auckland border. Seeing this in the data from Healthline.
 - 1.4. Police are working with the Ministry of Health to support contact tracing efforts where required.
2. The Chair invited MIQF to provide an update –
 - 2.1. 147 quarantine rooms in Auckland. 200 rooms will become available in the next 24 hours.
 - 2.2. Expecting a managed red-flight from Australia on 16 September.
 - 2.3. A staff member has returned a positive test. Likely that this is connected to the community outbreak.
 - 2.4. The group heard that this outbreak had put pressure on MIQF in new ways. A key learning was there was no early-warning system in place with ARPHS, unlike in the border system. This has been worked through. Also noted that while groups within MIQF as a result of this outbreak have had some complex needs, agencies are now working together to best address this, which has been a positive outcome.
3. The Chair invited DPMC Policy to provide an update –
 - 3.1. Noted that today's Cabinet Paper has a number of options in it for Ministers to consider. The main proposal is for Auckland to move down a level, with a range of options as to when that occurs.
 - 3.2. Other work being undertaken at the moment includes: advice on boundaries (including testing for those who are crossing the boundary, and advice on exemptions); advice on what AL1 could look like; advice on entry of non-New Zealanders into the country; advice of use of vaccine passports; and advice on QFT with Australia.
4. The Group talked through the Order making process, and the Chair noted the key dependencies required for the Order to be gazetted and operationalised.
5. The Chair invited Jesse Nicholls, MSD Liaison, to provide an update:

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- 5.1. Work continues on providing an end-to-end view on what food insecurity issues look like. This will be shared with NRG when ready.
- 5.2. There is an additional piece of work that's being undertaken regarding future policy settings, including what needs to be put in place to improve the system.
- 5.3. Noted that there is still pressure in the system. Additional funding is going into providers to help alleviate this.
6. Marisa Maepu, from the Ministry for Pacific Peoples, provided an update:
 - 6.1. Sentiment within the Pacific communities continues to be one of concern and fatigue. MPP is starting to turn their minds to capturing lessons learned through the response.
7. The Ministry of Primary Industries gave an update on sector sentiment, noting that sectors have been mostly pragmatic around rule changes.
8. Police noted that they:
 - 8.1. Are appreciative of any early heads up regarding rule changes that may need to be operationalised.
 - 8.2. That things are moving smoothly at the boundaries.
 - 8.3. Noted that any additional complexity that may come may cause issues for workforce operationalisation. Noted a general level of fatigue and frustration.
9. DPMC Communications noted that they were working closely with the Police team to pick up and address any gaps in the communications. Noted that the next round of public sentiment research is due tomorrow. Committed to reporting back to NRG with an update on how this may have shifted over the course of the lockdown.
10. The Chair provided an update on cadence for the week ahead. Noted a move to less frequent meetings, on Tuesday and Thursday. Next NRG meeting to be Thursday 16 September.
11. The Chair closed the meeting.

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COVID-19: Domestic response, operational updates regarding AL 4 in effect.

Level 4 will extend in Auckland until 14 September; Everywhere else is currently under Alert Level 3.

Date: 16 September 2021, 1400hrs

National Response Group meeting

All time markers recorded in NZT

Public health and other operational updates

1. Tania Ott, Public Service Commission, provided an update –
 - 1.1. Noted that by and large the vaccination rollout was tracking well. Current focus was on increasing vaccination rates of rangatahi. Advice was being prepared for vaccine ministers.
2. DPMC Policy provided an update –
 - 2.1. Work is continuing on the Cabinet Paper, including advice on boundary options. Request to agencies that any information able to be provided ahead of time would be gratefully received.
3. Customs provided an update, noting that Port CEs and agencies had recently met, and that engagement was tracking well. Noted that the focus is currently on the Far North, with additional work was underway around providing assurance to Mayors regarding small vessels in the summer.
4. Members heard from Michael Lovett, DIA, who noted that engagement with mayors and local government was tracking well.
5. MIQF provided an update –
 - 5.1. There are 184 quarantine rooms in Auckland. No current capacity concerns.
 - 5.2. Work still progresses on accommodating the differing needs of community cases.
 - 5.3. Work is underway on next steps for QFT with Australia, and on upcoming voucher releases.
6. Police noted that the new testing regime would be in place as of midnight tonight. Members heard that it was looking likely that there would be high levels of engagement due to the work with the sector that had been undertaken over the past week.
7. NEMA noted that there are no major weather events on the horizon.
8. Ministry of Health Policy noted that they are working on policy advice required ahead of the next AL changes.
9. MPI affirmed Police's comments, and noted that there had been a large amount of sector engagement on testing at the boundary, but that they were still expecting some level of non-compliance. Pop-up testing station will be opened tomorrow at Mercer.
10. Immigration NZ noted that their focus is on one-way QFT for Pacific RSE workers.
11. DPMC Comms noted that their primary focus currently is (i) AL changes ahead of Tuesday; (ii) QFT announcement and the voucher release from MBIE yesterday. Queried the possibility of changes of testing requirements for permitted personal travel.
12. The Ministry of Health provided an update –

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- 12.1. 13 new cases today, three currently unlinked to the current cluster. Foodstuffs driver has tested positive after trips throughout the motu. Another case was identified after presenting at Middlemore.
- 12.2. Contact tracing efforts continue into the two main clusters of concern.
- 12.3. Noted that not out of the woods by any stage. Continuing to focus on particular communities of concern.
13. NEMA queried the Pukekohe positive wastewater testing. Ministry of Health noted that further sampling is being undertaken, and in Snells Beach.
14. Jesse Nicholls, C4C, provided an update –
 - 14.1. Focus remains on access to food in Auckland.
 - 14.2. There is an ongoing issue with the funding of food banks and Auckland Council. DIA noted that they are on standby to assist if required. NEMA noted that they have asked for more information from Auckland Council on this issue, and are preparing advice for Ministers.
15. NEMA noted that Health has the lead for psychosocial support, and that this is being attended to through the Welfare Coordination Group.
16. The Chair closed the meeting, noting particular areas of focus over the coming days.

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COVID-19: Domestic response, operational updates regarding Alert Level 4

Date: 19 September 2021, 1400hrs

National Response Group meeting

All time markers recorded in NZT

Public health and other operational updates

1. DPMC policy provided an update on the Cabinet paper–
 - 1.1. A Public Health risk assessment was undertaken this morning to inform the Cabinet paper. The draft advice recommends Auckland to move to AL3 on Tuesday as intended. The rest of NZ is to remain at AL2, with a loosening of some settings. This will be in place for 2 weeks, with the next decision on 04 October.
 - 1.2. Options to reduce AL2 settings for an 'Alert Level 2 minus', include: increasing gathering size from 50 to 100 people, removal of no standing on public transport, and a reduction of 2m to 1m distance in some circumstances. In addition, a few other conditions are being reviewed however, they will take longer to implement.
 - 1.3. The group discussed the testing requirements at the boundary for an AL3/2 split, including evidence requirements for saliva testing and if any subsequent changes will be required in the Alert Order.
 - 1.4. DPMC and MOH to have a follow up conversation on saliva testing and positioning of advice in Cabinet paper tomorrow.
2. The Ministry of Health provided an update –
 - 2.1. We can expect the tail end of this virus to be different. The clusters are made up of multiple families, all interlinked, across big households. Due to this, it is expected that case numbers will remain at current levels for some time as we reach the edges of these clusters and the remaining household contacts become positive cases.
 - 2.2. Of the 24 new cases, 21 were linked as household members, with a high number of those people were already in MIQ before testing positive. Noted there are high rates of testing in clusters.
 - 2.3. Due to this, it is the unlinked cases that remain a concern. Testing is going to remain important as a component of outbreak management.
3. The Chair invited DPMC comms to provide an update–
 - 3.1. Confirmed that once decision has been made, the communications updates are ready to go across channels. Work is underway to generate higher intensity advertising across Auckland region, to reiterate the messages of AL3 to this audience.
 - 3.2. DPMC to engage with MOH on what information comms can signal modelling/ trends to community.
4. The Chair invited the group to provide operational updates -
 - 4.1. MPI noted potential supply chain issues in forestry sector and difficulties in AL3/2 setting

- 4.2. DPMC policy confirmed that there is no room for increased permissions at this stage, but the options have been provided to review permissions, depending how long AL3 remains in effect for.
 - 4.3. Police provided an update on compliance and raised concern with the level of complexity in the AL changes. The more complex it becomes, the harder it is for the public to understand the changes as well as the staff who operationalise the border settings and the greater the chance of an error.
 - 4.4. Reported that in general compliance is good with a high level of cooperation in the sector. However, there are a few people who are creating a lot of work which could unravel social licence moving forward, including the boundary jumpers and sense of frustration they are causing in smaller communities impacted.
 - 4.5. MIQ provided an update that the current capacity is good, with rooms available across country. MIQ interested in MOH modelling as have advice underway on timeframes for transitioning Q can go back into I's, noting contingency planning.
 - 4.6. MIQ noted there are still a large number of people from Australia using emergency allocation process. There is pressure on the system from travellers in Australia who did not return in the week window, trying to find a way to travel back, where there are not flights available.
 - 4.7. DPMC policy provided an update on work underway in the Alert Level Framework, including how the settings could be impacted, post vaccinations.
5. The Chair closed the meeting.

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COVID-19: Domestic response, operational updates regarding AL 4 and 2 in effect

Date: 21 September 2021, 1400hrs

National Response Group meeting

All time markers recorded in NZT

Public health and other operational updates

1. Ministry of Health update –

- 1.1. 14 new cases reported today, all but one are linked. MOH still expected a number of household contacts across clusters will likely emerge with further positive cases.
- 1.2. Upper Hauraki:
- 1.3. Public health risk assessment shows that Upper Hauraki poses a similar level of risk as Auckland clusters. There are a few household members and a neighbouring household that have not yet come back with negative tests. The denominator for the region is being looked at to assess how much of the region needs to be tested.
- 1.4. Public health is planning to have a public health risk assessment tomorrow and Thursday for Upper Hauraki. Alert Level 3 will be in place from tonight 21 September.
- 1.5. High level of cooperation from the community and a high level of testing.
- 1.6. Section 70 'tidy ups' – new S70 will cover people who are outside the region. New section 70 that DG Health just signed has an exemption for workers such as truck drivers that will drive through Upper Hauraki area. The section 70 requirement for those inside the region will be reassessed because the public health measures in Alert Level 3 will be sufficient and there might not be a need for section 70 alongside Alert Level 3. Legally – the changes from the 4 / 2 order will be incorporated into today's 3 / 2 order.

2. C4C update for Upper Hauraki area –

- 2.1. Regional leadership group have been meeting daily and there is good support in the community through the Hauraki Maori Trust Board, and lots of groups leaning-in on the ground.

3. Upper Hauraki cases are managed by ARPHS. But Waikato DHB are engaging with the school and community.

4. Roundtable on operational response updates from NRG Members:

5. MIQ –

- 5.1. MIAS and other pressure points (eg fisher folks) and contingency planning. Lobby was very successful, around 31,000 joined the queue. About 15% got through the lobby but chose to not go through with getting a voucher. This is a one-off of voucher releases, not all vouchers were released, some will be small or large pools of release.
- 5.2. Fishers and Antarctica arrivals in the next week or so. Q rooms 222 available in Auckland. Paper went to Minister Hipkins on reverting Q to Isolation, recommendation that Novotel is returned to isolation but we keep holiday inn as dual Q/Isolation.

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- 5.3. Contingency planning – MOH work on a national operating model on how you manage mild to moderate cases at home and looking at what is needed (skillset, knowledge, equipment, clinical guidelines) but there will always be a need of some sort of MIQ to accommodate those that cannot safely isolate at home. MOH have contracted-in someone to lead a health system readiness piece here which includes management of mild to moderate cases in the home. There is not currently an intent that the health system would operate MIQFs for community cases.
- 5.4. Readiness for management of COVID in the future will include community case management and contingency planning. Action: DPMC, MOH, MIQ, to take this offline to put plans in place for community case management, particularly in scenarios where cases emerge in areas where there is no MIQF.
6. Upper Hauraki 'buy-in' appears to be significant and positive. NZP taking the approach of 'do the right thing' and the community appear to be taking this approach, too.
7. Insights from the Ministry for Pacific Peoples – mental health line calls have increased; vaccination push to Pacific communities.
8. Business frustrations mainly focus on the lack of a path forward. The data we are getting is that businesses are doing okay, but they are feeling stressed and nervous and the psychological impact of uncertainty. In terms of rolling out additional resurgence support payments, Treasury are discussing with MOF what other economic supports that Treasury could put in place.
9. Cadence of meetings:
 - 9.1. NRG will meet Tuesdays and Thursdays, and over the weekend as required.

COVID-19: Domestic response, operational updates regarding AL 3 and 2 in effect

Date: 23 September 2021, 1400hrs

National Response Group meeting


All time markers recorded in NZT

Public health and other operational updates

1. Ministry of Health update –

1.1. 15 new cases reported today. Small number unlinked. Vast majority are household contacts or known connections to positive cases. The cluster that relates to the first case reported in August is winding down.

1.2. Section 9(2)(g)(i)



2. Upper Hauraki area update –

2.1. Section 70 for individuals who were in Upper Hauraki area will lift as announced by the DG Health today 23 September.

2.2. Public health reassessing the risk in the upper Hauraki area. Compliance seems high with good testing rates. The advice at this stage will be to lower upper Hauraki from Alert Level 3 to 2, feedback and input from the community on the Alert Levels will be considered ahead of an Alert Level change decision.

2.3. Alert Level shift will require a change in boundaries and MOT and NZP will work together to shift boundary checkpoints as and when required.

3. Policy updates from DPMC and MOH –

3.1. Reminder there is no Alert Level Cabinet paper that will be drafted over the coming weekend.

3.2. Ministers agreed Monday that there will be more work done on Alert Level 2 'minus' as the DG Health proposed. Agencies will work on a draft briefing for this over the next few days.

3.3. Drafting of a briefing is underway on domestic vaccine certifications.

3.4. Drafting of a Cabinet paper is underway on controls to prevent non-vaccinated non-New Zealanders from entering the country.

3.5. Advice to clarify testing requirements on moving from a lower Alert Level area to a higher Alert Level area. Amendments to the Alert Level Order will be required, as well as other minor amendments to the Order.

4. Roundtable on operational response updates from NRG Members:

5. Public sentiment at boundaries – Although incorrect, there is a view from people on the ground that movement permissions from Alert Level 4 to 3 are significantly different and allow more movement freedoms. NZP is taking an education-first approach and stressed

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that communications out to the public could help make it clearer to the public what the different movement permissions are between Alert Level 4 to 3.

6. Transport update – High level of confusion in the sector on the different categories that permit people to travel, stressed that UAC communications could make this clearer.
7. Communications update – Developed clearer ‘fliers’ on permitted travel, movement requirements, and testing requirements, that will be shared with partner agencies. UAC website has also been updated to clarify these sets of requirements. The NRG Chair stressed that UAC-generated communications should provide backbone/base information that sectors can nuance to best meet the sectors’ needs.
8. Focus to increase awareness of and stress the importance of following Alert Level 3 settings over the next ten days to two weeks.
 - 8.1. Two key factors such as workplaces acting as tight bubbles (following IPC and encouraging people to stay home if they are sick, etc), and the level of intercommunity mixing contribute to success of following Alert Level 3 settings.
 - 8.2. How do all agencies bring networks together to channel targeted Alert Level 3 settings communications to the two key factors.
 - 8.3. DPMC to coordinate a hui with agencies and Auckland City Council to do some planning around how to best help people do the right thing and follow Alert Level 3 settings.
9. C4C providers and food access – Advice will go to Ministers soon on additional funding needed for providers on the ground to continue to support food access.
10. NEMA continue to hold 3x weekly calls with Auckland emergency management (and Northland and Waikato).

COVID-19: Domestic response, operational updates regarding AL 3 and 2 in effect

Date: 28 September 2021, 1400hrs

National Response Group meeting

All time markers recorded in NZT

Public health and other operational updates

1. Ministry of Health update –

1.1. Section 9(2)(g)(i)

1.1.1. MSD and ARPHS/MOH working closely together to deliver targeted vaccination and testing services to housing insecure communities (eg for individuals and whanau that are in temporary motel accommodation).

1.1.2. The Chair stressed that if there are barriers to agencies working together to solve this problem that DPMC is happy to facilitate solutions.

1.2. Some individuals in the new clusters are regularly flouting the Alert Level rules which presents challenges to our approaches and stepping down from Alert Levels.

1.3. Proactive approach with Communications, testing sites, etc to get ahead of any possible undetected transmission that could have resulted in positive results in wastewater testing in Tauranga.

1.4.

1.5.

2. Policy updates from DPMC and MOH –

3. Yesterday 27 September Cabinet did consider permissions for personal travel particularly those individuals that are returning home, movement for new jobs or house sales, and tertiary students that need to move. The AL Order will be updated tonight 23:59hrs 28 September.

4. AL Cabinet paper for next Monday 4 October will have a different process with a review this week as opposed to over the weekend. Last time Cabinet met they agreed to increase hospitality limit from 50 to 100m but did not agree to other suggestions for public health measures. Those suggestions will be revised and included in this next Cabinet paper due next Monday 4 October.

4.1. Public health risk assessment will be completed and reported on Thursday 30 September. Draft Cabinet paper will be circulated Thursday night. Cabinet paper will be lodged Friday 1 October.

5. Loosening of Alert Level settings in Auckland 'loosening the pressure in the tires' over the next few weeks will be discussed with Ministers at the 1130hrs tomorrow 29 September.

6. The Chair stressed that some updates shared in the NRG are sensitive.

7. The Chair updated NRG that the DPMC Readiness & Planning Team will be hosting 'worst case scenario' planning in case the tail of this Auckland outbreak is not contained.

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8. The Chair invited New Zealand Police to update on community compliance with the rules.

8.1. NZP commented that social license and community compliance will become increasingly hard as the tail of the outbreak extends.

8.2. NZP commented that the multi-agency work with ARPHS in Auckland is working quite well and NZP is available to help with their multiple arms (eg iwi liaisons, youth liaison, etc).

9. The Chair invited MOT to update on their operations.

9.1. MOT commented that the complexity around permissions for travel is difficult for the public to understand, and communications do help but there is still confusion because of the nature of the complexity.

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COVID-19: Domestic response, operational updates regarding AL 3 and 2 in effect

Date: 30 September 2021, 1400hrs

National Response Group meeting

All time markers recorded in NZT

Public health and other operational updates

1. Health update:
 - 1.1 Concern over the Auckland situation, noting rising case numbers and hospitalisation numbers increasing. Evidence emerging that a second (but linked) outbreak is occurring with challenging characteristics.
 - 1.2 Confidence the outbreak is still contained to Auckland and the strategy is working.
 - 1.3 Social licence remains despite high alert levels for extended period of time.
 - 1.4 The Step-down of Alert level 3 for Auckland is still considered reasonable. However, Public Health Risk Assessments due Sunday and Monday for guidance on next steps.
2. Policy update:
 - 2.1 Alert Level Cabinet paper will be socialised with agencies tonight for feedback by 9am Friday, lodging at 3pm.
 - 2.2 Further discussion on the stage step-down approach for Auckland will be discussed 11am Friday.
 - 2.3 DG will give an Oral update Monday for the Cabinet paper.
 - 2.4 Additional papers being lodged next Monday, and Tuesday include;
Vaccination of non-New Zealand citizens
traffic light frameworks.
3. Around table:
 - 3.1 Chair noted the importance of generating readiness within the regions. Specifically notes that he wants to communicate with regional councils, chief executives and CDEM Chairs. Confirms dialogue has been established with Iwi to gain insights over the ongoing situation in Waikato/Upper Hauraki
 - 3.2 MoH noted there is continual contact with PHUs to assess regional capabilities such as ICU capacities; the focus of the system readiness should be on elements such as the distribution of food parcels, and other non-health topics.
 - 3.3 Police noted structures are in place at a regional level and should be utilised in these readiness and planning sessions.
 - 3.4 Chair noted the importance of vaccinations in the context of regional readiness; MoH acknowledges that all DHBs have communities where vaccination levels are low
 - 3.5 Immigration noted a number of regional economic development structures and contacts exist which should be tapped into for future readiness and planning.
 - 3.6 MPI noted the importance of local leadership being aligned on national planning frameworks.
 - 3.7 MoH has raised the consideration for Housing and Urban Development representatives to be present at NRG. A similar request has gone to Minister Hipkins in relation to the Ministers meeting due to the number of community cases who are rough sleepers.
 - 3.8 MBIE MIQ noted the importance of distributing lessons captured from current outbreak to regional leadership. Chair agrees and notes the effectiveness of dialogue with Te Arawhiti in gaining community insights.

5. Comms Update:

- 5.1 Noted declining levels in social licence; citing abusive behaviour towards border workers and an attack in a supermarket over mask usage.
- 5.2 Work underway on establishing what has been successful this outbreak; noted the effectiveness on pre-existing frameworks and how that assisted public transparency and the timeliness of comms distribution.
- 5.3 Noted that overall New Zealanders are comfortable with the Governments response and Alert Level Framework.
- 5.4 Comms are looking at how to transition to a new framework through an evolution approach rather than a revolution.

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COVID-19: Domestic response, operational updates regarding AL 3 and 2 in effect and new cases reported in the community in Waikato


Date: 3 October 2021, 1330hrs

National Response Group meeting

All time markers recorded in NZT

Public health and other operational updates

1. Situation update:


- 1.1. The Prime Minister announced today 3 October 1300hrs that certain areas around Raglan and Hamilton will have a bespoke boundary and Alert Level 3 settings will be applied due to positive cases reported in the areas. The boundaries will have spot-checks but maintenance of the boundary will be different to the 'hard boundary' around Auckland. This is a similar approach to Upper Hauraki recently. The public was encouraged to work from home if possible. Settings will be in place for at least the next five days from 2359hrs tonight 3 October. After five days of wide testing, contact tracing, and wastewater testing, Ministers will assess and ascertain how widespread the cases are to determine what to do next.
2. Graham MacLean, Chair of the National Response Group opened the meeting to discuss the bespoke Alert Level 3 approach and the planning leading up to 2359hrs tonight 3 October 2021. There will be a number of key engagements with local groups (local council, iwi, etc) to support the people affected.
3. MOH update on cases identified –
 - 3.1. A truck driver that was tested as part of essential worker testing was notified yesterday of his positive test result. Currently in a facility in Palmerston North. The public health risk is considered low at the moment, but there are some locations of interest that are of-concern. The truck driver case is considered low risk due to his patterns of movement (eg overnight truck driver and known places where he visited).
 - 3.2. Positive case in Hamilton is of-concern due to movement patterns.
 - 3.3. Positive case is part of a large household and the positive case is active in the community. The WGS should have results tomorrow. Section 9(2)(a)

 - 3.4. Emphasis on vaccinations through communications around this outbreak.
4. Increase of testing stations and increase of vaccination stations in affected areas – MOH report sufficient testing supplies and vaccine doses in both Waikato and Palmerston North, internal discussions occurring around what might be needed. DHBs are preparing for large influx in the areas of interest and possibly increase around the country for both testing and vaccination uptake.
5. Policy update from MOH and DPMC:
 - 5.1. MOH report – finalising the report now, public health advice supports the decision to move a geographical area (which will cover certain areas) to Alert Level 3 with a 'soft' boundary ie a boundary that will not be fully policed but measures of AL 3 will be in effect and keep people in place. The main areas of focus are on hospitality

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(click and collect retail), and managing numbers of people in public spaces, and vaccination rates. A cautious approach applying commensurate control measures for the public health risks, with a review in five days.

- 5.2. DPMC – Alert Level Order and cover briefing will include the health report and advice from Crown Law and Parliamentary Council Office. For drafting instructions we are trying to make the Order as straight forward as possible, the bottom line is that the same rules for Auckland AL 3 rules will apply to the new geographical area. The boundary around Waikato will be able to be enforced, but for practicality reasons it will not be policed as ‘hard’ as the Auckland boundary. The two AL 3 areas is not easily allowed for in the current Order, so CLO, PCO and DPMC will work together to amend the Order.
 - 5.2.1. There will still be rules in place that prevents movement across a ‘soft’ boundary between Alert Level 3 areas because there is an AL 2 area between the Southern Auckland boundary and the Northern Waikato boundary.
 - 5.2.2. The boundary exemptions process will be worked through offline after the NRG as it is integral to the Alert Level Order drafting.
 - 5.2.3. Testing of essential workers crossing the boundary will also need to be worked through, and whether Hamilton airport is in/out of the AL 3 area.
 - 5.2.4. Policy issue on implications of today’s situation on tomorrow’s Cabinet decision which should be worked through with the NRLT this afternoon.
- 5.3. Regional Leadership Group will meet this afternoon to discuss implications for Waikato/Hamilton. Michael Lovett will support linking across regional groups after policy issues are worked through.
- 5.4. Impacts on certain communities will need to be worked through and the C4C group will need to lean in with proactive work commencing this afternoon.
- 5.5. Individuals who are in AL 3 boundaries/areas will be impacted by the settings so we will need to work through the operations to enable them to access goods and services.
- 5.6. Many individuals will have travelled for school holidays or otherwise, so we will need to be really clear about the communications around ability to travel home.
- 5.7. Impacts of boundary around Waikato on agriculture and farmers.
- 5.8. Treasury is considering if this approach triggers any further financial supports.

Follow-up meeting to work through specific issues, 3 October 1430hrs

1. What rules will apply at the boundary around Waikato, options are to apply the same rules as AL 3 in effect in Auckland (with things like BTDs and testing requirements) or different rules apply to the two areas under AL 3.
2. Practicalities of implementing settings and consistency of AL 3 application is critical.
 - 2.1. Position: Same rules for both AL 3 areas. High-trust model application of the 'soft' boundary around the Waikato area but public communications should emphasise that the rules apply. Messaging about practicalities of following those rules will be different for the two areas.
 - 2.2. Testing requirement could have a delay before it comes into effect and the necessity of the requirement could be assessed at the review at day five.
 - 2.3. Testing should be signalled to the sector that a testing regime may come into play soon but not required as yet (the current public health risk does not necessarily warrant implementing a testing regime).
 - 2.4. Difficult if the system runs two sets of rules simultaneously, challenges to do this before 2359hrs tonight 3 October.
3. Section 9(2)(h) 
4. Not being able to enforce rules could undermine the integrity of the system.
5. Hamilton airport will be outside of the AL 3 area and therefore will maintain the same AL 2 settings the airport currently operates under.

COVID-19: Domestic response, operational updates regarding AL 3 and 2 in effect and new cases reported in the community in Waikato

Date: 5 October 2021, 0930hrs

National Response Group meeting

All time markers recorded in NZT

Public health and other operational updates

1. Waikato update from agencies:

1.1. C4C:

- Regional Leadership Groups are comfortable with arrangements and groups are working well together with concerns being addressed proactively. The same model that was used in Upper Hauraki is being used in the Waikato, with good support arrangements through Haruki Maori Trust Board, Waikato Tainui and Pacifica provider support.
- There is some pressure on the funding for food support which has been a theme throughout the response. There was a release of funding last week which will last until Friday. There are ongoing Ministerial conversations on how funding could work for the next few months to enable a more sustainable model going forward. One additional request for funding (Islamic women's council) has been received which is being supported through MSD.
- There is attention on MIQ arrangements with the DHB and MBIE working on what this may look like with a focus on keeping whanau together in Hamilton where possible.
- There was some confusion regarding boundary impacts and implementation yesterday, however these have been resolved through messaging.

1.2. MoH:

- Numbers around the same as yesterday which is as expected, with continued increase in hospitalisation rates.
- Within Auckland the cases are majority household or known contacts. Cases have been reported in the neonatal ICU. The risk to the patients are low. MoH have signed off for rapid antigen tests to be used for rapid screening of all visitors to the ward.
- There are high testing volumes in Auckland and Waikato with a focus on suburbs of interest.
- Waikato cases are expected to increase, all are currently linked, with a clear link to Auckland. WGS suggests a relatively new infection. Currently Waikato has low exposure events due to household transmissions but are expected to increase.
- Healthline have been receiving questions on boundaries and the Auckland AL changes. Healthline will continue to work on updating FAQs.
- There is an ongoing issue regarding boating in Auckland and whether the boundary can be crossed.

1.3. Quarantine:

- MIQ and MoH are working on a process to deal with those in MIQ with behavioural issues.
- MIQ are working on a solution for cases in Waikato. Those in the Waikato do not want to go to an Auckland Quarantine, wanting to remain close to Whanau.

1.4. MIQ:

- Requested for modelling on predicted quarantine numbers related to the Waikato cluster to inform planning. MoH indicated it is currently too early

undertaking this modelling, however the cluster seems to be restricted to a few households with strong links between households and Auckland. More information will come to inform modelling once wider community testing results come though.

1.5. Home isolation:

- There is a programme of work within MoH looking at clinical guidelines, resourcing and equipment required for home isolation of mild and moderate cases in a highly vaccinated population.
- Transition will see a continued demand on MIQ and therefore greater imperative for an alternative community solution for cases and contacts of cases.

1.6. NZP:

- The hybrid model of AL3 in Waikato is running as smoothly as expected. Focus is on reassurance and patrolling.
- There have been 238 complaints – 38 Waikato area. It is hard to tell if the complaints in the Waikato are a result of high compliance or COVID fatigue.
- The stepping down in Auckland AL3 has been complex to undertake compliance. Police are waiting for the Order amendment to understand their role further.
- Chair highlights elected officials praised police on their education and reassurance role which has a helpful impact to encourage the right behaviours and is important for social licence

1.7. MoT:

- Avsec arrived in Hamilton airport yesterday and will be there rest of the week. They are nervous due to recent media coverage but are taking a spot check approach consistent with police.

1.2. With regards to the boating concerns in Auckland the following agencies have offered support: MoT (through Maritime NZ), and MPI (through fisheries officers). MoH Response Manager to reach out to both agencies. DPMC Policy highlighted more guidance is to come on this topic.

1.8. PSC:

- Offered to connect Dave Samuels who leads Maori vaccine uptake with MIQ/MOH in the Waikato to aid leaning into Maori communities. MIQ will touch base if required as good connection with Iwi already exist.

2. Future steps and alignment:

2.1. DPMC Policy: A strategy for a highly vaccine NZ (Slides)

- The new framework is a working progress which has had limited agency and stakeholder engagement to date. Agency engagement will be sought this week for feedback by Friday.
- The framework will be going back to Cabinet next week prior to a Public announcement 14 October 2021.
- The framework aims to minimising the impacts of COVID-19 on people health as much as possible through sustainable public health measures. The frameworks goals were agreed to by Cabinet 04 October 2021 for the purpose of further work.
- An overview of the frameworks was given.
- The transition to the new framework is expected to occur by mid-November
- Next steps include; agency and stakeholder engagement, and TSY to look into economic support. A more detailed Cabinet paper on the framework will be going to Cabinet 26 October.

- Alongside this framework paper is a Cabinet paper on vaccination certificates for domestic use.

2.2. Question:

- Section 9(2)(g)(i) 

2.3. Next steps:

- The framework matrix will be shared with agencies on this call
- Engagement on the framework will occur over the next two weeks both from a policy and implementation angle.
- Chair requests everyone leans in with most appropriate people into this work.

2.4. NRG into future will be Tuesdays and Thursday as placeholders only.

COVID-19: Domestic response, operational updates regarding AL 3 and 2 in effect and new cases reported in the community in Waikato

Date: 07 October 2021, 1400hrs

National Response Group meeting

All time markers recorded in NZT

Public health and other operational updates

1. Situation update:

1.1. The Chair opened the meeting with an update on key decisions for the day, which included extending the Waikato boundary further south. This decision was taken in conjunction with the DHB, Iwi and Regional Council, creating a new soft boundary which will take effect from 2359 tonight, until 2359 Monday 11 October.

2. MoH update on cases -

2.1. The situation in Waikato continues to evolve. Anticipate the number of cases will continue to grow within the region.

2.2. There was a public health assessment today on Auckland outbreak and the situation is grumbling in an upwards trend, but in a manageable situation. Consideration is being given to if/when we Auckland can go into phase 2 and schools can reopen. The public health advice has gone to Ministers this afternoon for a decision.

3. Policy update -

3.1. Draft advice for Cabinet will be completed this evening, once the PH assessment is received later today. The paper will be submitted tomorrow for a Cabinet announcement on Tuesday.

Roundtable on insights the group are seeing from their sectors -

4. Cat Robinson provided an update on a meeting yesterday with the Regional Economic Senior Officials in Te Rawhiti.

4.1. Businesses in the region are making a big effort to ensure over 90% of staff vaccinated. They are interested in what a high vaccination rate of their workforce would mean if there is a positive worker and if this could prevent the factory from shutting down. They are interested on the direction of this concept.


4.2. The area is concerned that the low vaccination rates makes them both vulnerable and it could impact negatively on the future growth in the region. They have offered as the economic leaders of the region to do whatever they could to boost vaccination in the region. The area of focus is 19-21 year olds and new ways to get messages to them.

4.3. MoH noted vaccine insights need to be channelled through Jo Gibbs. There is a lot going on in this space, but this landscape isn't always visible on what the other activities are. Offer to set up an opportunity for Jo to come talk to NRG on what work is underway to target different groups.

5. PSC provided an update on the vaccination status messaging for Government. Noted the messaging is complex balancing that all Government workers should be vaccinated, however noting some people will be able to be vaccinated. The messaging has been

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shared with all Public services heads of comms last night. Within the core of public service and key supporting messages have been widely disseminated.

6. Legal confirmed they are tracking well with the draft order underway and just waiting on the map to come from DPMC to finalise.
 7. Police updated that the Waikato service on the soft boundary is doing a great job and exceeding expectations. They are turning vehicles away and generally see a high level of compliance. Confirmed that on the northern hard boundary, all is running well.
 - 7.1. A key insight from Police is to be involved in the Public Health response process (case investigations) earlier, even if it is found later that they are not required.
 8. Transport provided an update to the group
 - 8.1. Air NZ was in an Ops meeting at 1430. Previously, when Hamilton has been at AL3, the airport has been closed, but no decision has been made yet, however some airlines have cancelled flights.
 - 8.2. Australia has raised concerns regarding chartered flights from and looking at changing rules as it is putting pressure on their quarantine facilities. The numbers of travellers are not significant.
 9. Chris Scahill provided an update on planning work underway on MIQ contingency.
 - 9.1. In Hamilton, there is work underway to convert an existing MIF into a quarantine. This would be dependent on cases but could be ready to go-live for this weekend. In Auckland, planning is underway to convert 1-2 MIFs to quarantine. Similar work is underway for building contingency in Christchurch.
 - 9.2. Section 9(2)(g)(i)

 - 9.3. The contingency planning does not yet include the transport component of moving cases to the quarantine facility but will be incorporated into the overall system session hosted by DPMC.
 10. MPI reported they are consultation regularly and no specific concerns from the Waikato. There is consideration underway on what a positive case could mean in the cold-chain and how the sector can prepare. A large concern to avoid an outbreak in this area as it would have impacts on exports.
 11. The Chair updated the group that an RLG signal group is being set up to communicate to the regions and will be in operation from tomorrow.
 12. The Chair noted that the NRP Q4 plan is going to be proactively released. Agencies will be asked to sign off and check redactions in their section. The Q2 and Q3 NRP are planned to also be released. Copies of the NRP will be published on the COVID-19 website.
- Next steps -
13. The next NRG will be held on Tuesday, unless there is an escalation point prior that requires meeting.

COVID-19: Domestic response

Date: 14 October 2021, 1400hrs

National Response Group meeting

All time markers recorded in NZT

Public health and transitional planning updates

1. Situation update:

1.1. The Chair opened the meeting with an apology for the meetings clash between DPMC Policy and NRG on Tuesday. These meetings have now been deconflicted for the future.

2. MIQ current situation update:

2.1. MIQ noted the current risk profile in MIQ is different to that of the past. The current risk is higher from community cases than border cases.


2.2. MIQ currently have 130 Quarantine rooms available in Auckland. If daily case numbers continue to track upwards there is the potential MIQ capacity will be met in the coming days.

2.3. Work is ongoing with Hamilton Iwi to establish whether or not cases from South Auckland could be put into the Waikato MIQ where there are 110 Quarantine rooms.

2.4. MIQ acknowledged that due to the building pressure an alternative is needed for returnees due to arrive at the border. MIQ are working with health to see what levers can be pulled to ease pressure on MIQF system.

3. MOH update -

Section 9(2)(g)(i)



3.2. 71 cases today, all in Auckland. A Public Health risk assessment was undertaken earlier today with another to take place this Sunday in support of the Alert Level Cabinet decision on Monday.

3.3. Paper due to go to Minister Verrall in the coming weeks, on the potential for change in contact classification, with considerations given to vaccination status, PPE worn and setting in which contact took place. Noting that no observed casual contacts have become cases during the current outbreak.

3.4. Acknowledged that the new cases are now moving household spread to social gatherings spread, in line with the slight easing of restrictions.

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3.5. CE of County Manukau has mentioned to MoH the length of lockdown is having impact on peoples non COVID health treatment.

4. Section 9(2)(g)(i)

5. Police update:

5.1. Receiving about 220 complaints a day. Complaints are in relation to gatherings and those attempting to cross the alert level boundary without the correct permissions.

6. DPMC Policy update:

6.1. Preparing Alert Level Review Cabinet paper for Monday. Based on the most recent Public health risk assessment, Auckland's Alert level restrictions will likely remain the same. Paper will be sent out for agency feedback tonight.

6.2. Within the Cabinet paper, advice is to be provided on the reopening of Auckland schools, with information on entities and controls that need to be in place before this can be safely done. Information to be provided about saliva testing requirements for people crossing the regional Alert Level boundary.

6.3. Ministers meeting today at 1500hrs to discuss the traffic light system, draft paper will be sent out tonight for input from relevant agencies over the weekend. Paper to be lodged Monday.

7. Treasury update on business support payments going forward:

7.1. Current business support settings are continuing to roll out as are.

7.2. Work is ongoing regarding financial support under the new framework. Expect this to be less, a mix of smaller grants and one-off payments to help firms readjust and retool.

8. Transport – No update

9. Customs update:

9.1. Noted that the team is working on reviewing the Maritime border strategy.

9.2. Currently working on paper for One-Way Quarantine Free Travel from some Australian states (Initially Queensland and Western Australia)

10. NEMA Update:

10.1. Regional CDEM groups have recognised the shift from elimination, increased requests from CDEM groups for information.

10.2. Work is currently underway within NEMA to plan for concurrent events. Stated the importance of information sharing, particularly in identifying people who are isolating/quarantined at home.

11. DPMC Comms:

11.1. Very challenging to keep the public informed in an ambiguous environment. This will continue as we move into a new framework.

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- 11.2. A public sentiment piece has found the public grumpy and wanting clarity on the future. There is a lot of pride in the current framework, but there is also recognition that it is time for a change in approach.
- 11.3. A focus group has found the unvaccinated want to understand their choices in the future state.
12. MPI voiced concern about the potential for supply chain issues and impacts on the primary sector.
13. Crown Law noted that there is an increased appetite to challenge decision which have been made, particularly in the MIQ exemptions space.

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COVID-19: Domestic response

Date: 26 October 2021, 1400hrs

National Response Group meeting

All time markers recorded in NZT

Public health and transitional planning updates

1. Situation updated from MoH
 - 1.1. Public Health Risk Assessment for Northland was undertaken over the weekend due to community concerns. The risk was assessed low, with the Alert Level remaining the same.
 - 1.2. Public Health Risk Assessment for Waikato occurred this morning. Draft recommendation is Alert Level three step 1 similar to the current Auckland settings. To be reviewed Monday 01 November.
 - 1.3. Auckland Alert Level is to remain at Alert Level 3 step 1.
 - 1.4. The Alert Level boundary has been good at containing the outbreak.
2. MoT reflected on the case in the South Island, expressing nervousness with the call for more testing for those travelling to the South Island. If policy changes required increased testing it would be operationally difficult and would encompass regional airports as well as ferries.
3. Customs reinforced MoT's point and raised concerns of setting a precedent that cannot be enforce.
4. Police updated
 - 4.1. Checkpoints are operating as normal.
 - 4.2. Intel suggests public sentiment is changing. Police Intelligence has identified three groups heading to Waitangi in the next few days. There are discussions internally and with DPMC on how to handle this. Numbers could be between 1,000-30,000, consisting of anti-vaccinators and anti-government groups.
5. MIQ update
 - 5.1. MIQ is operating at high capacity.
 - 5.2. There is an announcement tomorrow regarding shorter stay MIQ. This will take time to implement, requiring expectation management. This is partly due to there being over 5,000 people across facilities at the moment, thus there is a requirement to rebuild a buffer to support the current response.
 - 5.3. Work is underway to consider converting Sudima Rotorua MIF into a MIQ.
 - 5.4. In the month of October there have been more violent incidents in Quarantine facilities than in September and August combined, which is putting strain on staff and processes. MIQ have been working with Police to increase presence and are working on a transition from a NZDF based model to an MBIE employed staff model.
6. Welfare update

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- 6.1. Quarantining at home requires a new model. As this rolls out more widely there is a large proportion of the population where this model will not work. This is the focus for welfare agencies this week.
- 6.2. Focus this week is also on connecting with regional partners to learn from previous responses to inform the new model.
7. MIQ are planning on undertaking lessons learnt regarding the challenges of the high need cohorts to help inform the new model. These learnings will be shared.
8. It was noted Auckland and Waikato health system have used multi agency, NGO and local leadership to engage and influence with the parts of the community who do not want to engage with the system during a response. However, this is not a one size fits all approach.
9. COVID-19 Protection Framework update
 - 9.1. Up and coming Cabinet papers:
 - 15 November DPMC paper outline transition planning to date
 - 29 November DPMC paper outlining Auckland's implementation plan as well as a review on National vaccination targets
 - November MoH paper on testing, tracing and isolation
 - End of November, Treasury paper on Economic Support
 - 15 November MSD paper on the revised approach to wrap around community welfare support.
 - 9.2. There will be engagement across the system to aid transitional planning.
 - 9.3. High level overview of transition planning given.
10. MoT outlined a need for detailed planning to occur quickly to input into the 15 November Cabinet paper. MoT also need to understand what government funding is available for compliance as well as sustainable workforce model.

COVID-19: Domestic response

Date: 28 October 2021, 1400hrs

National Response Group meeting

All time markers recorded in NZT

Public health and transitional planning updates

1. MoH update

- 1.1. There are two confirmed positive cases in Christchurch. A Public Health Risk Assessment was conducted this morning and has deemed at this time there is no significant red flags. The two individuals have clear links to each other and one to Auckland, with no significant locations of interest or super spreader events being identified. There are a small number of Close Contacts being tested and results are expected this afternoon which will help inform the next steps.
- 1.2. Auckland remains stable.
- 1.3. There are four 4 new linked cases in the Waikato. Continue to see long tail associated with the outbreak.
- 1.4. No change for Northland or Blenheim.
- 1.5. Wastewater at Tokoroa returned a no detection result.

2. Focus of the meeting is to understand operational considerations for the two possible boundary options being worked on for Christchurch.

3. Police update

- 3.1. Option 1 is the preferred option. This option would require 7 checkpoints and 175 staff to operate 24/7 to checking movement in and out of the boundary.
- 3.2. Option 2 is not supportable.
- 3.3. Currently South Island Police are supporting the North Island boundaries, if a hard South Island boundary was required there would need to be a redistribution of staff and which would lead to implication on other work carried out by Police to sustain these boundaries.
- 3.4. Police note they could ask NZDF for support but acknowledge they have a large personnel commitment to the response already. Another option to explore is Airport Police staff and Avsec staff.

4. MIQ update

- 4.1. The South Island has 40 Quarantine rooms in total with one in use.
- 4.2. MIQ currently has no surge capacity available. Surge capacity can only be built when the policy decisions made today come into force. There are additional health workforce constraints, however MoH have been in conversations with CDHB to start planning for home quarantine to enable MIQ rooms to only be used for those who cannot Quarantine at home.
- 4.3. MIQ facilities in Christchurch are dual facilities and can be turned into full Quarantine facilities. Contingency planning is underway to assess options available.

5. MoT update

- 5.1. Option 1 is the preferred option, with daylight implementation recommended due to checkpoints being on state highways.
- 5.2. Constraints identified included needing to understand potential testing requirements and whether a soft or hard boundary will be used as this will have implications on lead in time.
- 5.3. Christchurch airport has an Avsec presence already in place, but no conversations have been had to date regarding helping with any future boundaries, however no issues are foreseen.

6. Section 9(2)(a)

7. Welfare update

- 7.1. No issues foreseen
- 7.2. RLG's met today awaiting a readout from meeting but regional planning is robust.

8. Treasury update

- 8.1. It is estimated the proposed boundary option costs will be as follows
 - Option 1: \$60mn a week
 - Option 2: \$40mn a week
- 8.2. Processes are ready when triggers are met

9. Policy update

- 9.1. Poised ready to write Cabinet papers if decision requires.
- 9.2. Auckland and the rest of the country excluding the Waikato Alert Level Cabinet paper is being drafted and sent to the Ministers office this evening.
- 9.3. Alert Level settings for the Waikato will be reviewed Sunday pending the Public Health Risk Assessment.
- 9.4. An amendment has been made to the Order to restrict people from moving primary place of residence when an announcement has been regarding the intent to go up Alert Levels.

10. DPMC Comms update

- 10.1. Targeted push in Christchurch regarding vaccinations.
- 10.2. Broader comms focus in on testing and other health behaviours particularly scanning.
- 10.3. The comms team is adjusting to a regional approach in its campaigns.

11. Chair summarised boundary discussion. Noting particularly due to resourcing constraints, if a boundary was required it would likely the recommendation would be to implement a similar approach to Waikato.

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12. MFAT and MoH confirmed Commonwealth of Australia are notified of the Christchurch case by MoH sitrep to Australia National Focal Point (NFP).

12.1. MoH are liaising with Australia through daily sitrep.

13. NEMA noted the emergency mobile alert system ready if required.

14. It was noted this situation could be used to test the thinking and operability of the proposed boundary settings in the new CVOID-19 Protection Framework.

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COVID-19 Response Checklist

1

NRG to complete upon notification of a positive case

2

Chair NRG to report to Chair NRLT

3

NRLT to assess and recommend course of action to Ministers Board meeting (pre-Cabinet)

4

The indicators and assessment questions covered in this checklist will form the basis of a shortened AL Cabinet Paper

Health situation	
<p>Is the source of the outbreak known?</p> <p>What is the geographic distribution (of known or potential close contacts)?</p> <p>How long has the virus thought to have been in the community? And the impacts.</p> <p>What is the health systems capacity for;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact tracing Testing Surveillance 	<p>6 cases, all part of same family. Section 9(2)(a)</p> <p>The index case has been identified as Section 9(2)(a)</p> <p>Index case arrived in Taranaki 01 November. Positive wastewater was detected from 02 November.</p> <p>Taranaki DHB can surge 5 ICU beds and working with Whanganui DHB to provide additional capacity over the weekend, if required.</p>
System Considerations	
<p>What is MIQs or community isolation capacity?</p>	<p>Relevant facilities are:</p> <p>Auckland: 325 beds; Waikato: 80 bed; and Wellington 13 rooms</p>
<p>What are the economic impacts from the Alert Level change?</p>	<p>No additional economic impacts, area covered by existing response financial arrangements.</p>
<p>What are the impacts of the detection and alert level changes on at risk communities to move in the timeframes being recommended?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What welfare support is available? Do any of the welfare support packages need to be activated earlier? 	<p>Welfare system working as expected, with Iwi leaning in. MSD will continue to work with providers to ensure they have what they need to support response.</p> <p>Wage subsidy #7 has gone live today, with nationwide coverage.</p>
<p>What do we believe the public attitude will be towards the measures?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well do we believe people and businesses understand, accept, and abide by them? 	
<p>When can the decision be operationalised? Timeframes and next steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Orders Hard boundaries Welfare 	<p>Orders: PCO confirmed if Order has similar conditions to previous orders but in new geographical location, they will be able to draft this evening.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public communications 	<p>Boundaries: Draft boundary options have been consulted, including with Taranaki RLG members. New Plymouth Mayor confirmed proposed looks sensible and aligned with previous boundaries.</p> <p>4 Roads:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three State Highways <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SH3 Tongaporutu = Regional SH3 Waitotara = Regional SH43 = secondary collector Local Road <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Okau Road = access <p>Hard boundaries: Difficult to implement due to rural area. Main roads would be feasible but several smaller roads. Police would need additional resource, including NZDF request. Could support soft boundary spot checks. Waka Kotahi need 6-12 hrs of daylight notice to operationalise boundary, noting staff would need notification today to be on standby for a weekend change.</p> <p>Communications: DPMC Comms begun drafting talking points and messages, in preparation.</p>
<p>Do we understand what permitted activity is allowed under the proposed restriction and is this practicable?</p>	
<p>What Compliance measures are in place?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do these need bolstering? 	<p>NZ Police has several competing priorities, including supporting Auckland boundary (Op ROMEO) and responding to planned protest activity over weekend. Staff on the ground is limited and would need to call in additional resource for a hard boundary.</p> <p>Mayor requested NZ Police to provide additional resource to support local capacity, especially at Southern boundary should this be required.</p> <p>NZ Police advise that they would likely seek additional NZDF support if a boundary is required.</p>
<p>Are there any legislative implications which need to be considered?</p>	<p>Draft instructions to PCO have been prepared by DPMC Legal.</p>
<p>Are there any border changes required?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Air Border Maritime border 	<p>Avsec confirmed only AirNZ flights from New Plymouth. Avsec could implement airport restrictions, but at earliest tomorrow afternoon due to limited staff.</p> <p>Customs have staff at Maritime border. Could temporarily support Air Border, if required.</p> <p>Maritime border:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3x commercial vessels currently at Port Taranaki, departing 12-13 November. Each with approx. 20 crew onboard

	- 10 x commercial vessels are enroute, due to arrive between 12-20 November. Each with approx. 20 crew onboard
<p>What are the impacts to partner countries we allow quarantine free travel with?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australia • Cook Islands • Niue • Samoa, Vanuatu and Tonga 	No impact.
<p>Are there any trade-offs, risks or issues which will occur as a result of the proposed restrictions?</p>	<p>Iwi considerations:</p> <p>Ngā Iwi o Taranaki Chairs met this morning and their strong view is that an AL change should be implemented to limit travel within the region, particularly south towards Whanganui which has significant vaccination challenges. This is due to the commuter nature and geographical location of Stratford, being in the centre of the region, which poses a high-risk spread area. There is a major concern for iwi due to the time passed since wastewater detection, and the diligence of tracer app usage by cases. There is also concern around the recent and current tangi being held in Levin and Waitara which have the potential to become spreading events, which Ngā Iwi o Taranaki are working with whānau and Marae to manage.</p>

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COVID-19: Domestic response

Date: 23 November 2021, 1400hrs

National Response Group meeting

All time markers recorded in NZT

Public health and transitional planning updates

1. The Chair opened the meeting.

2. MoH update:

- MoH are comfortable with how the Auckland and Northland outbreaks are tracking. Both outbreaks are considered well contained, with regions in suppression mode.
- The Waikato appears in a steady state tracking towards suppression. However, was noted there is a cluster of interest in Tokoroa.
- There is a Mid-central wastewater positive which remains unexplained.
- MoH noted that as we move into the summer period hotels/motels which are currently being used for those who cannot isolate at home are becoming unavailable. MoH are working with MBIE on capacity.

3. Policy update:

- Section 9(2)(g)(i)



- Update on cadence for next Monday's paper:
 - o Health and agency information is due on Thursday, a draft will be sent out Thursday night and will be held close. The paper will be discussed at NRLT Friday morning, undergo ministerial consultation Friday and be lodged Friday evening for a Decision Monday
 - o Future desire is for this process to follow a less compressed timeframes.

4. The Chair invited Graham Maclean to discuss operationalisation of CPF from a central perspective.

- Focus this week is to take policy decisions and build sector guidance to ensure we are as well prepared as possible for go live next week.
- The expectation from Ministers is to share a detailed CPF A3 (similar to AL A3) with the Public this week.
- There is also a focus on RLGs this week to ensure an understanding of their role, and make sure we aren't over taxing that part of the system. DPMC are preparing RLG guidance which will be shared tomorrow with regions and MSD. The aim of this guidance is to empower regions and ensure they have a voice in the advice chain under the new framework.
- The compliance workstream leads are meeting end of this week to ensure alignment in the CPF.
- MoT, MPI and PSC highlighted sectors are requesting guidance on expectations for how to deal with a positive case in the workforce. MoT raised the risk of possible critical services outages or failures, noting we may need to change on how we deal with close contacts to mitigate this.

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- MBIE is intending to hold a BCP session with a segment on how these work under the CPF.
5. DPMC comms update:
- There are a number of updates this week including an announcement today on the verifier app.
 - Tomorrow Minister Hipkins is announcing the detailed CPF A3 and sector guidance
 - MFAT highlighted there will be high interest from the Pacific around the CPF, including concerns relating to their families and RSE workers in NZ. Countries have obligations in place to provide pathways for return. Engagement with Pacific countries will be essential.
6. Information sharing cadence:
- MoH are building a forward-looking dashboard for the CPF. The MoH Science and Insights team will help identify what indicators and warning signs should indicate the need for a health assessment outside of biweekly/monthly cycle. Amongst many variables, this dashboard will look at hospitalisation, vaccination rates, and modelling.
 - Alongside this, the AoG piece considers regional advice from the RLG and Iwi/Hapu standpoint. This is a complex piece which will require the fusing of advice from 16 RLGs to inform Cabinet of regional considerations. In addition to these bi-weekly updates there will be a daily snapshot to keep the system informed.
7. MIQ update:
- International arrivals are the lowest risk with only a few cases.
 - The 7-day isolation model is progressing well. A few people are requiring an extra day but is not onerous.
 - Community Quarantine capacity is ~860 rooms total, currently housing ~500 with around ~300 rooms available in Auckland.
 - Further Quarantine capacity could be created if required but there are two major dependencies for this.
 - o Local iwi and wider community agreement and buy in; and
 - o Staffing
8. C4C update:
- Lots of work underway operationally align the welfare model into the health assessment with work focusing on getting systems in place and regional teams ready to stand up.
 - Initially there will be requirement for a 7-days a week contact centre model to support.
 - Sector guidance is currently being worked on.
 - Housing capacity is severely limited, and tension will increase as we go into the summer period, with increased. C4C are bringing agencies together to map out what housing is available nationally and regional, including considering pivot options. MIQ and Health may be able to lean in.
9. Compliance update
- There are ongoing challenges with getting framework up and running in time for the flip
 - Policy flagged 2 systems may not be required to be in place for 3-15 December. An update will be provided offline later today.
10. Chair closed meeting confirming the next NRG meeting is to be held Thursday.

COVID-19: Domestic response

Date: 25 November 2021, 1400hrs

National Response Group meeting

All time markers recorded in NZT

Public health and transitional planning updates

1. The Chair opened the meeting and spoke through the agenda.
2. CPF Update:
 - Still lots to be done and work through but given the speed it is being imposed we are in a good place.
 - System architecture and decision making will remain the same for now. There is not time to develop a bespoke methodology before summer.
3. MoH update:
 - 178 new cases, mostly Maori.
 - Particular attention on a new cluster emerging in Waikato, Te Kuiti in the primary sector. MoH are working with MPI on this.
 - Pahiatua in Mid-central is also of interest due to one unlinked case identified. This case answers the positive wastewater over the last week. This case has been symptomatic for a while and active in the community. MoH are expecting to see a spike in testing numbers.
 - The first Health system Risk Assessment has been complete and is with DPMC for their assessment. From a Health perspective this is in line with the PM announcement Monday.
4. Policy update:
 - Monday paper is being worked on. Those who are on the list to receive paper will receive tonight. NRLT will discuss tomorrow and the paper is to be lodged tomorrow evening.
5. Comms update:
 - Care in community announcement made today which has been picked up by the media.
 - DPMC comms are working on new campaign material to be finalised and approved.
 - Sector guidance progressing well with some being released today for business, education and transport.
 - There have been a number of engagement sessions with sectors in preparation for next weeks announcements.
 - Yesterday announcement about Reconnecting New Zealand lead to one of the biggest days for social media queries mostly regarding what does eligible mean.
6. Customs update:
 - Everyone seems across 3 step process.
 - SWC paper yesterday has generated a lot of report backs. As a result, a number of workshops have been or are being held with affected agencies. A paper is being intended to be sent to Reconnecting New Zealand Committee 03 December.
 - Number of aviation CEs in the past 24 hours have been vocal, pushing back around timeframes.
 - MFAT highlighted they are hearing from airports and airlines are discontent around timelines and the continuation of 7-day isolation as they feel this will limit tourism and make NZ an undesirable location for travel.

[IN-CONFIDENCE]

- Policy noted the self-isolation requirements may change between now and when tourism will be opened up. Ministers are tracking what is occurring in the Northern hemisphere.

7. Immigration update:

- Noted step 3 of reopening New Zealand does not mean all border restrictions are gone and are cautioning a phased return of travel will be possible. INZ noted there are policy decisions which still need to occur to determine what settings look like.
- There are 165,000 people in NZ who could apply for residency from 01 December. The workforce processing these visas is the same workforce that process holiday visas. Workforce planning is underway.

8. MIQ update:

- Workforce planning a big focus.

9. MoT update:

- The sector feels it is in a good place for compliance checks in Auckland over summer. This is aided by the Air New Zealand condition of carriage policy, as well as Jetstar reporting they feel they can do 40-50% of vaccination pass checking. Section 9(2)(h)
- [COMMERCIALY IN CONFIDENCE] The Cook straight ferries are looking at making vaccination status or testing requirements as a condition of carriage which would be in alignment with the Air New Zealand Policy.
- Smaller airlines have raised they would like to follow Air New Zealand's condition of carriage policy, however testing capacity in some smaller regions is very limited and thus this approach is not possible. Smaller airlines are exploring options.
- MoT does not consider they are in a position to ask industry to carry anyone who does not meet health requirements including those who have been in Location of Interest, symptomatic or are a positive case.

10. Police Update:

- There was a significant workshop this morning regarding compliance, with a governance meeting occurring this afternoon. A pathway forward will be put to CCB next meeting.

11. DIA update:

- The CPF is a complex operating environment for local government with most councils touching every element of the framework. Councils are currently working out what the framework looks like for them. Noting a live issue around council meetings, their processes and how these are managed.
- Councils are trying to balance democracy and fulfilling their civic functions while maintaining health and safety of staff and public.
- Local Government NZ are working well to connect elected officials in the regional leaderships' groups. Local government connection into RLGs varies across the country. DIA are working with those not as well connected to improve this.
- Two RLG key functions have been identified, the first is the provision of regional advice on -health factors and secondly to oversee and enable effective locally-led care in the community. The sub roles of RLGs is to come.
- DIA flagged local councils are likely to push back on the intent of the framework and impacts to public facilities with vaccinated versus unvaccinated access. This is not an immediate issue but of note for the future.

12. C4C update:

[IN-CONFIDENCE]

- Regional service commission roles in RLG is being socialised and expected to go well.
 - The housing position is challenging. A stocktake of what is available has been compared with the demand and supply, based on modelling, and has highlighted the constraints of the environment. There have been conversations with MoH to ensure most of what is available as emergency housing fits under the self-isolation guidelines.
 - Temporary accommodation addresses have been provided to MoH to enable early connection if someone is self-isolating.
13. Information is being sought to inform ongoing decisions. The Chair highlighted there may be requests for information and updates on information to enable a dashboard across the system to be built to increase awareness for the future.
14. The Chair requested the group remain poised to react if something comes up. The next planned NRG is Tuesday and any changes will be communicated through normal channels.

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COVID-19: Domestic response

Date: 28 November 2021, 1015hrs

National Response Group meeting

All time markers recorded in NZT

Public health and transitional planning updates

1. The Chair opened the meeting.
2. MoH update:
 - Yesterday there was Public Health Risk Assessment – caveating there is only a few days' worth of information regarding the new variant. This assessment led to putting restrictions on a number of African countries as a cautious approach.
 - The UK has had 2 cases of the new strain from southern African country. The UK has also added Angola and Zambia to their high risk countries list.
 - MoH are comfortable with MIQ approach which is in place.
 - Arrivals into the Netherlands were required to test negative then went into community. Therefore, more cases are likely.
 - Australia is looking to reinstate interstate borders this is partly due to some states not having MIQ.
 - MoH stated PCR testing will identify a positive case but will not identify the strain. Whole Genome Sequencing will still be required to determine strain.
 - MoH have confidence in the current procedures for returnees and will not be changing at this point.
3. MoT stated that while there are no direct flights from Seychelles and Zambia, people could come to New Zealand through indirect flights. Therefore, once more information is available, we may need to consider whether the Seychelles and Zambia should be considered high risk.
4. MFAT highlighted there is a Belgium case which came from Egypt, which may suggest wider spread of the new strain across Europe.
5. MFAT as noted there are a large list of countries imposing restrictions on travel to and from Southern Africa. New Zealanders have had three routes out of South Africa the past few days through Singapore via Dubai. MFAT went on to note the risk beyond this weekend of people coming here is lower as routes to come to New Zealand become increasing more difficult from Africa countries. The last flight coming from South Africa is Sunday lunch time locally.
6. MPI questioned maritime routes. It was confirmed the Maritime rules remain in place.
7. MBIE has been analysing the data available on countries which have had restrictions imposed. The most pressing issue is an individual from a party of 5 who arrived from South Africa 7 days is due to leave MIQ today, with another 8 due to leave tomorrow. MoH confirmed the MBIE CE has the authority to hold MIQ personnel for longer duration if the health risk factors require, also stating the ABO requires 14 days in MIQ for travellers from high risk countries.
8. Crown Law confirmed the only change to the ABO is the adding and removal of high risk countries from Schedule 3. There will be no change to the length of stay in MIQ. These changes will be done by Midnight tonight.
9. MoT sought approval to get guidance to airlines. Chair and MoT to touch base after meeting.

[IN-CONFIDENCE]

10. MoT also highlighted that currently those travelling from high risk countries are required to obtain a negative PDT test from an approved lab which are on MoH website, however this may not be ready in time for the changes to come into place at midnight.
11. The Chair outlined the need for a QFT type posture required going forward.
12. DPMC Planning and Readiness will reach out to agencies in the week ahead on contingency planning focused on new variants.
13. MoH noted new information is coming in but as the picture is being built expectation management is key. There are a lot of unknowns at the moment and it will take time to analyse the data.
14. MPI asked to have early heads up for any cases which have been at the border due to risk to frontline staff.
15. NEMA requested communications to the regional Leadership groups tomorrow to strengthen the system we are building.
16. MFAT noted the need to be able to give heads up to significant African countries. Also reminding the NRG of the consular responsibilities and need time to produce the communications. Offered MoH a channel to ask countries questions.
17. The Chair summarised the meeting and concluded with a request to MFAT for a fusing of diplomatic post insights on global responses to Omicron variant. The key focus being on risk mitigation techniques and scientific evidence. The first of these reports will aim to be available to share with system officials on Tuesday 30th November.
18. The chair closed the meeting.

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COVID-19: Domestic response

Date: 30 November, 1400hrs

National Response Group meeting

All time markers recorded in NZT

Public health and transitional planning updates

1. The Chair opened the meeting thanking agencies on the effort to produce sector guidance over the last week.
2. The Chair invited the group to provide an update on Omicron, including from MoH, BEB and MIQ.
3. MoH update:
 - a. Public Health Risk Assessment has been signed off this morning by MoH DG and is with Ministers. This advice outlines confidence remains in the systems and processes we have in place, however suggested MIQ stays for very high-risk countries change to 10 days opposed to 14 days. This is due to operational challenges and capacity limits to maintain cohorting for 14 days. The Public Health position supports a 10 day stay with cohorting being more important than a 14 day stay.
4. MIQ update:
 - a. MIQ confirmed a policy change to the length of stay has large operational implications. MIQ are waiting for direction from MoH on how long those from very high risk countries will be required to stay in MIQ.
 - b. There are direct impacts on the MIAS Voucher system with ~1,200 vouchers not being released today due to potential capacity constraints resulting from the 14 day stay.
 - c. MIQ highlighted the need for a decision as soon as possible, earmarking 06 December as the next decision point. Until then likely to be 14 day stay.
 - d. Crown Law confirmed the drafting instructions from the Order changes states 14 days in MIQ or those coming from very high risk countries.
5. Customs updated the Group on the role of BEB in securing our borders in light of Omicron.
 - a. Customs advised BEB is the appropriate apparatus to coordinate a linked up AOG border approach but would be seeking direction from health on the risk posed.
 - b. Customs noted there is a potential impact on Reconnecting New Zealand stepped approach. The impact remains unknown at this time.
6. MFAT update on global insights:
 - a. There are at least 15 countries which have transmission of Omicron. Countries are starting to think about how to tweak border barriers to align to the risk.
 - b. It has been reported through Post that 12 people have approached the High Commission in South Africa for help to date. More requests are expected in coming days.

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7. DPMC Policy update on the CPF:
 - a. DPMC policy provided an update on decisions yesterday. Decision was taken to move from 2359 02 December, with a number of North Island regions beyond Auckland and Northland to be at Red, remaining at Orange. The decision to include wider regions was in part with Iwi feedback to provide additional protection due to their lower vaccination coverage and likely high travel of people from Auckland. These settings are being put in place as a transitional precaution.
 - b. DPMC Policy have begun work on the Cabinet paper due 13 December which will be the first review of the new settings. At this stage there is unlikely to be any setting changes.
 - c. Policy are working on a process is being worked out for regular review cycle, similar to AL review process. A big difference is the role of Regional Leadership Groups and some structure is being developed for this.
 - d. Policy highlighted the call to use Territorial Local Authority boundaries with the change to the new framework was due to operational implications. It was stressed this does not take away from the RLGs role.
8. Amber Bill provided a read out of CCB this morning:
 - a. Carl Crafer provided an update on Summer Readiness including an update on Care in Communities workstream. Reported level of Iwi discomfort, they are still advocating for a hard border around Northland until 90% vaccination rate completed. RLG work is underway.
9. MoH updated on the health system in light of the transition to the CPF.
 - a. PHUs are concerned with Aucklanders traveling to regions which are not prepared for an influx of people. This is exacerbated by the system being tired.
10. Police update:
 - a. NZ police reported high level of anxiety in operating the new model. Orange portion between Auckland and Waikato will require current permissions to come through the hard border which will remain until 15 December. This is likely to generate complexity for staff and will rely on Government communications to clarify.
 - b. NZ Police stated on the AoG compliance front, the team is geared to run to the AL system. From 03-15 there is a temporary solution in place to support the transition, with a more permanent solution being built in this time.
11. DIA provided an update on regional feedback.
 - a. In general, the webinar session yesterday was viewed positively, with a partnership approach on how CPF could run. It was noted RLGs are all at different stages and conversation on what needs to be done to strengthen them for CPF. Councils are looking at the detail and understanding how they adapt the framework to local needs.
 - b. There is a meeting with Local Government Webinar 02 December at 1600. The chair noted there will be guidance provided in the webinar on how RLGs

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will need to provide advice into the centre. A timeline on what this looks like is underway but needs final approval.

12. C4C update:

- a. Welfare support arrangements are ready to go for Friday. Working through some welfare assessment details with MoH regarding the system that is used to push them through. Regions reported they are looking in good shape and conversations are underway with providers around the country. On track to be in a good place within the month, in time for the scale of response.

13. MPI update:

- a. Operating guidance went out last night to the sectors, noting this is an ongoing piece of work. Expect nuances to appear over the next week as sectors gain familiarity with the processes.
- b. Request for contact point into the RLGs from a rural support point of view.

14. MoT update:

- a. Tweaks to sector guidance required due to the announcements yesterday on CPF region colours.
- b. It was noted a workshop on how unwell people are moved over summer is required.
- c. Work is underway to look at what compliance is needed at Auckland airport during the transition period from 14 Dec -16 Jan.
- d. [COMERCIALLY IN-CONFIDENCE] Confirmed today that all Cook Island ferries will have the same vaccination requirements as Air NZ.

15. Comms update:

- a. The announcements went well, feedback has been received which will guide comms in the next few days.
- b. There is a planned significant website change on Thursday night to reflect and align to the new framework.

16. The Chair closed the meeting by apologising to those who could not provide an update, due to time. Asked those who have any agenda items for Thursday to please email these in for inclusion on Thursday.

COVID-19: Domestic response

Date: 02 December, 1400hrs

National Response Group meeting

All time markers recorded in NZT

Public health and transitional planning updates

1. The Chair opened the meeting with a situational update
 - a) The CPF is going live at 2559hrs tonight; and an Ops clearing house is being set up twice daily at DPMC at 0900hrs and 1600hrs to work through unresolved issues.
 - b) DPMC policy are preparing work to change testing requirements for crossing the Auckland boundary. The paper will seek to change requirements, so this applied only to those who are unvaccinated. A paper is being drafted Ministers
 - c) Boundary maps – Due to file size, request agency GIS staff request to access files. DPMC can send out individual maps to agencies, if requested.
 - d) NMP in final sign out, should be with agencies tomorrow.
 - e) Regional guidance material being developed. Can expect in the next 4-5 days, pending Ministerial decisions.
 - f) A transport meeting will be held later today to work through transportation of positive cases over Christmas.
 - g) Document outing key decision cycle timings was sent out earlier today. Noted there could be updates to come.
 - h) A cross agency workshop is planned for 14 December to check preparedness for Christmas holiday period.
2. MoH update:
 - a) Preparing for transfer of Care in Communities to MSD tomorrow, noting some MSD map discrepancies.
 - b) A number of regional workforce pressures. Likely to continue as we move into summer season.
 - c) Current outbreak is showing a slow decline in cases. Unknown what will transpire from 15 December border change, but could expect an increase in numbers, with additional regions impacted.
 - d) There are several schools in the media. Work underway with education sector to ensure the health advice provided to schools is consistent across regions.
 - e) A cluster is developing in Taranaki. This is being worked on today.
3. MSD reported looking positive and from system ready to go. The health system changes occur later today and will be tested throughout the night. RC and RPSC have been busy working in regions both across agency and between groups to bring them on the journey.

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4. PSC provided an update on staffing. Noted there are workforce pressures and fatigue but agencies working well to manage these. Noted they are in regular contact with relevant RLG stakeholders and prepared to facilitate surge workforce support if required
5. DIA updated there is a sense of nervousness at the local level, but local governments are as ready as they can be for the moment, based on what information is available. Meeting at 1600 today to talk to Mayors and Chairs, to work through issues they are facing. Expect unsettledness while work through next few weeks, but confident in measures in place that have been set up to support.
6. DPMC Comms update:
 - a) The new website should be ready by 2000 tonight. Most of the content is ready to go, and a pack is being prepared for MPs on FAQs and key messaging. Campaign is being finalised for go-live tomorrow.
 - b) Noted due to website architecture change, there is a chance hyperlinks will break with the update. They should be redirected but if agencies notice this, they are to email DPMC website.
7. NZ Police:
 - a) Noted infringements will not be in place until mid-next week, due to complexities of the order and the time it takes to change the infringement network. A workaround is in place allowing notices to be issued later.
 - b) Confusion internal and external on movement. Biggest challenge will be 15 December with removal of the barrier and managing expectations on Auckland checks. The challenge balancing community expectations and legislative powers for Police.
8. MFAT will provide a Tuesday/ Friday report on international Omicron insights. 35 countries have restrictions on 6 or more African states, with over 30 countries detecting Omicron. The Chair noted a drop to weekly reporting will be fine, if required.
9. Transport commented they are as ready as can be and will be monitoring unintended operational consequences of the CPF policy that may need to be raised for consideration.
10. MPI reported nothing further to report.
11. NEMA commented a lot of work in RLG space and chances of concurrent event over the summer period is high. Reiterated CDEM staff need to be ready to respond.
12. Legal updated the framework is ready to be imbedded tomorrow. Noted litigation is underway, including a Waitangi tribunal which will challenge the timing of the transition to the CPF, seeking consideration a higher vaccination of Maori population.
13. Customs noted their focus remains on RNZ. Work is on track to commence phase 1 on 16 January, but there are some significant matters that require further work (i.e compliance and monitoring).
14. The Chair closed the meeting by thanking Graham Maclean for his work as COVID-19 Response Manager.

COVID-19: Domestic response

Date: 07 December, 1400hrs

National Response Group meeting

All time markers recorded in NZT

Advice in preparation for CPF Cabinet review

1. The Chair opened outlining meeting aim was to prepare system information in preparation for the upcoming CPF review, next week.
2. MoH update:
 - a) The PH risk assessment is still underway. It went reasonably well but realised some areas of the country that need additional work to be considered for regions that are Red. A second assessment will be held tomorrow morning.
 - b) Omicron advice was provided yesterday, with the intent to revisit today as more information comes to light. Many unknowns remain.
3. The Chair updated that DPMC has received 15/16 RLG checklists.
4. Treasury is going to provide economic input into DPMC policy later this afternoon.
5. MPP had nothing further to report.
6. DPMC comms has research on public attitudes/ sentiments from pre-transition as well as a report on attitudes towards the transition now. Can provide this later today.
7. The Chair opened a discussion on the ability to operationalise restrictions:
 - a) C4C - Since Thursday, MSD continue to work closely with Health to dock in the welfare system and expect this to go live tomorrow. Overall, on track and the system is well prepared for summer.
 - b) MOH – confirmed the welfare system went live though 0800 number on Friday, with the online system is still in progress. Due to the pace, a handover between providers remains ongoing, including working through consent and privacy concerns. There is high level anxiety in Auckland/ Northland with the transition. MoH in conversation with Pharmacies on RAT testing availability, confirming there are constraints to make these widely accessible.
 - c) NZ Police – Northland checkpoints. Ongoing challenges with the legality on implementation and noted the closer they are to the existing boundary, the better. Extra staff going into Northland from 14 Dec- 10 January to support through these phases. Timeframes for extended checkpoints are still being worked through, at a minimum will be 7 days, before transitioning to a mobile approach to provide some ongoing reassurance to vulnerable communities.
 - d) Transport - starting to have some small issues pop up which are being worked through. Work progressing across agencies on transportation of positive cases, over summer.
 - e) MIQ – Working through contingency planning, including transferring possible Isolation into Quarantine facilities in CHCH, Wtgn and Rotorua. Work underway with transport provider to scale up over summer.

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8. Group discussed the ability of positive cases to travel via plane. Work remains ongoing to develop the process map on this. MoH commented the summer travel guidelines continue to outline if you are safe to drive, then drive home. Do it sensibly, stop infrequently and use PPE.
9. DPMC policy commented they are in a good place for getting information for the Cabinet paper, with agencies input coming in today.
10. MoH commented the cases in Auckland with numbers declining, and testing remains high which is promising heading into Christmas. Nationwide in a good place for testing, including ongoing wastewater testing.
11. The Chair closed the meeting by confirming there were no further risks or issues to be raised by the group. DPMC will confirm timing and date of next NRG meeting, and reminded agencies to provide summer rosters for the Ministers pack.

Released under the Official Information Act 1982

National Response Leadership Team meeting at 1100hrs 23 June 2021.

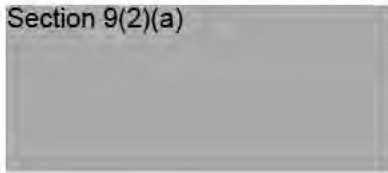
Member attendees: Brook Barrington (Chair), Ashley Bloomfield, Peter Mersi, Carolyn Tremain, Una Jagose, Christine Stevenson, Andy Coster, Graham MacLean

Advice to Ministers:

1. Alert Level 2 is our baseline position, go up to Alert Level 3 if requires.
 - 1.1. Alert Level 2 through the weekend to 2359hrs 27 June.
 - 1.2. But strong communications that if we get a case, situation may unfold and we may have to extend AL 2.
2. Provide strengthened guidance on mask-wearing in Alert Level 2.
 - 2.1. Officials will look at options to make mask-wearing required.
3. Emphasis on importance of communications.
4. Use agreed-boundary divisions for Wellington Region.

Section 9(2)(a)

Signed

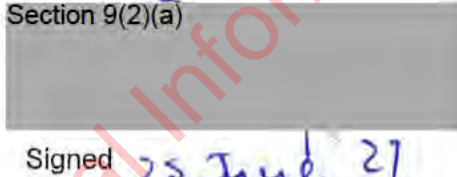


Graham MacLean
Chair, National Response Group

Section 9(2)(a)

Signed

25 June 21



Brook Barrington
Chair, National Response Leadership Team

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National Response Leadership Team advice to Ministers regarding the domestic response Alert Level in Wellington region

Date: 27 June 2021, 1000hrs

Member attendance: Brook Barrington (Chair), Ashely Bloomfield, Peter Mersi, Carolyn Tremain, Una Jagose, Christine Stevenson, Chris Seed, Cheryl Barnes, Glenn Dunbier (for Andy Coster).

Other: Graham MacLean (National Response Group Chair), Hamish Rogers, Richard Schmidt, Rae Nathan (NRLT Secretariat).

Public health assessment

1. Saturday 26 June 1530hrs, a Public Health Risk Assessment was completed for the Wellington to Sydney Visitor regarding the current Alert Level 2 status.
2. Based on the Public Health Risk Assessment, public health recommends holding Alert Level 2 for the Greater Wellington region, including Wairarapa, for a further 48 hours until Tuesday 29 June.
3. Public health recommends these considerations to decrease to Alert Level 1 if the following points are met:
 - 3.1. Test results for at least 95% of all close contacts including 100% of symptomatic contacts, and a high degree of confidence that contacts are abiding to isolation constraints.
 - 3.2. No new cases identified in the Greater Wellington region who were infectious whilst not in quarantine.

Advice to Ministers regarding Alert Level in Wellington region

Based on the public health assessment and wider system considerations, the National Response Leadership Team recommends:

4. **Extension of Alert Level 2 settings in Wellington region until Tuesday 29 June 2359hrs.**
5. **Review of Alert Level 2 settings within 48 hours.**
 - 5.1. **Note the reviews of Alert Levels and of QFT pause with all of Australia are aligned.**

Signed

Graham MacLean
Chair, National Response Group

Signed

Brook Barrington
Chair, National Response Leadership Team

09 July 2021 – National Response Leadership Team meeting 1430hrs

Members: Brook Barrington (Chair), Peter Mersi, Ben King, Cheryl Barnes, Carolyn Tremain, Ashley Bloomfield, Andy Coster, Aaron Martin, Rebecca Kitteridge.

Attendees: Richard Schmidt, Megan Main, Shona Meyrick, Terry Brown, Graham MacLean, Ruth Fairhall, Griere Cox, Rae Nathan, Amber Bill.

Actions over next 24 to 48 hours

NRLT-agreed leads:

1. CEs of MOT, MBIE, BEB. Broadly, MBIE on what and where; MOT on timing of arrivals; Customs on airport operationalising managed return red flights.
 - 1.1. MOT on airlines and aircrew.
 - 1.2. MBIE on MIQ availability, capping numbers of travellers on flights. Health team will support on prioritisation model.
 - 1.3. BEB on airport engagement (Auckland and Christchurch), flight planning, deep clean, cohorts, etc.
2. COVID-19 Group to lead on public information and communications.
3. Legal and drafting will be instructed by lead senior official.
4. To determine and come back to NRLT: One senior official to manage the next 24-48 hours between Peter Mersi, Carolyn Tremain, and Christine Stevenson.

Advice to be produced and weekend timeframes:

5. To manage traveller numbers and MIQ spots, advice on balance of prioritisation criteria and first-come-first-served approach, due to Ministers before Saturday 10 July.
6. Legal and drafting instructions to PCO. Over the weekend (10/11 July).
7. Investigate the immigration criteria differences between red flight and green flights. Refine criteria of red flights before Tuesday to allow for:
 - 7.1. Individuals eligible for red flights if they are ordinarily resident or citizens of New Zealand, this is typically a green flight eligibility.

Minutes

8. Material of ambiguity is on the prioritisation and self-declared criteria process. Delegation question on enforcement of criteria.
 - 8.1. Balance of first-come-first-served and prioritisation criteria that is used for emergency accommodation.
 - 8.2. Self-declaration of meeting prioritisation criteria. High-trust model.
 - 8.3. If there are MIQ spaces left over after prioritisation, then adopt a first-come-first served model.
9. MIQ availability from midnight Monday there will be 1000 rooms available; from Tuesday MIQ will cap the number of travellers allowed on flights to New Zealand and into MIQ.

Confirmation of Ministerial decisions on 09 July 1330hrs regarding New South Wales

10. Pause the scheduled flights from New South Wales.
11. Flights would aim to commence at the earliest viable time on Tuesday 13 July, subject to operational aspects being worked through. Requirement of 14 days in MIQ. No requirement of PDT on managed return red flight.
12. Those who go into MIQ will not pay.
13. High-trust model for enabling the prioritisation criteria.

Signed,

Brook Barrington
Chair, National Response Leadership Team

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National Response Leadership Team 0800hrs Friday 09 July 2021

Minutes, actions, COVID-19 system response to unfolding situation in New South Wales

Summary of NRLT discussion

Advice to Ministers:

1. Situation on ground is not stable, not contained. Evolving and increasing risk to New Zealand.
2. Extend pause with New South Wales.
 - a. Direct airlines to stop the managed return flights (green flights with PDT requirement, due to commence tomorrow 10 July) for 72 hours *at a minimum*.
 - b. Public communications discourage New Zealanders from travelling to New South Wales.
3. Direct officials to provide advice and set of options for Ministers to consider on enabling New Zealanders to return from New South Wales. Initial options discussed at NRLT:
 - a. Red flights into MIQ. Rely on contingency room capacity, consistent use of cohorts.
 - b. Red flights into MIQ. Break up cohorts to increase supply of MIQ rooms to meet demand.
 - c. Enforced self-isolation, with compliance checks.
 - d. Self-isolation, high-trust model.

Operationalisation considerations

4. BEB and NRG lead advice, commence today 9 July with an update to NRLT before 1330hrs.

Considerations and options:

5. If the time comes where pause cannot be continued, red flights enabled and travellers go to MIQ with day-five test. Considerations:
 - a. Demand should be managed so supply can meet it.
 - b. If supply cannot meet demand then enforcement of self-isolation compliance would need to be high.
 - c. MIQ supply and demand figures. Industry demand figures.
 - d. Legal framework needed to hold individuals for 5 days in MIQ.
 - e. Cost to travellers (eg of PDT, MIQ).
6. Transition of green flights into red flights, and prioritisation/criteria required.
 - a. Criteria for individuals to return, sustainability of cohort-ing, legal framework.
7. Approach to getting New Zealanders back from NSW, and how that relates to approach to getting New Zealanders back from India.
 - a. NRG to scope, BEB to lead.

National Response Leadership Team advice to Ministers regarding the situations unfolding in Australia and impacts to New Zealand COVID-19 system

Date: 14 July 2021, 2000hrs

Member attendance: Rebecca Kitteridge (acting Chair National Response Leadership Team), Griere Cox (acting DCE DPMC COVID-19 Group), Carolyn Tremain, Peter Mersi, Christine Stevenson, Ben King (acting CE MFAT), Gary Knowles (Acting CE NEMA), Caralee McLiesh, Una Jagose, Andy Coster, Caroline McElroy (in place of Ashley Bloomfield)

Other: Graham MacLean (National Response Group Chair), Amber Bill, Rae Nathan, Aaron Wright, Shona Meyrick.

Minutes

1. The National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) Chair opened the meeting.
2. The NRLT discussed the advice from the National Response Group (NRG).
3. The NRLT Chair agreed with the NRG and public health assessments regarding Victoria and that we will continue to monitor and watch situations as it unfolds, with preparations to pause Quarantine Free Travel (QFT) in case that becomes necessary.
4. Christine Stevenson provided an update on the Viking Bay and Playa Zahara vessels.
5. The NRLT heard from Graham MacLean, Chair of the NRG, regarding how the system is responding to unexpected concurrent events and that it presents capacity challenges to the system.
6. The NRLT discussed the precautionary approach to QFT, the intensity of the New South Wales lockdown, and the interstate travel challenges (eg seeing higher compliance with lockdown but border breaches occur).
7. The NRLT discussed the pace at which the New Zealand system is able to cope with the rapidly changing situations in Australian states.
8. The NRLT discussed that the shipping vessel domestic situation puts pressure on the system, and the addition of the NSW and Victoria QFT approaches can lead to a riskier operating environment.
9. The NRLT agreed that New Zealand's response to the situation in Victoria should mirror the Victorian government's approach in that a QFT pause would be reasonable should Victoria go into lockdown.
10. The NRLT discussed that the system would be put under further pressure if the system needed to accommodate a returnee process for Victoria and New South Wales at the same time.
11. NRLT members noted that the system managing multiple responses concurrently raises questions on the longevity of the QFT arrangement and system more broadly.
12. The NRLT suggested to Graham MacLean that for the workshop Thursday 15 July the group members look at the pillars of the QFT approach to understand how current practice aligns.

National Response Leadership Team meeting

Date: 16 July 0800hrs

Member attendance: Rebecca Kitteridge (Acting NRLT Chair); Griere Cox (Acting DCE COVID-19 Group), Ben King (Acting CE MFAT), Caralee McLiesh, Peter Mersi, Shona Merrick (in place of Ashley Bloomfield), Caroline McElroy (in place of Ashley Bloomfield) Megan Main (in place of CE MBIE), Una Jagose

Other attendance: Amber Bill, Rae Nathan, Graham MacLean

Actions

Responses underway:

1. NRLT agreed the New South Wales 'pathway to green' responsibility will go to NRG with MOH public health advice, as standard.
2. NRLT agreed watching-brief for situation in Queensland, with MOH risk assessment this afternoon around 1530-1630hrs.
3. NRLT noted that there will be a review of the Victoria pause on Monday 19 July, as per NRG and MOH advice provided to Minister Hipkins yesterday 15 July.

Advice to Ministers

4. NRLT agreed that an overview paper of Trans-Tasman QFT to Minister Hipkins in two weeks with DPMC lead. To address lessons learned, system capacity risks, cost-benefit analysis, PDT, transmissibility of Delta variant.
5. Further advice today on managing the next 500 red flight managed return allocations for travellers from New South Wales from MBIE and MFAT.

Minutes

6. The National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) Chair opened the meeting.
7. The NRLT noted that as at this morning, officials at the border had not identified ineligible travellers on the flight late last night (15 July) and the flight early morning today (16 July).
8. NRLT noted that industry found it difficult to manage the exact timing of commencement of the pause, in relation to the scheduled flights.
9. The Chair opened a discussion on a what our system might see to be satisfied that green flights (managed return) could commence from New South Wales. The NRLT discussed that should New South Wales be in lockdown for 14 days, our system could respond in similar ways to previous approaches (eg Victoria green flights following 14 day lockdown).
10. The Chair opened a discussion on the pathway options if New South Wales moves from red (high risk) to green (lower risk) and how New Zealand might commence with green flights (managed return).
 - a. MOH are working on pathway options according to risk profile of travellers.
 - b. MOH IMT assessments on New South Wales will be completed as-normal to assess the risk.
11. The Chair of the National Response Group (NRG) Graham MacLean summarised the workshop on contingency planning held on 15 July. The A3 below reflects the key points.

- a. The NRLT heard that workshop members discussed strains on the workforce, that the response system is 'at capacity', and how that impacts on the system's ability to keep the virus out.
 - b. Section 9(2)(g)(i)
[Redacted]
 - c. The NRLT heard that senior officials found the contingency planning workshop to be very helpful and that officials will further work on specific scenario planning, and on what community isolation options may be available to travellers.
12. Section 9(2)(g)(i)
[Redacted]
13. The NRLT discussed that the return to original QFT might not be sustainable for the system and officials will continue to assess the future of QFT and what that might look like.
14. The NRLT agreed that responsibility for the New South Wales 'pathway to green' will go to the NRG as standard with MOH public health risk assessment input.

Below is the A3 from the cross-agency Contingency Planning workshop on multiple concurrent events, held by the Response and Planning team at DPMC COVID-19 Group on Thursday 15 July.

Multiple Concurrent COVID-19 Event Contingency Planning

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Background / Context

Two way QFT began with Australia on 19 April 2021. Since then, NZ has paused with all or part of Australia 5 times. Virus is mutating to be more transmissible and more infectious. To date, no country has been able to get ahead of containment through contact tracing measures.

Currently New Zealand is paused QFT with NSW and all flights from NSW are entering NZ through the airport Red Zone with passengers required to enter MIQ for 14 days. In addition there is an increasing risk in Victoria with COVID cases emerging.

Australian states are large with porous borders and it is possible for people to circumnavigate these, increasing risk. Australian border Averters have become a new emerging risk. These are Australian citizens who illegally exit NSW, and travel to NZ from another Australian state. From 05-12 July, there have been 55 Border averters identified. These people are putting additional capacity constraints on NZ MIQ system which is already close to capacity.

Currently there has been an allocation of 1,000 additional MIQ rooms for the NSW managed return flights. Demand has outstripped supply quickly and MIQ can no longer meet current the demand requirements. MIQ has also signalled there is no contingency for a domestic outbreak with both rooms at capacity and the workforce is under strain.

Until NZ is largely vaccinated, there is heightened risk especially with new variants. Currently, New Zealand is on Group 3 for vaccine rollout, with rest of population (Group 4) due to begin vaccinated by 28 July 2021.

Increase MIQ Capacity

Option: To provide increase capacity in MIF/MIQ, through the possibility of setting up a new MIF.

Benefits:

- Creates capacity in a system known to work, however this increase is closely linked to resource availability.

Constraints:

- Takes 3 months to stand up a new MIQF and money. There are also staffing restraints including health personnel.
- Not sustainable for prolonged period of time due to IPC protocols, staffing and maintenance requirements.
- The 500 contingency capacity was not built to be used for a sustained period of time.
- Currently there is no capacity for a domestic outbreak (until 29 July) putting pressure on self-isolation options however these are not options for everyone.

Considerations:

- Optimal for MIQ is 4,000 people across the border, and 500 contingency to be maintained.

DHB facilities

Option: To provide community isolation facilities as alternatives to MIQF's.

Benefits:

- Reduced pressure and focus on MIQF's

Constraints:

- Limited capacity, unable to deal with a large outbreak.
- Each region is only set up with approximately 5-6 rooms
- Hawkes Bay has around 150 rooms which could be an option however the assurance piece around this does not exist

Feasibility:

- This option is not possible for a prolonged period of time as its above and beyond the DHB capability, however could be used as a short term fix for the next month.

Shorter stays in MIQ

Option: To reduce pressure in MIQ split isolation through MIQ stay followed by self-isolation at home where possible.

Benefits:

- Self-isolation at home allows testing capability to be split across

Constraints:

- Requires policy decision and time to enact
- This cause operational constraints to the MIQ system.
- Self-isolation is a high trust model seeing risk increase.
- Self-isolation assurance as not been explored outside of an Alert level change setting.
- This may not see a high number of spaces freed up due to room stand-down times. Therefore capacity increase could be negligible.

Limit people entering NZ through offshore measures

Option: To provide additional measure which restrict people coming into New Zealand

Benefit:

- Keeps the risk off-shore

Constraints:

- Limited ability to manage risk offshore
- Risk is not the same as the risk border agencies are use to managing and there is the added complexity of interstate moment which cannot be followed.
- Airlines capacity to handle QFT is reducing. Compliance is not part of their role or their skill set. Airline resources are becoming more constrained.
- Interstate travel hard to monitor.
- If this requires 100% PDT checks this has impacts on core functions pending on timeframe

Outstanding questions:

- Does the messaging to travellers -Buyer beware - need a revision? Are we communicating what this actually means to travellers?
- Demand for QFT has reduced significantly with the latest changes with TT-QFT. The assumption of going into QFT was the economic benefit. Given what we have seen, is this still a realistic cost/ benefit balance with the pressure on the system (economic assessment?)

Common risks

- Any option needs to align to the reconnecting NZ risk appetite to manage COVID-19 across the border, prior to vaccine roll out completion. This will likely entail interim trade-offs (4-6 months)
- Another significant outbreak would see the system under a high pressure both resourcing but also sustainability (burnout), this introduces different types of risk to manage.



Cook Islands

A lot of work has been undertaken by the New Zealand COVID-19 Response system in preparation for a response to a case in the Cook Islands (CKI) which is focused on protecting their health system, prior to the completion of the vaccination programme. There is a planning assumption that any outbreak in CKI will come from NZ and therefore CKI will be treated as an extension of NZ.

The planned approach has been to get NZer's out who are at risk, to return to NZ as quick as possible. Due to MIQ being full the options to return are limited as a red zone return is not a current option. The system considers it would be best not to pause the QFT but let NZer's return home and follow public health guidelines. MoH advice would likely be to pause assess the risk and then resume.

Since the planning work has been undertaken;

- Delta variant and traditional ways of contact tracing and testing no longer work
- Vaccination of CKI people at 84%
- MIQ is at capacity

As a result response and decisions need to be harder and faster. New Zealand has noted there is a risk with isolation within the Cooks due to infrastructure constraints.

Note: October will see a one-way QFT from CKI to Australia.

Mariners

The maritime settings have been tested in the last week as a result of 2 people coming through the border and testing positive with results after they had boarded a vessel and left NZ waters. This situation resulted in 31 crew from multiple vessels having to enter MIQ and therefore putting additional strain on MIQ capacity. This has intern prompted internal discussions on **maritime border settings which be reviewed by Customs due in 30 days.**



Queenstown

The pause with NSW has seen a high number of border averters coming from NSW into QT. This has resulted in Queenstown systems and processes being tested and a number of questions being raised and discussed at a national and regional level. This has highlighted the need for ongoing planning regionally with support for the national system.

These questions include;

- What are the roles and responsibilities of each agency in the region?
- Clarity on who is in charge of leading a response regionally?
- Have we got the right people making the decisions across the nation, in the event of an outbreak?

Available options for border averters:

- Turn away passengers from border before come landside
- Get on to bus and move to MIQ in CHCH for 14 days
- Options being explored with MIQ and MoH in line with capacity constraints such as possible self-isolation amendment models

National Response Leadership Team meeting

Date: 20 July 2021, 1830hrs

Member attendance: Rebecca Kitteridge (Acting Chair, National Response Leadership Team), Griere Cox (Acting DCE COVID-19 Group), Graham MacLean (Chair, National Response Group), Peter Mersi, Ashley Bloomfield, Una Jagose, Megan Main (in place of Carolyn Tremain), Ben King (in place of Chris Seed), Struan Little (in place of Caralee McLiesh)

Other: Rae Nathan, Hamish Rogers, Aaron Wright, Liam McNamara,

Actions and agreement

1. The National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) considered the advice from the National Response Group (NRG) regarding the situation unfolding in South Australia and an approach to the QFT arrangement with all of Australia.

NRLT agreement regarding South Australia and a process for approaching the QFT arrangement with all of Australia

2. NRLT endorsed the following regarding advice on the situation unfolding in South Australia:
 - 2.1. Public health provide advice to Minister Hipkins tonight 20 July on a pause of QFT from South Australia to New Zealand.
 - 2.2. Public health recommended that flights over the next two days from South Australia can continue to New Zealand, travellers will need PDT.
 - 2.3. Public health recommended a review on 27 July.
3. NRLT endorsed the following regarding the COVID-19 system approach to QFT arrangement with all of Australia:
 - 3.1. DPMC-led process of detailed planning to operationalise a suspension of QFT with all of Australia.
 - 3.2. DPMC-led advice on suspension of QFT arrangement with all of Australia.
4. NRLT endorsed a three-phase plan for next few days:
5. Phase 1 (night of 20 July): Pause QFT with South Australia, commence from 2359hrs 20 July.
 - 5.1. Process: Public health advice to Minister Hipkins.
 - 5.2. Minister Hipkins announces tonight 20 July.
6. Phase 2 (21 and 22 July): Suspend QFT arrangement with all of Australia, detailed planning to operationalise to be completed by officials by COP Wednesday 22 July.
 - 6.1. Process: DPMC-led suspension advice prepared for Cabinet consideration.
 - 6.2. Wednesday 22 July: Section 9(2)(g)(i) MFAT increase travel advice, announces that Cabinet will meet regarding suspension with all of Australia.

6.3. Thursday 23 July: Cabinet meet to consider advice on suspension of QFT with all of Australia.

7. Phase 3: Officials produce advice on returning eligible individuals to return to New Zealand from the whole of Australia.

Minutes

8. The Chair opened the meeting. The Chair opened for discussion on South Australia and wider assessment of the QFT arrangement with the whole of Australia.
9. The Chair invited the Director-General of Health, Ashley Bloomfield, to debrief on the situation unfolding in South Australia.
 - 9.1. Public health recommended a pause of QFT with South Australia, effective from 2359hrs on 20 July. Expectation that the Minister will make an announcement tonight.
 - 9.2. DG Health noted that Ministers are keen to send a signal that the system is considering the system of QFT with all of Australia.
10. ADG Health noted that a condition for QFT is minimal or no community transmission in QFT partner jurisdiction, and what we are observing in Australia is distinct from this condition. The Delta variant is another key distinction. DG Health noted that New Zealand still has a long way to go in the vaccination programme and discussed the risks to the programme's success should New Zealand enter a lockdown due to COVID-19 cases, particularly if there is community transmission of the Delta variant.
11. The DG Health noted that the situation in Australia remains unstable. The COVID-19 system is acutely aware of travellers crossing Australian interstate borders, and travellers coming to New Zealand without meeting the proper requirements, and the pressure this puts on the system. NRLT members noted that the considerations and risks identified warrant a revisit of the whole QFT arrangement with Australia.
12. The Chair invited the Chair of NRG to debrief on what the NRG covered at 1715hrs.
13. The NRG Chair Graham MacLean summarised the key points raised in the NRG meeting, and recorded in the NRG advice.
14. NRLT members discussed the shipping vessel situations (now up to 3 vessels) presenting challenges to the COVID system, and noted that there are future, related, challenges that the system may need to endure.
 - 14.1. The NRLT agreed that after Australia situation is more stable, NRLT should meet to discuss shipping vessels and system approach to the challenges.**
15. NRLT members noted that the assessment of suspension or pause options should consider how that aligns to the *Reconnecting New Zealanders* strategy.
16. NRLT members noted that suspension of QFT will have implications for airlines, suspension is a relatively permanent state, and suspension may require industry to apply for funding to support retention of staff and funding toward commercial flights.

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National Response Leadership Team meeting

Date: 22 July 1630hrs

Member attendance: Rebecca Kitteridge (Acting NRLT Chair); Griere Cox (Acting DCE COVID-19 Group), Chris Seed, Struan Little (in place of Caralee McLiesh) Peter Mersi, Ashley Bloomfield, Suzanne Stew (in place of Carolyn Tremain), Aaron Martin (in place of Una Jagose), Graham MacLean.

Other attendance: Rae Nathan, Hamish Rogers, Aaron Wright, Chris Hinchcliffe, Heather Peacocke.

Minutes

1. The National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) Chair opened the meeting.
2. The Chair acknowledged the work put into drafting the QFT Cabinet paper.
3. The NRLT agreed the BEB is the lead for operationalisation of the Cabinet decisions.
4. The Chair noted for members that Cabinet made slight changes to the Cabinet paper that will be reflected in the Cabinet minute.
5. **The Chair discussed immediate term (22 and 23 July) work that needs to get underway following Cabinet decision.**
 - 5.1. Confirmed that communications strategy and planning work is underway. DPMC, Heather Peacocke, lead.
 - 5.2. DPMC confirmed that the public announcement will occur at 1330hrs tomorrow 23 July. Note this may change.
 - 5.3. Noted that MOT will engage with airlines regarding pause and suspension decisions in-confidence, and subject to discussion with Minister Hipkins' office with others in the aviation industry.
 - 5.4. The Chair confirmed that the BEB will lead the operationalisation of red flights from commencement of suspension (from 30 July), and will determine SROs.
 - 5.5. Confirmed that MFAT will work with MSD on consular and welfare support to individuals who require support if unable to return to New Zealand from Australia.
 - 5.6. Confirmed that MOT will discuss capacity planning with airlines and will provide information on the scale of demand back to COVID leads.
 - 5.7. Confirmed that MBIE's call centre line will be live tonight. MBIE acknowledged the support from MSD offered to staff the call-centre.
 - 5.8. Confirmed that the legislative drafting for a pause is in-train, legislative drafting for suspension will take more time and will be completed by 30 July.
 - 5.9. Confirmed that officials will provide advice to the Minister for COVID-19 response by 28 July on the timeframe of the pause.

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- 5.10. Confirmed that MFAT will increase the travel advisory in line with Ministerial announcement. Confirmed that MFAT will stand-up a consular support service for this response.
- 5.11. The NRLT discussed lead on day-three testing of those in self-isolation (to be required for travellers from Victoria). Ashley Bloomfield nominated that MOH take the lead, and MOH will draft section 70 orders to extend to individuals travelling to New Zealand from Victoria requiring those individuals to self-isolate and test.
- 5.12. Prime Minister's Office (PMO) confirmed that the Prime Minister is intending to call Australian, Niue, and Cook Islands equivalents, and that Minister Hipkins will call his Australian equivalent.
6. **The Chair discussed medium term (24 to 30 July) work that should get underway.**
- 6.1. Confirmed that MOT will take the lead on drafting advice on impacts of a suspension on industry operations (eg decisions regarding retention of infrastructure, capacity, and resources, and on potential for government support if required). The Chair asked that DPMC and the Treasury remain apprised of this advice as it is developed.
- 6.2. Confirmed that the BEB will scope the impacts and considerations for reactivating MIAS for the whole of Australia.
- 6.3. Confirmed that the BEB will take lead on compiling the data dashboard to reflect traveller numbers, etc.
7. **The Chair discussed longer term (from 30 July) work that needs to get underway.**
- 7.1. The Chair confirmed that DPMC will work on the triggers to recommence QFT with Australia: alignment to *Reconnecting New Zealanders* strategy, public health advice, progress with vaccination programme, redefine conditions for QFT that reflect the change in context and settings.

Signed

Section 9(2)(a)

Rebecca Kitteridge

Acting Chair, National Response
Leadership Team

Signed

Graham MacLean

Chair, National Response Group

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Amendment to 22 July National Response Leadership Team meeting minutes – record of attendance

Not recorded on the final Minute, but in attendance at the 22 July NRLT at 1630hrs were:

Member attendees:

- Christine Stevenson
- Glenn Dunbier (in place of Andy Coster)
- Gary Knowles

Other attendees:

- Andrew Milne
- Rose King
- David Taylor
- Matt McGrath
- Jessica Gorman

Rae Nathan
Secretariat, National Response Leadership Team

Released under the Official Information Act 1982

National Response Leadership Team meeting

Date: 17 August 2021, 1530hrs

Member attendance: Rebecca Kitteridge (Acting NRLT Chair), Ashley Bloomfield, Cheryl Barnes, Carolyn Tremain, Peter Mersi, Graham MacLean, Chris Seed, Una Jagose, Carolyn Schwalger, Richard Bargh (for Christine Stevenson), Brook Barrington, Caralee McLiesh, Andy Coster.

Other attendance: Rae Nathan (NRLT Secretariat), Hamish Rogers, Ian Towne, Juliet Gerard, Ben McBride, Ruth Fairhall, Peter Hughes, Chris Scahill, Bridget White, Richard Schmidt, Tania Warburton

Purpose

This briefing records the discussion at the National Response Leadership Team meeting regarding a domestic response to a positive case identified in Auckland.

Next steps

1. Ministers with Powers to Act will meet at 1630hrs 17 August to consider advice from Chief Executives on shifting Alert Levels.


Minutes

2. Rebecca Kitteridge, Acting Chair of the National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) opened the meeting.
3. The Chair invited Ashley Bloomfield to debrief on the positive case identified in Auckland:
 - 3.1. Individual was symptomatic on Saturday 15 August and infectious period dates to Thursday 12 August. Currently no obvious link to the border, or known source of the positive case.
 - 3.2. Individual travelled to Coromandel Town over the weekend and went to a crowded pub in Coromandel Town on 15 August. Locations of interest will go on the Ministry of Health website as information becomes available. Individual was a regular user of the COVID-19 Tracer App.
 - 3.3. Section 70 notice will apply to all individuals at locations of interest. Individuals located as at locations of interest will need to isolate immediately.
 - 3.4. Genome sequencing will be available at approximately midnight tonight 17 August. Wastewater testing will be conducted around Coromandel Town.
 - 3.5. Working assumption that the case is infected with Delta variant of the virus.
4. Ministry of Health officials have discussed that, at a minimum, a shift to Alert Level (AL) 4 should be in effect for five days and effective across Auckland and Coromandel.
5. The Chair opened the discussion to AL options that Chief Executives could propose to Ministers.

Discussion on Alert Level options

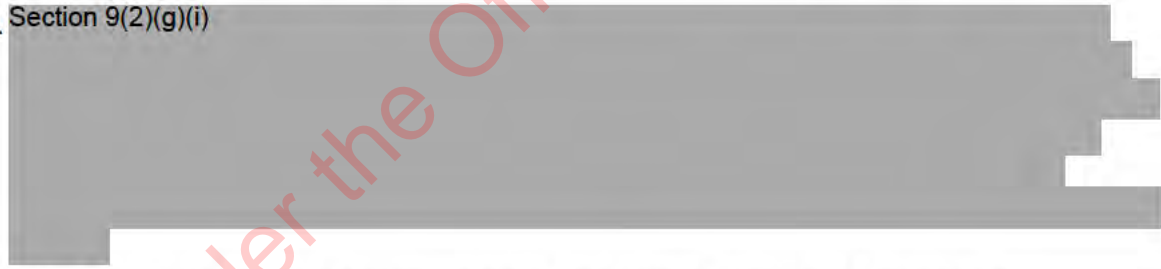
6. Commencement of any AL shift should go into effect at 2359hrs tonight 17 August. Exemptions should allow for individuals to travel home. Further exemptions for businesses will be drafted.
7. The principal public health concern is the undetected chains of transmission, potentially around the country, and that officials do not know the origin of this case. Much information is unknown at this stage.

Section 9(2)(g)(i)



9. NRLT Members discussed that at this stage of the lockdown and possible undetected community transmission, the public health imperative supports one AL across the country.

10. Section 9(2)(g)(i)



11. NRLT Members heard that regional leads and Civil Defence and Emergency Management functions are in place to deliver support under AL 4.

Discussion points from the National Response Group


12. Alert Level boundaries option sets discussed at NRG:

- 12.1. AL 4 for Auckland and Coromandel, AL 2 for rest of North Island and rest of country.

- 12.2. AL 4 for Auckland and Coromandel, AL 3 for rest of North Island and rest of country.

13. Emphasis from NRG was that if there was to be a boundary, it would be better to move ALs across islands rather than regions (eg AL 4 for North Island, AL 3 for South Island).

14. Section 9(2)(g)(i)



Section 9(2)(g)(i)

15. A boundary option workstream has commenced, however, and will work closely with MOH, MBIE, with a coordinating function from DPMC.
16. Clarity on Cook Islands returnees – Cook Islands may stop QFT with New Zealand and we may need to operationalise enabling kiwis to return to New Zealand.
17. Schools are well prepared to operationalise AL shifts. Work will continue to clarify how ALs will work with students who live in hostels (ie boarding schools).
18. Welfare supports will come into effect through their channels. Debbie Power, CE of MSD, will convene a Caring for Communities meeting with CEs.
19. On exemptions, CE of MBIE said that the communications currently suggest that MPI has the lead on exemptions. This does not make sense for exemptions that are not related to primary industries. The CE of MPI agreed that the lead needs to be shared and communications should reflect that.
20. System is prepared to deliver. Clear and concise communications tonight will be essential, both to the public and to public service to deliver.

Signed

Rebecca Kitteridge
Acting Chair, National Response Leadership Team

National Response Leadership Team meeting

Date: 18 August 2021, 0900hrs

Member attendance: Brook Barrington (NRLT Chair), Rebecca Kitteridge, Ashley Bloomfield, Cheryl Barnes, Carolyn Tremain, Peter Mersi, Graham MacLean, Chris Seed, Una Jagose, Carolyn Schwalger, Richard Bargh (for Christine Stevenson), Caralee McLiesh, Andy Coster.

Other attendance: Rae Nathan (NRLT Secretariat), Peter Hughes, Hamish Rogers, Ben McBride, Richard Schmidt.

Purpose

This briefing records the discussion at the National Response Leadership Team meeting regarding the Alert Level 4 in effect across the country.

Next steps

1. National Response Leadership Team meet daily at 0830hrs to receive updates on key actions arising across the response.

Minutes

2. The Chair of the National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) opened the meeting.
3. The Chair invited Ashley Bloomfield to debrief on further information received regarding the positive cases identified:
 - 3.1. Overnight to morning of 18 August, four more confirmed positive cases. One (case B) is a work colleague of the case identified yesterday, the other three are flatmates relating to case B.
 - 3.2. Public health response will gear up today, following up with individuals and possible close contacts, and ensuring people isolate.
 - 3.3. A key mitigation over the next 24 hours is to minimise movement.
 - 3.4. ESR modelling suggests there could be 50 to 100 further positive cases in the community given that it is the Delta variant and nature of the individuals infected (ie one is a nurse at Auckland hospital).
4. Ashley Bloomfield also noted processes are being worked through to enable the vaccination programme to continue through AL4, while keeping people safe (staff and patients).
5. Update on immediate actions
 - 5.1. Cabinet meeting on Friday regarding Alert Level posture, a Cabinet paper will be required. It will reflect the completed boundary work and exemptions work.
 - 5.1.1. Boundary work will be completed within 72hrs of Alert Level 4 in effect. DPMC lead.
 - 5.1.2. Exemptions work will be completed within 24hrs today. DPMC lead.
 - 5.2. Orders for concurrent Alert Levels (eg AL 4 and AL 3 simultaneously, or other combination). Orders will be drafted in case it is needed. PCO and DPMC lead.

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- 5.3. Compassionate exemptions work will be completed shortly and is dependent on the duration of lockdown.
- 5.4. Education exemption to pick up devices contactless will be worked through today between MOH and MOE. Teams will work through this today, to operationalise tomorrow.
- 5.5. More testing sites will become available via DHBs, they will be stood up immediately.

Roundtable on operations and actions – key points for updates to NRLT on 19 August
 Note: this table of key points was circulated to NRLT members on 18 August 2021.

Key points for updates to the NRLT on 19 August	Lead
Update: Surge capacity for testing (if needed).	MOH
Update: Exemption to enable contactless pick up of education devices. <i>Note: Aiming to be operational tomorrow 19 August.</i>	MOH / MOE
Update: Relief and community support at testing stations addressing long queues. <i>Note: CDEM, DHBs (Waikato and Auckland), local government providing support from today 18 August.</i>	DPMC lead
Update: Clarity of triggers to support decision-making to move down Alert Levels (for example, number of cases, change in number of cases, wastewater test results, social license observations).	DPMC
Update: Caring for Communities governance and workstream	C4C (Carolyn S)
Update: Wastewater testing – general sit rep.	MOH
Update: Hospital capacity in Auckland and contingency planning for triaging care / delivering care safely. <i>Note: Meetings already established to support triaging care if required.</i>	MOH
Other matters discussed at 0900hrs 18 August NRLT meeting	
<u>Essential services & exemptions</u> Ensure communications messaging is tidy. There is inconsistency across messaging, and this must be resolved. To be completed asap.	DPMC and other relevant agencies
<u>Vaccination programme</u> Advice provided by MoH on recommencing the vaccination programme. <i>Note: MOH briefed Ministers 18 August on the plan, with view to operationalise from 19 August.</i>	MOH

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<p><u>Boundaries</u></p> <p>Advice to be provided on boundaries within 72 hours of AL 4 in effect.</p>	DPMC
<p><u>Mandatory use of face coverings</u></p> <p>Advice to be considered by Ministers</p> <p><i>Note: Ministers since took the decision to mandate use “by all people at all businesses and services operating at Alert Level 4 that involve customer contact”.</i></p> <p>Departmental messaging should configure to national settings.</p>	MOH / DPMC / PCO
<p><u>Cabinet</u></p> <p>Paper required for Cabinet meeting on Friday 20 August.</p> <p><i>Note: Paper to consider Alert Level posture and reflect the completed work on boundary and exemptions.</i></p>	DPMC
<p><u>Compassionate exemptions</u></p> <p>Work to be completed shortly.</p> <p><i>Note: This is dependent on the duration of lockdown.</i></p>	MOH
<p><u>Social licence</u></p> <p>COVID-19 Unit Communications to consider social license maintenance.</p>	DPMC
<p><u>Protocols</u></p> <p>IPC protocols and messages for public precautions must be reiterated via comms. In light of transmissibility of Delta variant, precautions for social distancing, wearing face coverings, remain critical.</p>	MOH / DPMC
<p><u>Concurrent events</u></p> <p>Carolyn Schwalger to speak to Tony Lynch to ensure plans in place to manage concurrent (nationally significant) events.</p>	Carolyn S
<p><u>COVID-19 Act Orders for concurrent Alert Levels</u></p> <p>May be required following Friday Cabinet decisions.</p>	PCO
<p><u>Real time issues</u></p> <p>If it requires system intervention, please call Brook.</p>	All

National Response Leadership Team meeting

Date: 19 August 2021, 0830hrs

Member attendance: Brook Barrington (NRLT Chair), Ashley Bloomfield, Graham MacLean, Cheryl Barnes, Peter Mersi, Una Jagose, Carolyn Tremain, Andy Coster, Chris Seed, Rebecca Kitteridge, Carolyn Schwalger, Richard Bargh (for Christine Stevenson), Caralee McLiesh.

Other attendance: Rae Nathan (NRLT Secretariat), Hamish Rogers, Ruth Fairhall, Peter Hughes, Ben McBride.

Purpose

This briefing records the discussion at the National Response Leadership Team meeting regarding the Alert Level 4 in effect across the country.

Next steps

1. National Response Leadership Team meet daily at 0830hrs to receive updates on key actions arising across the response.
2. Cabinet meeting on Friday 20 August regarding Alert Level posture.

Minutes

3. The Chair of the National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) opened the meeting.
4. The Chair invited Ashley Bloomfield to debrief on further information received regarding the positive cases identified:
 - 4.1. Members heard that at the end of yesterday, 18 August, 10 cases were reported publicly. One was an Air New Zealand crew member and was picked up through routine testing. The other nine are all genomically linked. All cases to date are Auckland-based and all linked. The DG Health was notified overnight of three more.
 - 4.2. Members heard that the Crown Plaza has stopped releasing individuals due to a family bubble who had returned from New South Wales returned a positive test. The family were on the same flight as another positive case identified, and were next door in the Crown Plaza to that positive case. Members heard that the Crown Plaza has had ventilation remediation completed and that the staff who worked at Crown Plaza during exposure times are highly compliant with routine testing and vaccination requirements.
 - 4.3. Members heard that the latest wastewater testing results are showing positives across Auckland. The Ministry of Health teams are pulling together a map that overlays where the positive cases were identified and where wastewater testing is showing positive results.
 - 4.4. Members heard that at this stage, no positive cases have been identified outside of Auckland and this is materially significant.
 - 4.5. Members heard that the MOH website had a process issue yesterday which resulted in a slow period to updating the site's Locations of Interest pages.

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- 4.6. Members heard that 25% of Coromandel Township have been tested and that it is an encouraging early indicator that we have not yet seen positive cases in Coromandel Township.
 - 4.7. Members heard the DG Health emphasise that it is critical that essential workers frequently check the Locations of Interest because if essential workers have been exposed they must immediately isolate, and due to their permitted movement they risk transmitting the virus further. The DG Health asked that this message is communicated more explicitly through public communications channels. Members discussed that the public communications also reinforce that Section 70 notices are in place and that websites direct individuals to the notice itself.
5. Other updates from Members
- 5.1. Members discussed the vaccination programme recommencement under AL settings and the possibility that clinics extend hours for the next two weeks.
 - 5.2. Members discussed the crucial nature of public communications and the importance of reminding people about public health precautions, checking locations of interest, etc.
 - 5.3. Members discussed that for subsequent lockdowns we may want to have a plan in place to discourage 'holiday travel' that overwhelms small towns when individuals en masse travel to smaller towns to reside at holiday homes through lockdown.
 - 5.4. Members heard that MOT are following through with ensuring truck drivers have access to compliance certificates for those essential workers to work under AL 4.
 - 5.5. Members heard that the Public Service Commission will run social media campaigns to highlight some of the response work underway across the Public Service and will reinforce the public health messages.
6. Forward actions
- 6.1. Daily Economic sitreps from Treasury shared with the Chair.
 - 6.2. Graham MacLean and Ruth Fairhall to ensure operational considerations and policy considerations are aligned in boundary setting work so that Ministers are informed of the trade-offs associated with boundary options.
 - 6.3. Await public health data and critical intelligence to inform a decision on Alert Levels.

Signed

Brook Barrington
Chair, National Response Leadership Team

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Roundtable on operations and actions – key points discussed at NRLT on 19 August
 Note: This will be shared with NRLT members.

Key points and updates from NRLT members on 19 August	Lead
<p><u>Granular detail re Crowne Plaza</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testing / compliance information (MBIE) • Source investigation (ARPHS) <p><i>Note: MOH / MBIE provided information to Ministers office. Closed.</i></p>	
<p><u>Boundaries</u></p> <p>Advice to be provided on boundaries (locales/managing a 4/3 boundary... could it be done)</p> <p><i>Note: DPMC provided draft advice to Ministers with power to act. Advice to be formally considered on Friday 20 August.</i></p>	DPMC
<p><u>Testing</u></p> <p>MOH to look at the possibility of extending hours at vaccination clinics.</p> <p>MOH/Comms will think about how to stimulate demand.</p>	MOH
<p><u>Communications</u></p> <p>Social license – COVID-19 Group Communications to consider social license maintenance.</p> <p>IPC protocols – public precautions must be reiterated (ie social distancing, face coverings).</p> <p>UAC – Critical focus is on key information for people and what they need to do, pointing them to factual sources</p> <p>Testing – MOH view is that testing capacity has increased, and that MOH / Comms will think about how to stimulate demand to increase testing numbers.</p> <p>If there is an AL shift, or split between ALs, agencies will see large surge in call volumes from individuals seeking information on what they can do or what they need to do.</p>	All
<p><u>Real time issues</u></p> <p>If it requires system intervention, please call Brook.</p>	All

National Response Leadership Team meeting

Date: 20 August 2021, 0830hrs

Member attendance: Brook Barrington (NRLT Chair), Ashley Bloomfield, Graham MacLean, Cheryl Barnes, Peter Mersi, Una Jagose, Carolyn Tremain, Andy Coster, Chris Seed, Rebecca Kitteridge, Carolyn Schwalger, Richard Bargh (for Christine Stevenson), Caralee McLiesh.

Other attendance: Rae Nathan (NRLT Secretariat), Hamish Rogers, Ruth Fairhall, Peter Hughes, Richard Schmidt, Ben McBride.

Purpose

This briefing records the discussion at the National Response Leadership Team meeting regarding the Alert Level 4 in effect across the country.

Next steps

1. Cabinet meet today Friday 20 August to assess advice on the Alert Level posture.
2. National Response Leadership Team meet daily at 0830hrs to receive updates on key actions arising across the response.

Minutes

3. The Chair of the National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) opened the meeting.
4. The Chair invited Ashley Bloomfield to debrief on further information received regarding positive cases identified and other developments:
 - 4.1. A positive case was identified overnight, presented to Waitakere Hospital. The individual was at Northshore Hospital earlier in the week with non COVID-19 symptoms.
 - 4.2. Key issue presenting is staffing pressures across Auckland hospitals, the Ministry is working closely with DHBs to address this.
 - 4.3. Ashley Bloomfield was notified before the NRLT that two positive cases were identified in Wellington and Miramar. Individuals will have been isolating due to Alert Level 4. Members discussed that the response will be sustained.
 - 4.4. The Ministry of Health will open National Health Coordination Centre today. Ashley Bloomfield notified Members that they will have to consider who in their agencies might be a liaison to the NCC.
5. Other updates from Members
 - 5.1. Members discussed the Locations of Interest notification process and if would be practicable to prioritise the LOIs and getting in contact with individual's based on which LOI they are associated with.
 - 5.2. Members discussed testing capacity and heard the volume has increased and that there were 28,000 tests processed yesterday.
 - 5.3. Members discussed the importance of being clear about identifying the policy decisions that require Ministerial decision-making, and that this is crucial for the process to enable a split Alert Level Order, if the situation requires.

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- 5.4. Members discussed shortening the time between routine testing of MIF workers and that MBIE and MOH will work together to consider how this might be operationalised and the public health value.
- 5.5. Members discussed that the extension of the window of travel from Queenstown and between islands has gone smoothly, and that based on availability of seats on planes/ferries, the Ministry of Transport believe people have relocated to their homes successfully.
6. Ruth Fairhall, Head of Policy COVID-19 Group, invited Members to provide feedback on the Alert Level paper due to Cabinet today 20 August.
 - 6.1. Members suggested including operational considerations to implement a boundary-setting, should Ministers make a decision on boundary-settings.
 - 6.1.1. Such as: ability to move large numbers of New Zealand Police staff to checkpoints; engagement with iwi on checkpoints across boundaries; IT/system changes required to enable essential workers permits aligned to the Alert Level Order; enable social service providers to move across boundaries to deliver services or develop boundary-settings that do not cut off social service providers from communities;
 - 6.2. Members discussed that it is important the Alert Level Order is changed quickly when the approved list of essential services is changed. Members discussed that Minister Hipkins has the authority to make ongoing changes to the Order to reflect the most up-to-date list of essential services.

Signed

Brook Barrington
Chair, National Response Leadership Team

IN-CONFIDENCE

Roundtable on operations and actions – key points discussed at NRLT on 20 August

Note: This will be shared with NRLT members.

Key points and updates from NRLT members on 20 August	Lead
<p><u>Locations of interest</u></p> <p>Prioritisation framework across LOIs and making contact with individual's based on which LOI they visited.</p>	MOH
<p><u>Boundaries</u></p> <p>Boundary-setting policy choices – 4/3, North/South etc etc</p>	DPMC
<p><u>Testing</u></p> <p>Ongoing focus on surge capacity and options to increase (ie private providers)</p>	MOH
<p><u>Testing of MIF workforce</u></p> <p>Assess public health value and operationalisation of shortening the time between routine testing of MIF workers.</p>	MOH / MBIE
<p><u>Communications</u></p> <p>Social license – COVID-19 Group Communications (UAC) developing forward communications strategy to maintain trust and social license.</p> <p>Ongoing reinforcement of key messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (UAC / all agencies) Public precautions (ie social distancing, face coverings) • (UAC / all agencies) Critical focus pointing individuals to key information on what they need to do or can do, pointing them to factual sources • MOH/Comms will continue to think about how to stimulate demand. <p>Going forward – If there is an AL shift, or split between ALs, agencies will see large surge in call volumes from individuals seeking information on what they can do or what they need to do.</p>	All
<p><u>Essential services</u></p> <p>Thought given to enable faster changes to Order schedule of essential services, Min Hipkins with PTA to change Order on advice.</p>	DPMC/MBIE/MOH/Crown Law
<p><u>Extension of travel window</u></p> <p>Travel window extension closes 2359hrs 20 August. It appears people who needed to relocate to their homes from Queenstown or between islands have done so</p>	MoT Closed
<p><u>Real time issues</u></p> <p>If it requires system intervention, please call Brook.</p>	All

National Response Leadership Team meeting

Date: 21 August 2021, 1000hrs

Member attendance: Brook Barrington (NRLT Chair), Ashley Bloomfield, Graham MacLean, Cheryl Barnes, Peter Mersi, Una Jagose, Carolyn Tremain, Andy Coster, Chris Seed, Rebecca Kitteridge, Carolyn Schwalger, Christine Stevenson, Caralee McLiesh.

Other attendance: Rae Nathan (NRLT Secretariat), Hamish Rogers, Ruth Fairhall, Peter Hughes, Richard Schmidt, Richard Bargh, Ben McBride.

Purpose

This briefing records the discussion at the National Response Leadership Team meeting regarding the Alert Level 4 in effect across the country.

Next steps

1. National Response Leadership Team will meet Sunday 22 August at 1000hrs to discuss updates on key actions arising across the response.
2. Cabinet will meet on Monday 23 August to assess advice on the Alert Level posture.

Minutes

3. The Chair of the National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) opened the meeting.
4. The Chair invited Ashley Bloomfield to debrief on further information received regarding positive cases identified and other developments:
 - 4.1. Ashley Bloomfield reported that the rates of testing and vaccinations yesterday set a record for the testing and vaccination systems.
 - 4.2. Ashley Bloomfield commented that the amount of testing undertaken across the country is materially important to inform Cabinet's decision on Monday regarding the Alert Level posture. Ashley Bloomfield noted that it is encouraging that with higher testing volumes we have not seen positive results returned outside of Auckland or Wellington. Ashley Bloomfield noted that prioritisation of tests does occur (ie MIF workers, healthcare workers, etc.).
 - 4.3. Ashley Bloomfield updated Members that the Ministry of Health and Auckland Regional Public Health Service are working together to develop a more nuanced approach to manage locations of interest and a prioritisation framework.
 - 4.4. Ashley Bloomfield notified Members that there was positive detection of COVID-19 in wastewater near Warkworth, and that the Ministry have stood up another testing site there.
 - 4.5. Ashley Bloomfield notified Members that testing of Auckland and Northshore Hospital staff have returned negative results. Ashley Bloomfield noted that additional staff were procured from the private sector and senior medical students to undertake COVID-19 swabs.
5. The Chair invited Cheryl Barnes and Ruth Fairhall to update Members on the development of the paper due to be discussed by Cabinet on Monday 23 August on the Alert Level posture.

Section 9(2)(g)(i)

5.1.2. Members heard the paper will update Ministers on the status of the boundary-setting work. And that the paper will signal that there are significant operational considerations associated with drawing boundaries to separate areas under different Alert Levels.

5.1.3. Members heard that engagement with local communities, iwi, will need to occur to confidently propose boundary-setting options to Ministers next week.

6. The Chair invited Members to provide key operational updates:

6.1. Members discussed that available quarantine capacity is steadily waning, and that MIQ may need to consider contingency planning to free up capacity for MIQFs.

6.2. Members heard that there is a shipping vessel off Auckland port that may need to be isolated if a crew member tests positive. The standard procedures are in place and may need to be activated.

6.3. Members heard that the Economic Advisory Group will be stood up early next week and comprises of the agencies which participate in the Economic Chief Executives Group.

6.4. Members discussed some sectors and stakeholders have queries regarding exemptions, and that further guidance and communications may be needed to explain under what circumstances individuals can apply for exemptions (ie AL 4 versus AL 3).

6.5. Members discussed how welfare supports are being delivered across agencies and providers under Alert Level 4. The focus from the Caring for Communities (CforC) governance group is on improving how the various groups work together to deliver supports to communities that need supports. Because Alert Level 4 has extended, the CforC group will look at how to put arrangements (strengthened unified communications and intelligence sharing) in place for a more sustained response.

6.5.1. Members heard that the National Welfare Coordination Group and regional welfare coordinating groups are key infrastructure mechanisms. Core line agencies are relied on to deliver supports relevant to their core role (ie if individuals have an accommodation need, then support will be provided by Housing and Urban Development or via the Temporary Accommodation Service network or otherwise). If gaps emerge then CforC is the right body to develop a solution.

6.5.2. Members discussed that the public may need clarity on where individuals can go when in-need of welfare supports.

6.5.3. Members discussed inviting Nic Blakely to attend NRLT to provide updates on welfare support needs and delivery under Alert Level 4.

7. The Chair invited Chris Seed to provide an update on Section 6(a) the New Zealand Government response.

Section 6(a)

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Signed

Brook Barrington
 Chair, National Response Leadership Team

Roundtable on operations and actions – key points discussed at NRLT on 21 August
 Note: This will be shared with NRLT members.

Key points and updates from NRLT members on 21 August	Lead
<p><u>Locations of interest</u></p> <p>MOH will look at prioritisation framework across LOIs. Refine narrative around close contacts and proximity to LOIs.</p>	MOH
<p><u>Testing</u></p> <p>To consider:</p> <p>Prioritisation of test processing (eg. MIF workers, healthcare workers, tests are prioritised).</p> <p>Ongoing focus on surge capacity and options to increase (eg. private providers)</p>	MOH
<p><u>Concurrency</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 6(a) [Redacted] • NZCS: Shipping vessel off Auckland port, if crew member returns positive test procedures will be activated to isolate the vessel. 	All

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<p><u>Welfare supports</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different processes in place (from previous AL 4 response) to deliver welfare supports. May need clarity on where the public can go when in-need of welfare supports. • C4C, NEMA will lead putting in place arrangements for a longer response. C4C governance role includes improving communications across all relevant welfare support groups and intelligence sharing. Line agencies will be relied on for welfare support delivery. CDEM plays a triaging/coordination role. Note: Nic Blakely current SRO, and to attend NRLT on Monday to provide update. 	<p>C4C / NEMA / CDEM / MSD</p>
<p><u>Cabinet paper</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice: Clear and concise advice. If ask for input, can agencies please provide succinct text for incorporation. • Boundaries: Boundary-setting policy choices – 4/3, North/South etc etc <p>Operational considerations of boundary-setting work critical to success of COVID response to contain the virus. Advice and reports to Ministers must reflect the operational realities.</p> <p>In advice to Ministers, indicate the timeframes needed to operationalise boundary-settings (eg minimum time required).</p>	<p>DPMC / agencies</p>
<p><u>Exemptions</u></p> <p>Some sectors with stakeholder queries re exemptions. Further guidance and communication may be needed to explain under what circumstances individuals can apply for exemptions (ie AL 4 versus 3).</p>	<p>MOH / DPMC</p>
<p><u>Situation reports</u></p> <p>Feedback that information in situation reports should provide more detail, make it more accessible and internally consistent, and capture a thread/story of the response that we add to daily.</p>	<p>MOH</p>
<p><u>Real time issues</u></p> <p>If it requires system intervention, please call Brook.</p>	<p>All</p>

National Response Leadership Team meeting

Date: 22 August 2021, 1000hrs

Member attendance: Brook Barrington (NRLT Chair), Ashley Bloomfield, Graham MacLean, Cheryl Barnes, Peter Mersi, Una Jagose, Carolyn Tremain, Andy Coster, Chris Seed, Rebecca Kitteridge, Carolyn Schwalger, Christine Stevenson, Caralee McLiesh.

Other attendance: Rae Nathan (NRLT Secretariat), Hamish Rogers, Ruth Fairhall, Peter Hughes, Richard Schmidt, Ben McBride.

Purpose

This briefing records the discussion at the National Response Leadership Team meeting regarding the Alert Level 4 in effect across the country.

Next steps

1. National Response Leadership Team will meet Monday 23 August at 1000hrs to discuss updates on key actions arising across the response.
2. Cabinet will meet on Monday 23 August to assess advice on the Alert Level posture.

Minutes

3. The Chair of the National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) opened the meeting.
4. The Chair invited Ashley Bloomfield to debrief on further information received regarding positive cases identified and other developments:
 - 4.1. Ashley Bloomfield reported that DHBs report pressure on Auckland Hospital capacity has reduced. ICU beds available should it be needed (occupancy ~54%). This reflects that elective operations that require post-surgery have been postponed.
 - 4.2. Ashley Bloomfield reported that there are over 8,700 contacts in the system. Most are close contacts or close contacts-plus. Contact tracers are following up with contacts and checking that individuals are able to isolate at home, are faring well, and offering to provide follow up emails or phone calls.
 - 4.3. Ashley Bloomfield reported that PHUs around the country have capacity stood up to support contact tracing.
 - 4.4. Ashley Bloomfield updated Members that public health (MOH and ARPHS) are forming a strategic view of the outbreak to inform the Cabinet paper and discussion tomorrow 23 August. And they are refining the strategic approach to locations of interest, contact tracing, and testing to direct the next few days.
5. The Chair invited Members to provide key operational updates:
6. Members heard from Graham MacLean on developing readiness in the response. Graham MacLean is focused on integrating the AOG system into the National Health Coordination Centre (NHCC) and that integration is progressing well. Key updates to Members were that:
 - 6.1. AOG and NHCC are considering how they might reduce the need for people to congregate to receive essential goods or services (eg supermarkets).

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6.2. AOG and NHCC, with New Zealand Police (NZP), are considering areas of compliance that other parts of the system might lend capacity to increase capacity in the compliance space. The Chair emphasised that compliance considerations need to align at a strategic level with NZP in the first instance.

7. Members discussed that quarantine capacity is steadily waning and is of-concern for the MIQ system.

Section 6(a)

8. Members heard that Treasury are supporting Alert Level Cabinet decisions and discussions tomorrow with data on economic impacts and supports.
9. Members heard that the Unite Against COVID-19 Communications focus is on getting targeted information out to individuals and providers and tracking public sentiment regarding Alert Level 4.
10. Members heard that the Southern Trader vessel crew member has returned a negative test.
11. Members discussed that NZP, CLO, DPMC, will progress exploring options to restrict 'holiday travel' pre-emptively next time an Alert Level 4 comes into effect.
12. Members discussed that limited supermarket delivery options may become an issue for those who are self-isolating and that the system will monitor if demand for this service grows.
13. The Chair invited Cheryl Barnes and Ruth Fairhall to update Members on the paper due to be discussed by Cabinet on Monday 23 August on the Alert Level posture.
14. Members discussed that the paper must be public health driven, must discuss operational complexities, and that the advice is free and frank, rich in data that informs Cabinet Ministers about the risks associated with Alert Level changes.
15. Members commented that the Cabinet paper must reflect the operational challenges associated with boundary-settings that materially impact on the system's ability to maintain the public health response.
16. Members discussed that if there were to be a decision to have multiple Alert Levels in effect across the country, the operational needs to enforce checkpoints at boundaries will impact on the ability to enforce lockdowns in Alert Level 4.

17. Section 6(a)

Signed

Brook Barrington
Chair, National Response Leadership Team

Roundtable on operations and actions – key points discussed at NRLT on 22 August

Note: This will be shared with NRLT members.

Key points and updates from NRLT members on 22 August	Lead
<p><u>Alert Level Cabinet paper – due tomorrow 23 August</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public health advice: Cabinet paper must be driven by public health advice. • Advice: Clear, concise, free and frank advice. • Boundaries: Boundary-setting policy choices • Exemptions: Clarity around process and legal framework for exemptions. <p>Operational considerations of boundary-setting work critical to success of COVID response to contain the virus. Advice and reports to Ministers must reflect the operational realities.</p> <p>In advice to Ministers, indicate the timeframes needed to operationalise boundary-settings (eg minimum time required).</p>	<p>DPMC / MOH / agencies</p>
<p><u>Concurrency</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 6(a) [REDACTED] • Shipping vessel off Auckland port, crew member returned negative test. Closed. 	<p>All</p>
<p><u>Testing</u></p> <p>To consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternatives to deliver and alternative processing mechanisms. • Prioritisation of test processing (eg. MIF workers, healthcare workers, tests are prioritised). • Ongoing focus on surge capacity and options to increase (eg. private providers). 	<p>MOH</p>
<p><u>Hospital capacity (AKL)</u></p> <p>DHBs report pressure on Auckland Hospital capacity has reduced. ICU beds available should it be needed (occupancy ~54%).</p>	<p>MOH</p>
<p><u>Contact tracing</u></p> <p>PHUs around the country have capacity stood-up to support contact tracing.</p>	<p>MOH</p>
<p><u>Integrating the AOG system into the National Health Coordination Centre (NHCC)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AOG and NHCC are considering how they might reduce the need for people to congregate to receive essential goods or services (eg supermarkets). • AOG and NHCC, with New Zealand Police (NZP), are considering areas of compliance that other parts of the system might lend capacity to increase capacity in the compliance space. Compliance considerations need to align at a strategic level with NZP in the first instance. 	<p>AOG / NHCC</p> <p>NZP</p>

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<u>Compliance and reducing 'holiday travel' before AL 4s in effect</u> NZP, CLO, DPMC, will progress exploring options to restrict 'holiday travel' pre-emptively next time an Alert Level 4 comes into effect.	NZP / CLO / DPMC
<u>Situation reports</u> Ensure and internally consistent and capture a thread/story of the response that we add to daily.	MOH
<u>Crowne Plaza</u> Request from Chair NRLT: can we please make sure that any "embers" around the Elliot Street / Crowne Plaza location are not a concern? Note: APRHS has a dedicated team on this but DG Health to confirm.	MOH
<u>Real time issues</u> If it requires system intervention, please call Brook.	All

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National Response Leadership Team meeting

Date: 23 August 2021, 0830hrs

Member attendance: Brook Barrington (NRLT Chair), Ashley Bloomfield, Graham MacLean, Cheryl Barnes, Peter Mersi, Una Jagose, Carolyn Tremain, Andy Coster, Audrey Sonerson (for Chris Seed), Rebecca Kitteridge, Carolyn Schwalger, Christine Stevenson, Caralee McLiesh.

Other attendance: Rae Nathan (NRLT Secretariat), Hamish Rogers, Ruth Fairhall, Peter Hughes, Richard Schmidt, Ben McBride, Nic Blakeley.

Purpose

This briefing records the discussion at the National Response Leadership Team meeting regarding the Alert Level 4 in effect across the country.

Next steps

1. National Response Leadership Team will meet daily 0830hrs for the week commencing 23 August.
2. Cabinet will meet on Monday 23 August to assess advice on the Alert Level posture.

Minutes

3. The Chair of the National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) opened the meeting.
4. The Chair invited Ashley Bloomfield to debrief on further information received regarding positive cases identified and other developments:
 - 4.1. Ashley Bloomfield reported that it appears the outbreak is Auckland-based, and most of the transmission is between known contacts.
 - 4.2. Ashley Bloomfield noted that more information (testing, wastewater results, close-contacts follow up) is needed to help assure ourselves that there are not seeded cases around the country.
 - 4.3. Ashley Bloomfield noted the modelling from Te Puna Matatini suggests we may see around 1,000 cases at the end of this outbreak, and that the bulk of these may occur over the next few days before we see a decline.
 - 4.4. Ashley Bloomfield noted that the Crowne Plaza is still under investigation to understand how the source border case spread to the community.
5. The Chair invited Cheryl Barnes and Ruth Fairhall to update Members on the paper due to be discussed by Cabinet today Monday 23 August on the Alert Level posture.
 - 5.1. Members heard the recommendation is to follow the Public Health and DG-Health advice (AL 4 across whole country until Sunday 29 August) and recommends a Cabinet review on Friday supported by a public health risk assessment, and will include information to support a discussion on an Alert Level split.
6. Members heard that the waning capacity of Quarantine rooms is of-concern, and that MBIE CE has engaged Minister Hipkins on the range of challenges associated with this concern.

Section 6(a)

8. The Chair invited Nic Blakeley to discuss the Caring for Communities work underway to deliver welfare supports through this response.
9. Emerging issue, and focus, of the last few days is access to food.
10. Issues with access to food was raised at Iwi leaders call with Ministers on Friday 20 August. Food banks and networks have food available, systems will need to improve the communications out to individuals and communities informing them of how they can access food.
11. Physically getting to a food bank or supermarket might become a bigger issue particularly if AL 4 is extended and the volume of people required to isolate increases.
12. Particularly in Auckland is an emerging issue around supermarkets being exposure sites and closing down (or shortening hours) temporarily, and supermarket workers isolating due to this. Impacts on AL 4 workforces to deliver essential services.
13. Emerging issue around moving food out of supermarkets to communities (ie contactless delivery service). Some supermarkets do not have delivery or click & collect slots available.
14. Access to shelter might become the next acute issue (eg homelessness, home circumstances not suitable to self-isolate).
15. Critical part of the response is to join-up at an operational level as efficiently as possible to deliver welfare supports.

Signed

Brook Barrington
Chair, National Response Leadership Team

Roundtable on operations and actions – key points discussed at NRLT on 23 August

Note: This will be shared with NRLT members.

Key points and updates from NRLT members on 23 August	Lead
Section 6(a)	
<p><u>Welfare supports</u></p> <p>Emerging issue and focus of the last few days is access to food.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physically getting to a food bank or supermarket might become more acute particularly if AL is extended and volume of people required to isolate increases. Emerging issue around supermarkets being exposure sites and closing down temporarily, and supermarket workers isolating due to this. Impacts on AL 4 workforces to deliver essential services. Particularly in Auckland this has caused supermarkets to shorten opening hours, and some do not have delivery or click & collect slots available. Emerging issue around transporting food out of supermarkets to communities (contactless delivery service). <p>Access to shelter might become the next acute issue (eg homelessness, home circumstances not suitable to self-isolate)</p>	<p>C4C governance / MSD / NEMA</p>
<p><u>Boundary settings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep ahead of the planning to operationalise a Level 4 / Level 3 split, should that become required. 	<p>DPMC / all agencies</p>
<p><u>MIQ capacity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decreasing quarantine capacity as volume of individuals needing to quarantine increases. This is concerning to MIQ system. 	<p>MIQ</p>
<p><u>Real time issues</u></p> <p>If it requires system intervention, please call Brook.</p>	<p>All</p>

National Response Leadership Team meeting

Date: 24 August 2021, 0830hrs

Member attendance: Brook Barrington (NRLT Chair), Ashley Bloomfield, Amber Bill (for Graham MacLean), Cheryl Barnes, Peter Mersi, Una Jagose, Carolyn Tremain, Andy Coster, Chris Seed, Rebecca Kitteridge, Carolyn Schwalger, Christine Stevenson, Caralee McLiesh.

Other attendance: Rae Nathan (NRLT Secretariat), Hamish Rogers, Ruth Fairhall, Peter Hughes, Richard Schmidt, Ben McBride.

Purpose

This briefing records the discussion at the National Response Leadership Team meeting regarding the Alert Level 4 in effect across the country.

Next steps

1. National Response Leadership Team will meet daily 0830hrs for the week commencing 23 August.
2. Cabinet will meet on Friday 27 August to assess advice on the Alert Level posture.


Minutes

3. The Chair of the National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) opened the meeting.
4. The Chair invited Ashley Bloomfield to debrief on further information received regarding positive cases identified and other developments:
 - 4.1. Ashley Bloomfield reported the total number of cases as at 1730hrs yesterday 23 August was 130, and that more reports of positive cases are expected overnight.
 - 4.2. Ashley Bloomfield updated that MOH will lean in more to address the backlog of lab tests.
 - 4.3. Ashley Bloomfield updated that pressure areas include on contact tracing and close-contact follow up, and that they have sought support from the Public Service Commission to source further workforce support here. Datacom has been engaged to increase capacity. Overall, there has been an increase overnight on the volume of follow-ups completed.
 - 4.4. Ashley Bloomfield updated that his team continue to address the internal inconsistencies of the MOH Situational Update Report.
 - 4.5. Ashley Bloomfield reported that over 63,000 vaccines were delivered yesterday. Ashley Bloomfield updated that he and his Australian counterpart Brendan Murphy discussed the nature of the virus and public health measures (ie vaccines and vaccination programme) in light of Delta variant and what his counterpart is observing in Australia.
5. The Chair invited Cheryl Barnes and Ruth Fairhall to update Members on Cabinet's decision yesterday 23 August.

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- 5.1. Summary of Cabinet decision yesterday: Alert Level 4 across whole country until at least 2359hr Friday 27 August, review on Friday 27 August. Alert Level 4 across Auckland until at least Tuesday 31 August, review on Monday 30 August.
- 5.2. Review on Friday 27 August will require an Alert Level Cabinet paper, DPMC is the lead. Members heard that the paper must have a strong data basis.
- 5.3. The Chair and Members agreed that distribution of Cabinet papers will go to named individuals only for consultation.
6. The Chair invited Cheryl Barnes and Ruth Fairhall to update Members on the boundary settings work.
 - 6.1. Boundary work on the settings for split Alert Level is progressing across agencies. Ministers meeting tomorrow at 1030hrs on this work.
 - 6.2. Section 9(2)(g)(i) [REDACTED]
 - 6.3. Members discussed that the policy and operational work must be aligned and joined up.
 - 6.4. Members discussed that we should anticipate an increase in 'holiday travel' movement if we have an Alert Level split with boundary settings in place. DPMC, CLO, NZP assessing options available to address this issue when it arises.
7. The Chair updated Members on cadence for this upcoming week in terms of NRLT meetings and regular Ministerial meetings:
 - 7.1. Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday this week: NRLT meet daily at 0830hrs; Ministers with Powers to Act meet at 1000hrs; COVID-19 Ministers meet at 1130hrs; Stand-up briefing at 1300hrs.
 - 7.2. Friday 27 August schedule will be determined. Expectation is that NRLT will meet at 0830hrs. TBD COVID-19 Ministers meeting and Cabinet meeting.
8. The Chair updated Members on media focuses this week:
 - 8.1.1. Tuesday economic focus (Minister Robertson and DG Health will deliver the 1300hrs stand-up).
 - 8.1.2. Wednesday vaccine focus (Ministers Hipkins and Henare, and DG Health will deliver the 1300hrs stand-up).
 - 8.1.3. Thursday vaccine focus, extension to General Practitioners, scale-up of campaign (Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and DG Health will deliver the 1300hrs stand-up).
 - 8.1.4. Friday Cabinet decision (Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, DG Health will deliver the stand-up)
9. The Chair updated Members that Parliament will not sit this week, but Select Committees will occur. Chief Executives and Officials will be aware of the Select Committees scheduled for Thursday.
 - 9.1. Tuesday 1030hrs Finance and Expenditure (Minister Robertson and Officials); 1430hrs Health (Minister Hipkins and Officials).

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- 9.2. Wednesday 1000hrs Transport and Infrastructure (Minister Wood and Officials); 1100hrs Social Services (Minister Sepuloni and Officials); 1430hrs Health with MIQ focus (Minister Hipkins and Officials).
- 9.3. Select Committee will include 60 minutes of question-time, the opposition will have 2/3s of that time to ask questions.
10. Members discussed vaccinations of government workforce and essential workers. Members discussed that when vaccinations are fully open and available to the public, the communications should emphasise that everyone should get vaccinated and utilise the booking system proactively to schedule a vaccination.
11. Section 6(a) 
12. Members heard that Ministers Hipkins agreed to convert two MIFs to quarantine facilities. Members heard that MBIE are sourcing N95 masks for MIF workers as an extra layer of protection on top of vaccination of workforce.
13. Members discussed that food access remains a number one issue in the welfare supports and emergency management space. There are mitigations put in place to reduce these pressures. Members heard that NEMA will sign contract today with student volunteer army so they can operate as an additional food distribution channel.
14. Members heard that Ngāti Porou applied to government that they declare state of emergency to enable the iwi to set up and maintain checkpoints, the application was declined and New Zealand Police are engaged to discuss further with Ngāti Porou.
15. Members heard we are not seeing a drop in emergency services required that we saw last Alert Level 4 lockdown (ie fire emergency services). The workforce pressures in emergency services is increasing.

Signed

Brook Barrington
Chair, National Response Leadership Team

Roundtable on operations – key points discussed at NRLT on 24 August

Note: This will be shared with NRLT members.

Key points and updates from NRLT members on 24 August	Lead
Section 6(a)	
<p><u>Boundary settings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministers meeting tomorrow at 1030hrs on this work. Work toward a 24hr implementation window of any Alert Level boundaries. Policy and operational work must be aligned and joined up. Anticipate 'travel' following AL/boundary announcement – DPMC, CLO, NZP exploring options to address this. 	DPMC / all agencies
<p><u>Welfare supports and emergency services</u></p> <p>Emerging issue and focus of the last few days is access to food.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working through mitigations to reduce pressures around enabling access to food. Physically getting to a food bank or supermarket (or transporting food out to communities via contactless delivery) might become more acute particularly if AL is extended and volume of people required to isolate increases. <p>NEMA not seeing a decrease in fire and emergency services requested.</p>	C4C governance / MSD / NEMA
<p><u>Information/Cabinet paper sensitivities</u></p> <p>Distribution of Cabinet papers should go to named individuals only for consultation.</p>	DPMC
<p><u>MIQ</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will convert two MIFs to quarantine facilities. 	MIQ
<p><u>Cadence of meetings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday this week: NRLT meet daily at 0830hrs; COVID-19 Ministers meet at 1130hrs; Stand-up briefing at 1300hrs. Ministers with PTA meetings will be advised at NRLT. Friday 27 August schedule to be finalised but will look like: NRLT at 0830hrs; COVID-19 Ministers at 1130hrs; Cabinet TBD. <p>Select Committee are expected to take place this week.</p>	All
<p><u>Media focuses this week</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tuesday economic focus Wednesday vaccine focus Thursday vaccine focus Friday Cabinet decision 	For awareness

<u>Real time issues</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If it requires system intervention, please call Brook.	All
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National Response Leadership Team meeting

Date: 25 August 2021, 0830hrs

Member attendance: Brook Barrington (NRLT Chair), Ashley Bloomfield, Peter Mersi, Una Jagose, Carolyn Tremain, Andy Coster, Chris Seed, Carolyn Schwalger, Christine Stevenson, Caralee McLiesh, Cheryl Barnes, Amber Bill (for Graham MacLean)

Other attendance: Rebecca Kitteridge, Peter Hughes, Richard Schmidt, Ben McBride, Ruth Fairhall, Ella Jones, Dave Gawn, Heather Peacock, Mac Leauanae (Chief Executive, Ministry for Pacific Peoples) Emily Waterson (NRLT Secretariat),

Purpose

This briefing records the discussion at the National Response Leadership Team meeting regarding the Alert Level 4 in effect across the country.


Next steps

1. Boundaries meeting at 1030 25 August with Ministers
2. Health Travel Documents meeting with PMO at 1300 25 August

Minutes

1. The Chair of the National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) opened the meeting.

Situational update

2. The Chair invited Ashley Bloomfield to give a situation update:
 - a. Ashley Bloomfield reported as of 1700 24 August 23 new cases had been reported with more expected to be reported overnight. There had been no exponential growth.
 - b. Ashley Bloomfield noted by close of business 24 August there were no new cases in Wellington
 - c. Section 9(2)(g)(i)

 - d. Ashley Bloomfield noted that the AOG cluster was likely to extend into the essential workforce and raised concerns these members may be active in the community. MoH is working on this.
 - e. Labs processed ~50,000 tests 25 August. The backlog has almost been addressed.
 - f. Ashley Bloomfield noted contact tracing is progressing well.
3. The Chair requested information from DPMC and MoH for Ministers on:
 - a. Where the current cases are coming from? Information on location, transmission type (e.g., household or community transmission)
 - b. How many locations of interest are producing cases - percentage?
 - c. Can we show the lockdown is working or not?

In-reach in the Pasifika community

4. The Chair invited Mac to update on Pasifika communities and highlight any concerns.

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5. Mac Leauanae stated direct leadership and coordination going well. The system has learnt from last time and the frameworks are in place. Ongoing challenges are:
 - a. Access to testing and vaccination stations.
 - b. Access to financial and social services
 - c. Caring for Communities self-isolation
 - i. Carolyn Tremain stated the Holiday Inn has been stood up for community isolation.
 - d. Racism in media – MoH and DPMC COVID-19 Group comms to work together to add positive messaging into the mainstream media.
 - i. Heather Peacocke stated DPMC COVID-19 Group comms are working across the system to amplify comms messaging.
 - ii. Peter Hughes offered to push communications through All of Government social media channels if useful.

MIQ and Airborne vectors

6. The Chair to Carolyn Tremain: Given what has been seen at the Crown Plaza, are we confident that all other MIF do not pose the same risk?
7. Carolyn Tremain highlighted they were working with ARPHs and are undertaking a number of steps across all MIFs to review the settings in light of Delta and the recent detection in facility.
8. Carolyn Tremain stated the Crown Plaza will open tomorrow for cohorts.
9. Carolyn Tremain gave a situation update on quarantine spaces:
 - a. 70 Jet Park;
 - b. Wellington and Christchurch are not an issue;
 - c. DG Health approved the Novotel to become a Quarantine facility with a capacity of 200 rooms;
 - d. Holiday Inn stood up as a self-isolation facility with 10 rooms in use and a capacity of 200 rooms;
 - e. Two staff members have tested positive. One linked to the AOG cluster, was not at work, second detected through surveillance testing third test result pending.
 - f. Two new facilities being stood up one in Rotorua and one in Christchurch.
 - i. Social licence issues with Major and Iwi expected.

Public Health comms / Delta changes

10. DPMC COVID-19 Group Comms and MoH Comms to liaise and review messaging in light of Delta. In particular, are the current Public Health messages fit for purpose in the Delta response.

Section 6(a)

Section 6(a)

Signed

Brook Barrington
Chair, National Response Leadership Team

IN-CONFIDENCE

Roundtable on operations – key points discussed at NRLT on 25 August

Note: This will be shared with NRLT members.

Key points and updates from NRLT members on 25 August	Lead
<p><u>Boundary settings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministers meeting at 1030 today Work towards understanding public service return to work at Alert Level 3 requirements Ongoing discussions on movement across boundaries High interest in exemptions at AL 4 – clear comms to go out 	MoH/PSC/DPMC
<p><u>Finance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advice to MOF on funding and unused funds. 	Treasury
<p><u>Reconnecting New Zealanders</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work on Framework, Self-isolation pilot and Health travel pass to continue as planned. PMO meeting at 1300 today 	DPMC
<p><u>Contact tracing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 497 Public Servants leaning into contract tracing 345 Private Sector surge staff available 	PSC
<p><u>Testing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assurance to Chair on testing kit supplies. Provide a delivery schedule via email to Chair. 	MoH/DPMC
<p><u>Welfare</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emerging issue of remote communities accessing essential supplies. CDEM investigating and work through any outstanding issues with Iwi chairs on Friday. 	NEMA
<p><u>Public comms messaging</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the public communications are fit for purpose in the light of Delta 	MoH/DPMC

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National Response Leadership Team meeting

Date: 26 August 2021, 0830hrs

Member attendance: Brook Barrington (NRLT Chair), Ashley Bloomfield, Peter Mersi, Una Jagose, Carolyn Tremain, Andy Coster, Chris Seed, Carolyn Schwalger, Christine Stevenson, Caralee McLiesh, Griere Cox, Graham MacLean

Other attendance: Rebecca Kitteridge, Peter Hughes, Richard Schmidt, Ben McBride, Ruth Fairhall, Ella Jones, Dave Gawn, Emily Waterson (NRLT Secretariat)

Purpose

This briefing records the discussion at the National Response Leadership Team meeting regarding the Alert Level 4 in effect across the country.

Next steps

1. Cabinet Paper on Alert Levels to be lodged 27 August

Minutes

1. The Chair of the National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) opened the meeting.

Situational update

2. The Chair invited Ashley Bloomfield to give a situation update:
 - a. Ashely Bloomfield noted all new cases are in Auckland.
 - b. Ashely Bloomfield stated that 41,000 tests were processed yesterday
 - c. Ashely Bloomfield commented data so far is suggesting the outbreak is contained to Auckland.
3. The Chair highlighted three areas of focus for the continuation of the meeting; operational, tactical and strategic.
4. The Chair raised concerns on if contactless delivery is enabling more movement than intended at AL4.
 - a. Carolyn Tremain commented she does not believe this is the case. The general rule is anything that can be sold in a supermarket can be harvested, manufactured and delivered without contact. Businesses have pivoted better this AL4. However, there is a need to revisit the Public Health advice in light of Delta and communicate it out to essential services.
 - b. Carolyn Tremain mentioned support for vaccinating couriers as essential services. An application is with MoH currently.
 - c. Carolyn Schwalger informed the group the transparent student army has stood up to help.
 - d. Graham Mclean mentioned Auckland City Council has people trained and ready to help with food delivery.

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5. Peter Mersi commented supply chain issues due to container availability. It was mentioned unless more people movement was to be allowed this issue will need to be managed by the system.
6. Peter Mersi stated all freight can currently move when it enters the country, the issue is getting the freight into the system.
7. Caralee McLiesh highlighted there is growing noise regarding supply constraints and workforce related issues.
8. Boundary
 - a. Ruth Fairhall updated the group on the outcome of the Ministers meeting 25 August, highlighting possible Alert Level setting changes, as well as who can move across different Alert Levels.
 - b. Andy Coster commented Police are comfortable with the proposed Alert Level splits. Police will be considering checkpoint implementation timing.
9. Reconnecting New Zealand
 - a. Christine Stevenson updated the group on the outcomes of the PMO meeting 25 August. Work is to continue as planned.
 - b. Customs are progressing traveller health declaration and it will be an iterative program over 18 months, firstly being manual and moving to a digital solution overtime.

Round table

10. Peter Mersi signalled maritime pressure building regarding transmissibility of Delta and staff boarding vessels before any testing has been undertaken. It was highlighted work is required in this area and likely cannot wait until we go down Alert Levels.
11. Caralee McLiesh stated economic supports wage subsidy applications were as expected. 600 million approved, 220 million in the first 1.5 days. There is a large number of applications for resurgence support. Looking at increasing appropriations.
12. Carolyn Tremain raised supermarkets are of a growing concern with high numbers of the workforce in isolation. The biggest concern being the distribution centres.
13. Carolyn Tremain also commented New Zealand Post are willing to assist with food delivery, however also facing a constrained workforce challenge.
14. Carolyn Schwalger commented food banks are at capacity due to workforce constraints. Iwi and Hapu have not stood up as much this time. Food banks will be a focus area for discussion at C4C tomorrow.

Signed

Brook Barrington
Chair, National Response Leadership Team

Roundtable on operations – key points discussed at NRLT on 26 August

Note: This will be shared with NRLT members.

Key points and updates from NRLT members on 26 August	Lead
<u>Contactless delivery</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring businesses are operating within the intended parameters. 	DPMC
<u>Public comms messaging</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the public communications are fit for purpose in the light of Delta in particular with the move from Alert Level 4 to Alert Level 3. 	MoH/DPMC
<u>Cabinet paper</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section on supply chain constraints and issues; and Section on Maritime pressure building 	MoT/DPMC
<u>Operational understanding</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process map the operational links for the maritime setting Considerations required between the timing of any announcements on boundaries and enforcement of those boundaries. 	MoT/DPMC NZA/DPMC
<u>Supply chain</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working group to be stood up 	MoT
<u>Checkpoints</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consideration on when checkpoints should be set up to ensure highest level of compliance 	Police

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National Response Leadership Team meeting

Date: 27 August 2021, 0830hrs

Member attendance: Brook Barrington (NRLT Chair), Ashley Bloomfield, Graham MacLean, Cheryl Barnes, Peter Mersi, Una Jagose, Carolyn Tremain, Andy Coster, Audrey Sonerson (for Chris Seed), Rebecca Kitteridge, Christine Stevenson, Caralee McLiesh, Dave Gawn.

Other attendance: Rae Nathan (NRLT Secretariat), Hamish Rogers, Ruth Fairhall, Peter Hughes, Richard Schmidt.

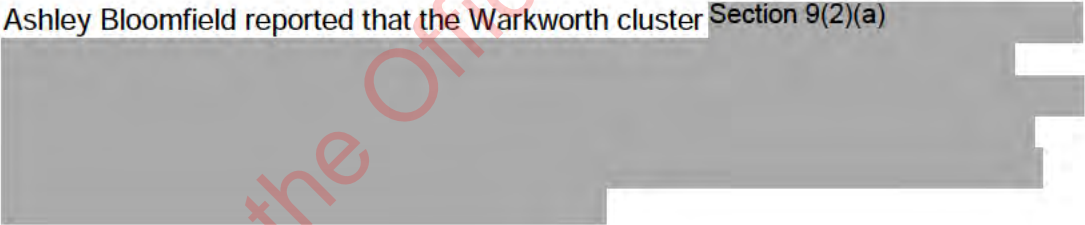
Purpose

This briefing records the discussion at the National Response Leadership Team meeting regarding the Alert Level 4 in effect across the country.

Next steps

1. Cabinet will meet on Friday 27 August to assess advice on the Alert Level posture.

Minutes

2. The Chair of the National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) opened the meeting.
3. The Chair invited Ashley Bloomfield to give a situation update:
 - 3.1. Ashley Bloomfield reported that by 1500hrs yesterday 26 August the number of positive cases reported was at 319, and that there were more cases overnight. Ashley Bloomfield noted that no new cases were reported outside of Auckland.
 - 3.2. Ashley Bloomfield reported that the Warkworth cluster Section 9(2)(a)

 - 3.3. Ashley Bloomfield reported that there were positive results in wastewater tests around Christchurch on 21 and 23 August, and that tonight there will be more wastewater test results available for Christchurch.
 - 3.4. Ashley Bloomfield reported that testing volumes remain at a high level, and that the Ministry of Health is targeting groups with higher risks to encourage testing, eg a bespoke testing centre in Auckland has been set up.
 - 3.5. Ashley Bloomfield explained that his public health advice, as at this meeting, is that we maintain Alert Level 4 lockdown across the country through to Tuesday 31 August which will take us to 2 full weeks in lockdown to be confident in the state of the outbreaks. Advice is to review Alert Level settings on Monday 30 August.
 - 3.5.1. From a public health perspective, if wastewater testing in Christchurch returns negative results tonight 27 August, then public health could consider moving the South Island to a different Alert Level setting.
 - 3.6. Note: public health advice provided by DG Health is an input into advice to Cabinet. This does not pre-empt Cabinet decisions.

IN-CONFIDENCE

4. The Chair invited Cheryl Barnes and Ruth Fairhall to update Members on the Alert Level paper to be lodged with Cabinet today 27 August. Ruth Fairhall's team are reshaping the paper with the most-recent Ministry of Health and DG Health advice to lodge the Cabinet paper at 1230hrs today 27 August.
5. Members discussed that the communications today 27 August could include providing certainty to Auckland about the potential duration of Alert Level 4.
 - 5.1. Graham MacLean updated the NRLT that discussions with Iwi Chairs and Mayors last night were productive and the key message is that they want certainty around settings, or as much certainty as possible.
6. Members discussed that New Zealand Police are planning for checkpoints to be ready today to lessen 'holiday home travel' that may occur following an announcement this afternoon.
7. Members discussed the importance of communicating Alert Level 3 conditions and settings that have been modified for Delta for businesses/workplaces/individuals to operate and move safely.
 - 7.1. Design a Unite Against COVID-19 resource outlining the conditions of Alert Level 3, and then sectors/businesses/people can share the resource through their channels.
8. Members discussed progress with setting up a process for individuals to apply for an exemption with DG Health, and that this process is a result of the Ministry of Health and the Public Service Commission working together.
9. Cadence for today and the weekend.
 - 9.1. Today 27 August: Ministers meeting at 1130hrs; Cabinet meeting at 1230hrs; Announcement at 1500hrs.
 - 9.2. Weekend cadence: NRLT will meet at 1000hrs on Saturday and Sunday. Ministers meeting at 1130hrs on Saturday and Sunday.
10. The Chair emphasised that NRLT Members should try to get some rest over the weekend.

Signed

Brook Barrington
Chair, National Response Leadership Team

Roundtable on operations – key points discussed at NRLT on 27 August

Note: This will be shared with NRLT members.

Key points and updates from NRLT members on 27 August	Lead
<p><u>Alert Level 4 conditions/settings – communications</u></p> <p>Design a Unite Against COVID-19 resource outlining the conditions of Alert Level 3. One place for clear advice and sectors/businesses/people can share the resource through their channels.</p>	MoH/DPMC
<p><u>Cabinet Alert Level decision</u></p> <p>Today 27 August: Cabinet meeting at 1230hrs; announcement at 1500hrs.</p>	DPMC/MOH
<p><u>Checkpoints</u></p> <p>Consideration and planning for checkpoints to ensure compliance with boundaries should Ministers decide and announce an Alert Level split today 27 August and to lessen the 'holiday home travel' issue that may occur after any announcement.</p>	Police
<p><u>Exemptions process</u></p> <p>Workforce in place to support processes for individuals to apply for an exemption with DG Health.</p>	MOH/PSC/DPMC
<p><u>Meeting cadence, today and weekend</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Today 27 August: Ministers meeting at 1130hrs; Cabinet meeting at 1230hrs; Announcement at 1500hrs. • Weekend cadence: NRLT will meet at 1000hrs on Saturday and Sunday. Ministers meeting at 1130hrs on Saturday and Sunday. 	All

National Response Leadership Team meeting

Date: 28 August 2021, 1000hrs

Member attendance: Brook Barrington (NRLT Chair), Ashley Bloomfield, Graham MacLean, Cheryl Barnes, Peter Mersi, Una Jagose, Andy Coster, Chris Seed, Rebecca Kitteridge, Christine Stevenson, Caralee McLiesh, Dave Gawn, Carolyn Schwalger

Other attendance: Ella Jones (NRLT Secretariat), Hamish Rogers, Peter Hughes, Richard Schmidt, Rachel Carter, Emily Waterson, Ben McBride

Purpose

This briefing records the discussion at the National Response Leadership Team meeting regarding the Alert Level 4 in effect across the country.

Next steps

1. Cabinet will meet on Monday 30 August to assess advice on the Alert Level posture.
2. Welfare meeting at 1300 with MSD, C4C and Te Arawhiti

Minutes

3. The Chair of the National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) opened the meeting.
4. The Chair invited Ashley Bloomfield to give a situation update:
 - 4.1. Ashley Bloomfield reported that there were 82 cases overnight. No exponential growth, most associated with AOG cluster. Wide community engagement and testing has occurred over past few days. Of the cases, 28 in hospital and 2 are in ICU
 - 4.2. Ashley Bloomfield reported the main issue today is processing backlog of people awaiting transfer into MIQ, some waiting a few days. There is a plan in place to address this backlog, of roughly 90 people. The stand-up of Novotel MIQ facility went well.
 - 4.3. Ashley Bloomfield reported testing remains high. The testing backlog has been addressed with nothing over 48hrs. Contract Tracing remains high. Healthline volumes have eased.
 - 4.4. Ashley Bloomfield reported the connection between ARPHs, MoH and NHCC going well.
5. The Chair invited Chris Seed to update on the non-ag sector (non-food sectors)
 - 5.1. Non-ag sector voiced their frustration with existing Level 4 settings. Exporters noted feeling squeezed in their ability to supply essential services offshore.
6. The Chair invited Graham MacLean to provide an update on the exemptions process.
 - 6.1. Graham MacLean reported cross agency leads are ready to lean into the exemptions process with an interactive map syncing with the exemption process. Both will go live tomorrow.
 - 6.2. Graham MacLean stated a lot of work has been completed on clear, concise and accessible communications. These will go live from tomorrow.

IN-CONFIDENCE

7. The Chair invited Caralee McLiesh to update the group. Caralee noted there is less patience with delays on New Zealand supply chains as the rest of the world is not in lockdown this time.
 - 7.1. Caralee stated these issues will be compounded by internal boundaries when suppliers cannot access Auckland.
 - 7.2. Peter Mersi queried if we are clear on the policy position for each choice. Need to have clear examples to draw on.
 - 7.3. Una commented the Order in its current draft allows for these exemptions, but it is how the exemptions promote the purpose of the Act that important. Ashely can also make exemptions on the basis of economic, social and health conditions. Una stated to be mindful that if we do it for one, need to do it for all. Policy will be key.
8. The Chair invited Cheryl Barnes to provide an update on the drafting of the Order.
 - 8.1. Cheryl Barnes stated the Order was close to drafted.
 - 8.2. Una Jagose commented that exemptions for the Tuesday order will need to be flagged today for inclusion.
9. The Chair invited Andy Coster to give a compliance update.
10. Andy Coster reported boundaries will be set up on Tuesday due to no notable movement out of Auckland, following yesterday's announcement. Highted documentation will be key at Alert Level 3 to ensure free flowing continuation of freight through at checkpoints.
11. The Chair invited Carolyn Schwalger to update on welfare.
 - 11.1. Carolyn Schwalger updated that demand concerns are widespread across the country. Supply issues are being addressed by MBIE, NEMA and C4C.
12. The Chair invited Peter Mersi to update on supply chains.
 - 12.1. Peter Mersi shared Carlee McLiesh's supply chain concern, commenting that there are big pressures on logging due to vessels being turned around or cancelled.
 - 12.2. Peter Mersi noted there is stress in the system on Delta transmissibility and PPE requirements.
 - 12.3. Peter Mersi emphasized concerns regarding freight movement through checkpoints and to keep it moving. Any congestion at checkpoints, may result in supply chain issues.
13. The Chair invited Ashely Bloomfield to give an update on vaccines.
 - 13.1. Ashley Bloomfield reported we are due to receive 350,000 vaccines per week until mid-September. In October this will increase to 1 million doses. There will be a deficit between mid-September and October. Work is underway by MoH and the Minsters office to resolve this issue.
 - 13.2. Una Jagose raised questions on how vaccines may be sponsored into the country. MoH will take the lead in negotiating with Pfizer.
14. Chris Seed provided an update on Section 6(a)

Roundtable on operations – key points discussed at NRLT on 28 August

Note: This will be shared with NRLT members.

Key points and updates from NRLT members on 28 August	Lead
<p><u>Exemptions:</u></p> <p>Scoping (light touch) to be undertaken to look at policy framing and timeframes for class exemptions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we enable activity in the private sector while maintaining the intent (and integrity) of the Alert Level 4 / 3 boundaries? • Need clear examples to draw on. <p>Update to be provided by Cheryl at NRLT on later than Wednesday 1 September.</p>	DPMC
<p><u>Order</u></p> <p>Close to drafted. Note, any exemptions for the Tuesday order will need to be flagged today for inclusion.</p>	PCO/Crown Law/DPMC
<p><u>Implementation of Alert Level change:</u></p> <p>Ensure clear, concise and accessible communication</p>	DPMC

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National Response Leadership Team meeting

Date: 29 August 2021, 1000hrs

Member attendance: Brook Barrington (NRLT Chair), Ashley Bloomfield, Graham MacLean, Cheryl Barnes, Peter Mersi, Una Jagose, Andy Coster, Chris Seed, Rebecca Kitteridge, Christine Stevenson, Caralee McLiesh, Dave Gawn, Ruth Fairhall

Other attendance: Ella Jones (NRLT Secretariat), Hamish Rogers, Peter Hughes, Richard Schmidt, Rachel Carter, Emily Waterson, Ben McBride, Chris Bunny, Gary Knowles

Purpose

This briefing records the discussion at the National Response Leadership Team meeting regarding the Alert Level 4 in effect across the country.

Next steps

1. Cabinet will meet on Monday 30 August to assess advice on the Alert Level posture.
2. Meeting Monday 30 August between MoH, MFAT Section 9(2)(i) on procurement of vaccines.

Minutes

3. The Chair of the National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) opened the meeting.
4. The Chair invited Ashley Bloomfield to give a situation update:
 - 4.1. Ashley Bloomfield reported as at 0900, there were 83 new cases. Of these, 82 in Auckland and 1 close contact in Wellington already in isolation. Outbreak remains contained to Auckland.
 - 4.2. Ashley Bloomfield noted that MoH are fielding a lot of information requests which diverting officials from building a comprehensive insights picture (on cases generated from household's vs locations of interest; overall compliance and social license picture). A plan to form a fuller picture (inductive and deductive) is being developed today. Multiple agencies offered resource to support, if required.
 - 4.3. Ashley Bloomfield provided anecdotal evidence regarding increasing concerns about gatherings and workplaces operating where they should not be. NRLT members noted we currently have an important window for public messaging to reiterate messages and ensure people are at home.
 - 4.4. Ashley Bloomfield reported that testing and contact tracing going well. There are now 30 people in hospital, with a number in ICU. These are predominately from the Pasifika community and can expect number to grow.
 - 4.5. Ashley Bloomfield stated the backlog of getting people into MIQ is being worked through.
5. The Chair shared insights and trends on Delta, pre-emptively asking the system to look at several Alert Level setting scenarios, prior to Government commissioning (table below refers). This is to be lead through DPMC COVID-19 Group, leaving MoH intelligence to focus on Public Health picture.

IN-CONFIDENCE


6. Ashley Bloomfield highlighted that while the intelligence is important, it is critical that movement is stopped as effectiveness has shown in previous responses. However, noted the economic considerations required.

6.1. The Group discussed a number of differing ways in which public communication could be strengthened to improve this.

7. Una Jagose provided an update on the legal proposition for vaccinated verses unvaccinated discrimination in the private sector which should be complete by tomorrow morning.

8. Ruth Fairhall provided an update on the Cabinet paper. All on track for Cabinet tomorrow.

Section 9(2)(i)



Signed

Brook Barrington
Chair, National Response Leadership Team

Roundtable on operations – key points discussed at NRLT on 29 August

Note: This will be shared with NRLT members.

Key points and updates from NRLT members on 29 August	Lead
<p><u>Insights</u></p> <p>Graham MacLean to consider composition of additional resource to support the insights function - in order to build a comprehensive insights picture (inductive and deductive) re the situation in Auckland, incl. insights on movements.</p> <p>Agencies to support MoH as insights must be public health informed.</p> <p>Utilise PSC Hub</p>	<p>DPMC / MoH / with support from relevant agencies</p>
<p><u>Quiet scoping: "flattening the curve"</u></p> <p>Red team to look at gradation of options for managing movement under alert level settings, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 9(2)(g)(i) • How we might enable activity in the private sector at AL4 / 3; • How we manage the AL4/AL3 boundary to ensure there is no leakage; • What <u>other</u> measures can be taken Section 9(2)(g)(i) (rapid tests; support to vulnerable households) <p>Cheryl Barnes to notify Minister Hipkins' office of work underway.</p>	<p>DPMC (with support from relevant agencies)</p>
<p><u>Comms on movements at AL4</u></p> <p>Request from Chair for Covid-19 Group to review existing communications collateral on movements – do we need a collateral refresh? And can public communication be strengthened to reiterate current rules?</p> <p>Note – there may not be. But it is timely to review.</p>	<p>DPMC</p>

National Response Leadership Team meeting

Date: 30 August 2021, 0830hrs

Member attendance: Brook Barrington (NRLT Chair), Ashley Bloomfield, Amber Bill (for Graham MacLean), Cheryl Barnes, Peter Mersi, Una Jagose, Andy Coster, Chris Seed, Rebecca Kitteridge, Christine Stevenson, Caralee McLiesh, Dave Gawn

Other attendance: Rae Nathan (NRLT Secretariat), Hamish Rogers, Ruth Fairhall, Peter Hughes, Richard Schmidt, Ben McBride, Chris Bunny, Gary Knowles

Purpose

This briefing records the discussion at the National Response Leadership Team meeting regarding the Alert Level 4 in effect across the country.

Next steps


1. Cabinet will meet on Monday 30 August to assess advice on the Alert Level posture.

Minutes

2. The Chair of the National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) opened the meeting.
3. The Chair invited Ashley Bloomfield to give a situation update:
 - 3.1. Ashley Bloomfield reported that by EOD yesterday 29 August there were another 24 cases reported, all reported in Auckland. The Ministry of Health anticipate more cases will have resulted overnight to 30 August.
 - 3.2. Ashley Bloomfield noted three key focus areas today for DG Health:
 - 3.2.1. Building the intelligence picture and strategic outlook of the outbreak. Caroline McElroy is the MOH lead liaising with ARPHS to get the fuller intelligence picture and strategic outlook.
 - 3.2.2. Auckland DHBs are under pressure, and there are operational implications for organising an Auckland community isolation support model, and they will likely need support from elsewhere in the country to do this.
 - 3.2.3. There are risks associated with operationalising more facilities quickly. MOH with response agencies will proactively consider a mixed model for isolation options.
4. The Chair invited Carolyn Tremain to provide an update on MIQ capacity and work underway.
 - 4.1. Capacity in Auckland – Jet Park has 14 rooms vacant, and all cases today will go to the Novotel (129 rooms vacant). MIQ is in discussions with the Holiday Inn for one wing to become quarantine facility, this would provide a further 200 rooms. Capacity would max out at about 680 rooms across those three facilities.
 - 4.2. The health workforce to manage MIQs is stretched and for additional MIQs in Auckland they would need more support from Auckland DHB to get the right people in the right places to manage MIQs. Non-health workforce to manage and oversee MIQs is also limited.


- 4.3. The Chair directed DPMC to progress thinking on the self-isolation pilot and if there are learnings or methods in that work that could be applied now or soon to progress self-isolation as a viable option for contacts to meet isolation requirement.
- 4.4. Members noted that a mixed model approach for isolation options would place strain on systems to operationalise.
5. Ruth Fairhall provided an update on the Cabinet paper due to be discussed today 30 August, it will include agencies' suggested changes this morning and an announcement will occur this afternoon.
6. The Chair reiterated the strategic work programme commissioned yesterday 29 August.

Section 9(2)(g)(i)



- 6.3. How to prepare the systems to avoid another Delta outbreak (eg AL setting scenarios).
- 6.4. What other countries are doing to manage caseloads that we might be able to learn from (both good and bad lessons).
7. The Chair invited the New Zealand Police Commissioner to update Members on AL boundaries border enforcement. The Police Commissioner is confident NZP are in place to operationalise enforcement when the ALR Order goes into effect. One area that will be key to its success is having good exemptions processes in place.
8. The Chair invited Members to provide operational and tactical updates.
9. Maps and processes regarding exemptions is on the UAC website (MOH leading on personal exemptions; MBIE lead on business exemptions), and further clarity on what is permitted movement across boundaries, noting minimal movement is permitted.

9.1. Section 9(2)(f)(iv)



10. Members discussed how the system could gain a picture of the travel patterns of individuals across the AL boundaries to manage the AL 4 / 3 boundary and ensure there is no leakage. Macro data is captured by NZTA and MOT, but the tricky part will be linking that to NZP tracking of movement across boundaries. Members discussed reinforcing public health measures and messages at checkpoints to drive behaviours.
- 10.1. DPMC, NZP, MBIE, MOT will work together this week on informing a picture of boundary enforcement and reinforcing public health measures at the border.

11. Members heard that an increase in Pacific languages translation and interpretation may be required.
12. Pasifika Futures and partners/networks to provide funding and food on the ground to Pacific people in Auckland. The Chair noted to NEMA and C4C governance members that if funding cannot be attained, reach out to NRLT Members.
13. Section 6(a) [REDACTED]
14. Chris Seed reported that vaccine procurement is going well, there is likely to be a vaccine Ministers meeting today. At the time of the NRLT meeting, there is also a meeting underway between MFAT, MOH, Section 6(a) [REDACTED] on vaccine procurement.

Signed

Brook Barrington
Chair, National Response Leadership Team

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Roundtable on operations – key points discussed at NRLT on 30 August

Note: This will be shared with NRLT members.

Key points and updates from NRLT members on 30 August	Lead
<p><u>Strategic work commissioned on 'flattening the curve'</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Section 9(2)(g)(i) [Redacted] 2. Section 9(2)(g)(i) [Redacted] 3. Plan/advice to prepare systems to reduce risk of a further Delta outbreak eg AL setting scenarios (DPMC lead) 4. What other countries are doing to manage caseloads (once the border is open) that NZ might be able to learn from. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note – Caroline McElroy (MOH) is building an intelligence picture and strategic outlook of the outbreak, working with ARPHS 	<p>DPMC / MoH / with support from relevant agencies</p>
<p><u>Options to meet isolation requirements</u></p> <p>Establish more MIQFs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In AKL the health workforce is under pressure which is likely to have an impact on available workforce for further MIQFs. Trained workforce to manage MIQFs is also stretched. MIQ operations will need support from Auckland DHB to get the right people in the right places to manage MIQFs. <p>Mixed model?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DPMC to progress thinking on the self-isolation pilot and if there are learnings or methods in that work that could be applied now or soon to progress self-isolation as a viable option for contacts to meet isolation requirement. 	<p>MIQ / MOH / with support from relevant agencies</p> <p>DPMC / MOH</p>
<p><u>Travel across AL boundary</u></p> <p>Discussion on how the system could gain a picture of the travel patterns of people across AL boundaries to manage the AL 4 / 3 boundary and ensure there is no leakage. DPMC lead with NZP, MBIE, MOT on informing a picture of boundary enforcement and reinforcing public health measures at the border.</p>	<p>DPMC to develop plan for how to do this</p>
<p><u>Exemptions</u></p> <p>Maps and processes regarding exemptions is on the UAC website (MOH leading on personal exemptions; MBIE lead on business exemptions), and further clarity on what is permitted movement across boundaries, noting minimal movement is permitted.</p>	<p>MBIE / MOH / DPMC</p>

National Response Leadership Team meeting

Date: 31 August 2021, 0900hrs

Member attendance: Brook Barrington (NRLT Chair), Ashley Bloomfield, Graham MacLean, Cheryl Barnes, Peter Mersi, Una Jagose, Andy Coster, Audrey Sonerson (for Chris Seed), Rebecca Kitteridge, Christine Stevenson, Caralee McLiesh, Dave Gawn

Other attendance: Rae Nathan (NRLT Secretariat), Hamish Rogers, Ben White, Peter Hughes, Richard Schmidt, Gary Knowles, Ben McBride

Purpose

This briefing records the discussion at the National Response Leadership Team meeting regarding the Alert Level 4 in effect across the country and the Alert Level 3 set to commence at 2359hrs 31 August for all areas except for Auckland.

Minutes

1. The Chair of the National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) opened the meeting.
2. The Chair invited Carolyn Tremain to discuss MIQF availability.
3. Members heard confirmation that the Holiday Inn will be converted from what was a close-contacts facility to a quarantine facility and that will provide the system with a further 195 quarantine rooms.
4. Members heard that if positive case numbers plateau or reduce over next few days the MIQF capacity can cope, but if positive case numbers increase the system will need to operationalise other options or additional facilities to isolate positive cases.
5. Members heard that Crowne Plaza is available to operate a close-contacts facility but MIQ will seek Minister Hipkins approval to use this facility for that purpose.
6. Members heard MIQ is operating a 24hr window to transport individuals to facilities.
7. Members commented that the MIQF system is under pressure and healthcare workers operating at MIQFs appear fatigued.
8. Section 6(a)
9. The Chair invited Members to discuss the boundary that will be in effect from 2359hrs tonight 31 August.
10. Members heard that 689 businesses have applied to cross regional boundaries and that covers around 5,000 essential workers. The largest sectors applying for exemptions are primary industries and freight/logistics operators. Members discussed that distribution centres are allowed to move freight from AL 4 areas through to AL 3 areas' distribution centres. The ways that business operate and transport goods across the country may create challenges for safe management of an Alert Level boundary.
11. The Chair asked that DPMC, MBIE, Public health consider policy options for an exemptions process and boundary settings to maintain supply chains and goods flow across the boundary, that limits higher risk movement across the boundary. The Chair asked DPMC to progress operational options around testing and surveillance regimes to surround the boundary and to enable safe movement across AL boundaries ('no leakage').

IN-CONFIDENCE

12. The Chair invited Gary Knowles (NEMA) to update on the West Auckland floods. Members heard an update on the situation in West Auckland, and that:
 - 12.1. FENZ received approximately 150 requests for support overnight.
 - 12.2. Auckland Emergency Management are ready to provide shelter to individuals who need to evacuate.
 - 12.3. Auckland Emergency Management, FENZ, NZ Police and discussing next steps.
 - 12.4. The National Coordination Centre (through NEMA) has stood up and is coordinating efforts on the ground with the CDEM group in Auckland.
 - 12.5. At this stage it does not appear necessary to declare any state of emergency or enable evacuation operations.
 - 12.6. COVID-19 safety complicates the rescue and recovery operations and that NEMA is reiterating the public health measures to those involved in operations.
13. The Chair invited Ashley Bloomfield to provide a situation update:
 - 13.1. Ashley Bloomfield reported that due to the West Auckland floods Waitakere Hospital has flooding currently and they are responding accordingly.
 - 13.2. Ashley Bloomfield reported that one case has been identified as a Corrections officer at a facility in Waikato, and MOH is working with Corrections accordingly.
 - 13.3. Ashley Bloomfield reported 6 individuals are in intensive care today due to COVID-19 infections. Ashley Bloomfield commented that there appears to be a higher hospitalisation rate with the Delta variant, despite that those who are in ICU today are relatively young compared to prior individuals infected.
14. Members heard from New Zealand Police that they are observing an increase in mental health issues presenting to NZP and other agencies (ie MSD).

Signed

Brook Barrington
Chair, National Response Leadership Team

Roundtable on operations – key points discussed at NRLT on 31 August

Note: This will be shared with NRLT members.

Key points and updates from NRLT members on 31 August	Lead
<p><u>Auckland floods</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure we are adhering to (and reiterating) good public health measures re any mingling of bubbles, for example, people leaving their houses and insurance assessors doing the rounds. 	NEMA
<p><u>Mental health impacts of AL restrictions (particularly AL 4 lockdown)</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Families and individuals under stress, particularly in AKL, may start to increase with the extension of AL 4 lockdown. MSD has observed an increase in mental health incidences requiring attention (ie Youthline calls are up 300%). NZP echoed this sentiment 3. Embed assessment/regard to mental health impacts in the processes and advice around tightening AL 4 settings and conditions, or extension of ALs. 4. Enhance communications about supports available. 5. Food access supports will likely need more funding to continue through extended duration of AL 4 in Auckland. 	DPMC MSD / TPK / C4C
<p><u>MIQF pressures and alternative options</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Additional quarantine capacity available (Holiday Inn on board) and close-contacts facility available (Crowne Plaza) will cope if case numbers plateau or reduce over the next few days. 7. Progressing development of alternative options to relieve MIQF pressure and contingency planning should MIQF capacity become critical. 	MIQ / DPMC / public health
<p><u>Movement across AL 4 / 3 boundary and business exemptions</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Context: Supply chains and flow of goods across the country may result in less-than-ideal movement across boundaries (ie freight moves from AL 4 area, to an AL 3 area, then back across boundary to AL 4 to deliver to individuals within AL 4 area). 9. Sweet spot to maintain supply chains and goods flow across the boundary, that limits higher risk movement across the boundary. 10. Progress operational options around testing and surveillance regimes to surround the boundary and to enable safe movement across AL boundaries ('no leakage'). 	MBIE / DPMC / MoH / with support from relevant agencies

National Response Leadership Team meeting

Date: 1 September 2021, 0830hrs


Member attendance: Brook Barrington (NRLT Chair), Ashley Bloomfield, Graham MacLean, Griere Cox (for Cheryl Barnes), Peter Mersi, Una Jagose, Andy Coster, Chris Seed, Rebecca Kitteridge, Christine Stevenson, Caralee McLiesh, Dave Gawn

Other attendance: Rae Nathan (NRLT Secretariat), Hamish Rogers, Ruth Fairhall, Peter Hughes, Richard Schmidt, Gary Knowles, Ben McBride, Rachel Carter

Purpose

This briefing records the discussion at the National Response Leadership Team meeting regarding the Alert Level 4 in effect in Auckland/Northland and the Alert Level 3 in effect for all areas except for Auckland/Northland.

Minutes


1. The Chair of the National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) opened the meeting.
2. The Chair invited Ashley Bloomfield to provide a situation update.
 - 2.1. Ashley Bloomfield reported that Caroline McElroy is still in Auckland working closely with ARPHS.
 - 2.2. Ashley Bloomfield reported that by 1500hrs yesterday 31 August there were further cases identified and that case numbers may yoyo up and down but that does not necessarily mean public health measures, and lockdown, is not working as intended to control the outbreak.
 - 2.3. Ashley Bloomfield reported there are still challenges across the healthcare system in Auckland and that Caroline McElroy would work with ARPHS to clarify if they need further operational support.
3. The Chair invited Carolyn Tremain to discuss MIQF availability.
 - 3.1. Projections for MIQF capacity looking manageable with the Holiday Inn becoming available.
 - 3.2. Novotel has a small number of rooms for families to isolate together, and many rooms for individuals, so one family going to the Novotel sometimes takes up multiple rooms for individuals. The configuration of the Holiday Inn can accommodate one family in one room more easily than other facilities which will aid in managing capacity of MIQF.
 - 3.3. The Crowne Plaza will also be available for managed isolation, not quarantine, shortly (within 24 hours) following ventilation work and facility reviews. It will be used for close-contacts and standard cohort-ing.
 - 3.4. Section 6(a) 

4. **Alternative options for MIQF: contingency planning (DPMC lead)**

4.1. Contingency planning for MIQF options should the system reach full capacity is underway. The Chair reiterated that although MIQF capacity pressure has eased in the past day, a contingency plan is necessary.

5. **Options for flattening the curve (DPMC lead)**

Section 9(2)(g)(i)



5.2. Members discussed that insights into the outbreak and into what measures are effective is a critical component to target additional measures to help flatten the curve. DPMC-led insights team are working with COVID-19 agencies to develop a regular (3x/week) insights piece focused on intelligence that will support policy and operational developments across multiple parts of the COVID-19 system.

5.3. Members discussed the importance of developing insights into what other similar countries are doing to flatten the curve, outside of lockdowns, to inform what that might look like in New Zealand and a range of options for us to consider. The due date for this work is 10 September to the NRLT and DPMC is the lead.

5.3.1. Insights should include other options to consider for a robust testing regime particularly at Alert Level boundary borders.

5.4. Members heard that DPMC will focus communications on further mitigations for workplaces to operate safely and further guidance for businesses to do this (including vaccinations for essential workers).

6. **AL 4 / 2 split policy process**

6.1. DPMC Policy leading on exploring what an AL 4 / 2 split might look like.

6.2. Members discussed that key intelligence will be from observing how the management of the AL 4 / 3 boundary currently in place between Auckland/Northland and rest of country.

6.3. Members discussed that a good and effective boundary is a public health measure and is therefore central to the policy process around assessment of AL split options.

7. Dave Gawn updated the NRLT on the Auckland floods operations.

7.1. NEMA is working with other agencies on other supports needed for individuals (eg housing, welfare supports, etc.) via AOG coordination. Major focus is assessment of needs for people affected.

7.2. Dave Gawn to update NRLT tomorrow on AOG response.

IN-CONFIDENCE

8. Members discussed the business travel documents processes underway and heard that as at yesterday 31 August 1615hrs approximately 21,000 employees were approved and are covered under travel documents.
 - 8.1. Members heard the largest groups applying for business travel documents are transport logistics (~8,000 employees); primary industries and food (4,690 employees); and utilities.
 - 8.2. Members heard compliance looks legitimate and applications are appropriate. Compliance activity leads are MBIE, MOT, MPI.
 - 8.3. Members discussed that there will be more movement and activity under AL 4 areas due to the fact that some businesses in AL 4 areas are able to operate to support businesses that are operating under AL 3 (ie ALR Order allows for steel production within AL 4 to provide freight to AL 3 area). Members noted that businesses need to apply for exemptions to do this.
9. Monday 6 September the NRLT will discuss the NRLT meeting cycles going forward.
10. The Chair closed the meeting.

Signed

Brook Barrington
Chair, National Response Leadership Team

Roundtable on operations – key points discussed at NRLT on 1 September

Note: This will be shared with NRLT members.

Key points and updates from NRLT members on 1 September	Lead
<p><u>Options for MIQF contingency planning</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Contingency planning for MIQF options should the system reach full capacity is underway. Briefing due to Minister Hipkins by EOD today 1 September. NRLT to receive update 2 September. 	<p>DPMC / MOH / MBIE</p>
<p><u>Options for flattening the curve</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Section 9(2)(g)(i) [REDACTED] Section 9(2)(g)(i) [REDACTED] Paper to NRLT by EOD today 1 September. NRLT to receive update 2 September. 	<p>DPMC / response agencies</p>
<p><u>Preparing advice on Alert Level 4 / 2 split</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> DPMC Policy advice on an AL 4 / 2 split. NRLT to receive update 2 September. 	<p>DPMC / response agencies</p>
<p><u>C4C / Auckland floods</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Government coordination of welfare supports for individuals affected by the floods. NRLT to receive update 2 September. 	<p>NEMA and relevant agencies</p>
<p><u>Insights assessment</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Developing insights into what other similar countries are doing to flatten the curve / managing caseloads, outside of lockdowns, to inform what that might look like in New Zealand and a range of options for us to consider. Down payment due 10 September. 	<p>DPMC</p>

National Response Leadership Team meeting

Date: 2 September 2021, 0830hrs

Member attendance: Brook Barrington (NRLT Chair), Ashley Bloomfield, Graham MacLean, Cheryl Barnes, Peter Mersi, Una Jagose, Andy Coster, Audrey Sonerson (for Chris Seed), Christine Stevenson, Caralee McLiesh, Dave Gawn

Other attendance: Rae Nathan (NRLT Secretariat), Hamish Rogers, Ruth Fairhall, Peter Hughes, Richard Schmidt, Gary Knowles, Ben McBride, Rachel Carter, Katrina Casey,


Purpose

This briefing records the discussion at the National Response Leadership Team meeting regarding the Alert Level 4 in effect in Auckland/Northland and the Alert Level 3 in effect for all areas except for Auckland/Northland.

Minutes

1. The Chair of the National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) opened the meeting.
2. The Chair invited Ashley Bloomfield to provide a situation update.
 - 2.1. Ashley Bloomfield reported that Caroline McElroy continues to work closely with ARPHS on outbreak intelligence, and that a report of the current outbreak should be available tomorrow.
 - 2.2. Ashley Bloomfield reported that for Northland area there has been negative wastewater test results, public health teams are chasing up tests, and a public health assessment of Northland is underway.
 - 2.3. Ashley Bloomfield reported that looking to the New South Wales situation it would be valuable for the system to relook at our planning for 2022 on the baseline public health measures and what settings may need to be enhanced (eg will the standard settings become those in AL 2 rather than AL 1).
 - 2.4. Ashley Bloomfield commented that our systems are geared up for events that require surge capacity, but that that workforce is quite different to having a baseline workforce dedicated to testing, contact tracing, community isolation capacity and capability. Ashley Bloomfield commented that the system needs a workforce that does not rely on a surging workforce, and that the Ministry of Health has started thinking around what a dedicated workforce might look like in the context going forward.
 - 2.5. The Chair commented that to protect our position (and gains made in our COVID-19 response thus far) we need to have a clear and appropriate baseline posture as we move into the future in context of the Reconnecting New Zealanders strategy and work underway, we need a coherent programme of work and a strategic framework for 2022 and beyond. This includes factoring in strategic workforce needs.
3. The Chair invited Carolyn Tremain to discuss MIQF availability.
 - 3.1. Projections for MIQF capacity looking manageable at this stage and the system is in a better position than yesterday.
 - 3.2. Quarantine capacity contingency planning is priority work for the system.

Section 9(2)(f)(iv)



5. Options for flattening the curve (DPMC lead)

- 5.1. Members discussed the option set provided in the memo.
- 5.2. Members endorsed engagement with Juliet Gerrard and David Skegg on the options presented.
- 5.3. The Chair recommended to move at pace for this work.
- 5.4. The Chair suggested we gather more information on how we might provide guidance and increase compliance with 'site bubbles'.
- 5.5. The Chair suggested improved accessibility of key safety measures is considered to increase uptake of measures.
- 5.6. Carolyn Tremain offered to use existing MBIE channels to provide increased guidance to businesses.
- 5.7. The Chair suggested bulletins might be a more accessible and flexible way to promulgate guidance.
- 5.8. The Chair suggested starting with principles (eg principle 1 is limit movement) and if businesses cannot meet this principle, suggest other measures they can have in place to supplement (eg IPC).

IN-CONFIDENCE

5.9. **Action:** Oral update to NRLT tomorrow 3 September on initial business and sector guidance in bulletin form. First bulletin due COP tomorrow 3 September

6. **AL 4 / 2 split policy process**

6.1. Members discussed the paper proposed to the COVID-19 Ministers Group for discussion today.

6.2. Members highlighted the enforcement and regulatory powers available to agencies to operationalise Alert Level split boundaries.

7. Dave Gawn updated the NRLT on the Auckland floods operations.

7.1. Continued assessment of damage and welfare needs. At this stage it appears individuals affected by the floods have relocated themselves to friends and family homes.

7.2. NEMA view is that the floods are not a large scale emergency response event in comparison to other emergency responses.

8. **Action:** Invite Debbie Power, Nic Blakely, Mac Leauanae, to attend NRLT tomorrow to provide updates on MIQF and welfare needs in a broad sense (eg pressure on supermarkets, food access, housing, etc.)

9. Monday 6 September the NRLT will discuss the NRLT meeting cycles going forward.

10. The Chair closed the meeting.

Signed

Brook Barrington
Chair, National Response Leadership Team

Roundtable on operations – key points discussed at NRLT on 2 September

Note: This will be shared with NRLT members.

Key points and updates from NRLT members on 2 September	Lead
Section 9(2)(f)(iv)	
<p><u>Options for flattening the curve</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Focus on improved guidance, in bulletin form, out to sectors on safety measures under Alert Level 4 and 3. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved accessibility of key safety measures will be considered to increase uptake of measures. Suggestion to use existing MBIE channels to share guidance/bulletins. 5. Draw on the work undertaken in the primary sector (MPI). Other options considered to flatten the curve will be tested with Juliet Gerrard and David Skegg. 6. Oral update on initial business and sector guidance/bulletins to NRLT on 3 September. 7. First bulletin due COP, 3 September. 	DPMC / response agencies
<p><u>Preparing advice on Alert Level 4 / 2 split</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Update to NRLT on conversation with COVID-19 Ministers Group on split AL 4 / 2 considerations. 	DPMC / response agencies
<p><u>C4C</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Debbie Power, Nic Blakely, Mac Leauanae, to attend NRLT on 3 September to provide updates on MIQF and welfare needs in a broad sense (eg pressure on supermarkets, food access, housing, Pasifika providers etc.) 	DPMC
<p><u>Insights assessment</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Developing insights into what other similar countries are doing to flatten the curve / managing caseloads, outside of lockdowns, to inform what that might look like in New Zealand and a range of options for us to consider. 11. Down payment due 10 September. 	DPMC

National Response Leadership Team meeting

Date: 3 September 2021, 0830hrs

Member attendance: Brook Barrington (NRLT Chair), Ashley Bloomfield, Graham MacLean, Cheryl Barnes, Peter Mersi, Una Jagose, Andy Coster, Chris Seed, Christine Stevenson, Caralee McLiesh, Dave Gawn, Rebecca Kitteridge

Other attendance: Rae Nathan (NRLT Secretariat), Hamish Rogers, Ruth Fairhall, Peter Hughes, Ben McBride, Rachel Carter, Katrina Casey, Debbie Power, Nic Blakeley, Mac Leauanae, Antony Byers, Charlotte Beaglehole, Libby Greville, Amber Bill

Purpose


This briefing records the discussion at the National Response Leadership Team meeting regarding the Alert Level 4 in effect in Auckland and the Alert Level 3 in effect for all areas except for Auckland. As at 2359hrs yesterday 2 September Northland is under Alert Level 3.

Minutes

1. The Chair of the National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) opened the meeting.
2. The Chair invited C4C leads to provide an update on the status of welfare needs regarding the Alert Level lockdown.
 1. Nic Blakely summarised the themes presenting across welfare support needs and at the Caring for Communities governance level.
 2. Food access – Progress from last week is an increase in funding to the welfare systems (to Whanau Ora, MSD, food networks and foodbanks) and to iwi to support. Looking ahead to next week they are trying to improve the coordination of funding out to communities from the system. Food access will continue to be an issue to watch.
 3. Housing – Biggest issue in housing relates to ability for individuals to self-isolate in suitable housing and the options for potential in home quarantine. Managing homelessness and emergency housing needs has been fairly under control.
 - 2.3.1. Members noted that we should plan for how food access and housing issues will be better-addressed and coordinated should we yoyo between Alert Levels.
 4. Vaccine uptake by Pacific and Maori communities – Chief Executives and system leads would benefit from having clear messages regarding uptake trends and if there is a need to fill a communications gap.
 5. Mental health engagement with communities – There are many connections across agencies that reach out to communities to ‘check in’ with people on how they are faring under lockdown. NRLT will consider if a centralised coordinated effort is needed regarding this, should Caring for Communities lead request it.
6. Mac Leauanae provided an update on what the Ministry is observing across the response – There are consistent themes presenting:
7. Food access, self-isolation issues, mental health issues, and employment issues related to reduction of hours, losing jobs, and ‘no jab, no job’ challenges. Sub-themes identified are: youth wellbeing and outreach, vaccine dis/misinformation, elder care abuse, domestic violence.


8. Mac Leauanae commented that the longer we continue with lockdowns the more these issues will present.
 9. Mac Leauanae reported that Pacific providers have strong health and cultural expertise but they are tired and under pressure. The additional funding will relieve some of the pressure, but a long term sustainable plan is needed here.
 10. Mac Leauanae updated Members that there are 3x weekly Zono occurring to engage with Pacific communities and Pacific leaders.
 11. **Action:** Mac Leauanae and Nic Blakeley as standing ad-hoc members of NRLT.
 12. **Action:** Graham MacLean to lead a tactical analysis of the mechanisms in place to ensure we are joined up and addressing issues raised by Pacific groups.
 13. Carolyn Tremain invited Mac Leauanae to provide further input or insight on how Pacific leaders stationed at MIQFs might provide further cultural and practical supports to Pacific individuals in MIQFs. Agreement to take this offline.
 14. Caralee McLiesh invited Mac Leauanae to provide further input or insight on how Treasury could enhance access to the financial supports available to increase Pacific uptake. Agreement to take this offline.
3. The Chair invited Ashley Bloomfield to provide a situation update.

Section 9(2)(f)(iv)




2. Ashley Bloomfield commented that MOH is putting in significant effort to increase testing rates in Auckland, particularly for those that are crossing the boundary. MOH is considering what mechanisms can be put into place quickly to track individuals that are getting regularly tested and crossing the boundary.
3. The Chair discussed the need for a strategic view as move forward that incorporates a view of workforce capacity pressures.
4. The Chair invited Carolyn Tremain to discuss MIQF availability.
 1. As at 3 September that there are additional rooms available for quarantine in Auckland and that surge public health capacity for management of these rooms has been secured.

2. Section 9(2)(g)(i)



4.2.1. Reported that MIQF staff are reporting physical safety concerns.

Section 9(2)(f)(iv)



Section 9(2)(f)(iv)

6. Options for flattening the curve (DPMC lead)

1. Members heard from Graham MacLean that the guidance process to look at AL 4 settings and how we can deliver them in a more efficient and effective way. Additional measures from a policy perspective is underway, look to have something available next week for NRLT to discuss.
2. Members heard the process they intend to follow to develop a bulletin. The starting point is high level guidance and principles of AL 4 and put up a prototype or concept for NRLT and others to comment on, to seek agreement that the right pitch of material is appropriate to promulgate through sectors and leads. Part of the plan is to identify where the channels sit that we could capitalise on.
3. The Chair commented that sometimes giving the private sector case studies can be compelling for a private sector & small business audience. The Chair suggested a Zoom with business leads to engage with the material and hear what more might be needed.
4. **Action:** discuss progress with this piece of work on Sunday 5 September NRLT meeting.

7. Split Alert Level policy processes

1. Members heard from Ruth Fairhall on the discussion with COVID-19 Ministers Group yesterday 2 September on considerations for split Alert Levels.

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2. Ruth Fairhall updated members that there is a paper due Monday 6 September on Alert Level splits: Planning for a possible AL 4 / 3 North Island and AL 2 in South Island. Three components to the paper will be: What the AL settings will be (reliant on public health advice), how the boundaries might work (criteria to cross boundaries), and what the implications are of these possible changes.
3. Next week there will be focus on what an AL 4 / 2 split might look like for AL 4 in Auckland, and AL 2 for the rest of the country.
8. The Chair summarised the key strategic pieces that he has commissioned:

Section 9(2)(g)(i)

3. Insights to NRLT on 10 September on how other countries are successfully living in a Delta world, Singapore and Canada in particular, and what lessons we can learn from countries on what not to do (eg from the UK and Israel) (Graham MacLean lead)
4. Develop a post-lockdown baseline position (pre border, at border, inside border) and what the system will revert to after lockdown is over that helps us to keep Delta out and at bay such that we do not have to revert to lockdowns (Cheryl Barnes lead)
 - 8.4.1. Before and at the border eg vaccine status of travellers, country risk assessments, etc.
 - 8.4.2. Inside border eg public health measures, surveillance, etc. And things we have put in place or innovations we are considering to put in place to keep Delta contained eg rapid testing at boundaries, pre-lockdown travel restrictions.
9. Monday 6 September the NRLT will discuss the NRLT meeting cycles going forward.
10. The Chair closed the meeting.

Signed

Brook Barrington
Chair, National Response Leadership Team

Roundtable on operations – key points discussed at NRLT on 3 September

Note: This will be shared with NRLT members.

Key points and updates from NRLT members on 3 September	Lead
Section 9(2)(f)(iv)	
<p><u>Options for flattening the curve</u></p> <p>4. Discuss progress with this piece of work to NRLT on Sunday 5 September.</p>	DPMC / response agencies
<p><u>Preparing advice on split Alert Levels</u></p> <p>5. Update to NRLT on Sunday 5 September RE paper due Monday 6 September.</p>	DPMC / response agencies
<p><u>C4C</u></p> <p>6. Nic Blakely, Mac Leauanae, to attend NRLT as ad hoc members to provide updates on presenting welfare needs in a broad sense (eg pressure on supermarkets, food access, housing, Pasifika providers etc.)</p>	DPMC
<p><u>Strategic pieces commissioned by NRLT Chair</u></p>	
Section 9(2)(g)(i)	
<p>9. Develop a post-lockdown baseline position (pre border, at border, inside border) and what the system will revert to after lockdown is over that helps us to keep Delta out and at bay such that we do not have to revert to lockdowns (Cheryl Barnes lead)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before and at the border eg vaccine status of travellers, country risk assessments, etc. • Inside border eg public health measures, surveillance, etc. And things we have put in place or innovations we are considering to put in place to keep Delta contained eg rapid testing at boundaries, pre-lockdown travel restrictions. 	DPMC / response agencies
<p><u>Insights assessment</u></p> <p>10. Developing insights into what other similar countries are doing to flatten the curve / managing caseloads, outside of lockdowns, to inform what</p>	DPMC

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that might look like in New Zealand and a range of options for us to consider.	
11. Down payment due 10 September .	
<u>Meeting cycle</u>	NRLT / Chair
12. Monday 6 September the NRLT will discuss the NRLT meeting cycles going forward.	

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National Response Leadership Team meeting

Date: 5 September 2021, 1000hrs

Member attendance: Brook Barrington (NRLT Chair), Ashley Bloomfield, Graham MacLean, Cheryl Barnes, Peter Mersi, Una Jagose, Christine Stevenson, Dave Gawn, Carolyn Tremain, Andy Coster, Rebecca Kitteridge, Caralee McLiesh, Chris Seed

Other attendance: Rae Nathan (NRLT Secretariat), Hamish Rogers, Ruth Fairhall, Peter Hughes, Ben McBride, Mac Leauanae

Purpose

This briefing records the discussion at the National Response Leadership Team meeting regarding the Alert Level 4 in effect in Auckland and the Alert Level 3 in effect for all areas except for Auckland.

Minutes

1. The Chair of the National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) opened the meeting.
2. The Chair invited Ashley Bloomfield to provide a situation update.
 - 2.1. Ashley Bloomfield reported that the clusters are still reporting to be Pacific communities. Ashley Bloomfield reported that MOH will follow up with
 - 2.2. Ashley Bloomfield noted the pieces of advice and work underway yesterday and today:
 - 2.2.1. Public health advice to support proposed Alert Level splits (AL 4 / 3 / 2 split and AL 4 / 2 split) in the Cabinet paper due for discussion tomorrow 6 September.
 - 2.2.2. Public health risk assessment is underway.
 - 2.2.3. Public health advice that shows how the system is tracking in containing the outbreak and on if leakage is occurring, advice should be ready by this afternoon.
 - 2.2.4. Public health advice on a surveillance testing and plan around Auckland region is underway.
3. **The Chair invited Ruth Fairhall to update on the Alert Level Cabinet paper due to Ministers tomorrow.**
 - 3.1. Ruth Fairhall reported that the Cabinet paper proposes two main options for Alert Level changes, they are: Auckland at AL 4, rest of country at AL 2; and Auckland at AL 4, rest of North Island at AL 3, and South Island at AL 2.
 - 3.2. Ruth Fairhall noted the paper suggests changes to Alert Level 2 settings –
 - 3.2.1. Change indoor gathering limits to 50 people (barring well-ventilated indoor spaces such as supermarkets) and suggests application of limit to gathering areas it was not applied to before such as museums;
 - 3.2.2. No-standing rule on public transit.

3.3. Ruth Fairhall noted the paper suggests changes to boundary settings –

3.3.1. If there is an AL 4 / 3 / 2 split, or an AL 4 / 2 split the boundary crossings would apply the existing AL 4 / 3 boundary crossing rules.

3.3.2. Proposal is that permissions allowed for in the Order are tighter.

3.3.3. Work travel permissions would remain the same (AL 4 business allowed to travel) and travel permissions include a surveillance plan which is being worked through.

3.4. The Chair noted that with the multiple pieces of advice underway today, NRLT may need to reconvene today to reconcile across advice. NRLT on stand-by.

4. The Chair invited Graham MacLean to discuss the work on strengthening Alert Level 4 guidance.

Section 9(2)(g)(i)

4.2. NRLT Members discussed the value of profiling good practice 'case studies', being clear about what is suggested good practice versus what the rules state, and encouragement to vaccinate.

5. Roundtable with NRLT Members on operational updates

6. Graham MacLean reported that from the National Response Group meetings there is an emerging issue around workforce pressure and capacity into week 3 of the response. Graham MacLean noted that the surge workforce that was 'loaned' to the response is needed to back to home agencies due to BAU needs.

6.1. This is coming to the fore in the compliance space in particular.

6.2. Peter Hughes offered that Graham MacLean work with the Public Service Commission to resolve this issue.

7. NRLT Members discussed the concern raised by Carolyn Tremain in prior NRLT meetings around the fact that individuals coming into MIQ from the community need additional supports, including better communication and engagement, to increase compliance of staying in MIQ.

7.1. Members heard that Carolyn Tremain and Mac Leauanae have worked together closely to enhance the communications and outreach to those on the ground to improve MIQ stays and have addressed issues such as providing the right types of food and supplies and maintaining connections to faith whilst in MIQ. There are other issues presenting that MBIE and MPP are working together to address.

8. The Chair invited Carolyn Tremain to discuss MIQF availability.

8.1. Carolyn Tremain reported that quarantine availability as at this morning is 155 rooms available, and a further 52 will be available later today.

8.2. Section 9(2)(g)(i)

Section 9(2)(g)(i)

9. The Chair closed the meeting.

Signed

Brook Barrington
Chair, National Response Leadership Team

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Roundtable on operations – key points discussed at NRLT on 5 September

Note: This will be shared with NRLT members.

Key points and updates from NRLT members on 5 September	Lead
<p><u>Advice underway</u></p> <p>1. With the multiple pieces of advice underway today, NRLT may need to reconvene today to reconcile across advice. NRLT on stand-by.</p>	<p>DPMC / relevant agencies</p>
<p>Sections 9(2)(g)(i), 9(2)(f)(iv)</p>	
<p><u>Options for flattening the curve – strengthened guidance</u></p> <p>4. Discussion on the value of profiling good practice 'case studies', being clear about what is suggested good practice versus what the rules state, and encouragement to vaccinate.</p> <p>5. Synthesised guidance was tested with external stakeholders.</p>	<p>DPMC / response agencies</p>
<p><u>Workforce</u></p> <p>6. Graham MacLean noted that the surge workforce that was 'loaned' to the response is needed to back to home agencies due to BAU needs. Graham to work with the Public Service Commission to resolve this issue.</p>	<p>PSC / DPMC</p>

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National Response Leadership Team meeting

Date: 06 September 2021, 0830hrs

Member attendance: Brook Barrington (NRLT Chair), Ashley Bloomfield, Amber Bill, Cheryl Barnes, Peter Mersi, Una Jagose, Andy Coster, Chris Seed, Rebecca Kitteridge, Christine Stevenson, Caralee McLiesh, Dave Gawn

Other attendance: Ella Jones (NRLT Secretariat), Hamish Rogers, Peter Hughes, Ruth Fairhall, Richard Schmidt, Rachel Carter, Emily Waterson, Ben McBride, Bryan Chapple, Nic Blakeley, Chris Bunny, Gary Knowles, Mac Leauanae

Purpose

This briefing records the discussion at the National Response Leadership Team meeting regarding the Alert Level 4 and 3 in effect.

Next steps

1. Cabinet will meet on Monday 06 September to assess advice on the Alert Level posture.
2. A cross agency working group will convene today to discuss the operationalisation of the boundary testing.
3. The COVID Ministers group will meet at 1000 Tuesday and 1000 Thursday.
4. The CBC will meet on Wednesday at 1500.

Minutes

5. The Chair of the National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) opened the meeting.
6. The Chair invited Ashley Bloomfield to give a situation update:
 - 6.1. Ashely Bloomfield reported no major changes from yesterday, with same level of cases coming through. Can expect more cases to come through, including small sub clusters as part of the outbreak. The Public Health advice for the Cabinet paper has not changed.
 - 6.2. Ashely Bloomfield provided an update on the considerations for surveillance testing measures at a potential AL4/2 border. It is expected to be a 4-6-week endeavour, complementary to strong public messaging. This will need to be communicated clearly to Cabinet.
7. The Chair invited Ruth Fairhall to give an update on the Cabinet paper:
 - 7.1. Ruth Fairhall reported the Cabinet paper is seeking two main considerations from Ministers. These are:
 - 7.1.1. Auckland will remain at AL4. De-escalation of AL for Auckland are still under consideration.
 - 7.1.2. For the rest of New Zealand, consideration is timing on whether it will be a staged approach to AL2 with the SI potentially moving first, and how this will work regionally.
 - 7.1.3. Changes to AL2 settings which includes no standing on public transport and reduction of the size of indoor gatherings. It was noted further guidance will

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need to be provide later in the week. This was supported by Ashley Bloomfield, particularly in regard to larger venues.

8. Carolyn Tremain raised social licence across the non-food sector will likely ebb this week. Businesses have communicated that an AL4/2 boundary will be harder for them to operate in.
9. The group discussed enhanced testing at the border. They agreed that clear and concise communication in the Cabinet paper, and to the public, is required.
10. The group discussed gathering sizes and the need for consistency across settings. Further consideration of larger venues and outdoor gatherings is required to increase social licence without compromising public health advice.
11. The Chair invited Carolyn Tremain to update the group on MIQ capacity and it was reported:
 - 11.1. 177 rooms, the additional rooms in the Holiday Inn have come online. There are 107 MIF workers who are self-isolating.
 - 11.2. . There have been some behavioural issues within MIQ facilities. Additional support is being provided by NZDF, NZP and First security.
 - 11.3. The first Red flight from NSW came into NZ. There has been a shift in social licence with airport staff experiencing higher complaints and abuse.
12. The Chair invited MPP to provide an update on the community in Auckland.
 - 12.1. Mac Leauanae reported that the longer Auckland stays at AL4, identified issues will be exacerbated. He reported that the measures put in place by C4C are assisting the community. The numbers accessing Fono is declining and they are getting used to using the services.
13. Dave Gawn stated those in West Auckland who were affected by the flooding are growing increasingly frustrated by difficulty getting exemptions to return home. This is currently sitting with MoH.
14. The Chair confirmed that NRLT will continue to meet daily for this working week, with a review on Friday for weekend requirements.

Signed

Brook Barrington
Chair, National Response Leadership Team

Roundtable on operations – key points discussed at NRLT on 06 September

Note: This will be shared with NRLT members.

Key points and updates from NRLT members on 06 September	Lead
<p><u>Post-Cabinet Decision:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monitor issues of social licence• Basic public health measures need to be reiterated and strengthened• Separate work underway in the short term (next 3 weeks) verses work required for longer term strengthening of AL2 settings	DPMC

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National Response Leadership Team meeting

Date: 07 September 2021, 0830hrs

Member attendance: Rebecca Kitteridge (Acting NRLT Chair), Ashley Bloomfield, Amber Bill, Cheryl Barnes, Peter Mersi, Una Jagose, Andy Coster, Chris Seed, Christine Stevenson, Caralee McLiesh, Dave Gawn

Other attendance: Rae Nathan (NRLT Secretariat), Hamish Rogers, Mac Leauanae, Peter Hughes, Richard Schmidt, Rachel Carter, Ben McBride

Purpose

This briefing records the discussion at the National Response Leadership Team meeting regarding the Alert Level 4 and 3 in effect across the country. Note Cabinet agreed yesterday 6 September that Auckland would remain at Alert Level 4 until 2359hrs 14 September, and the rest of the country would move to Alert Level 2 commencing from 2359hrs Tuesday 7 September.

Next steps

1. NRLT will meet at 0830hrs each day until at least Friday 10 September with a review on Friday for weekend requirements.
2. The COVID Ministers group will meet at 1000hrs Tuesday and 1000hrs Thursday.
3. The CBC will meet on Wednesday at 1500hrs.

Minutes

4. The Acting Chair ('the Chair') of the National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) opened the meeting and noted she is Acting for Brook Barrington.
5. The Chair invited Ashley Bloomfield to give a situation update:
 - 5.1. Ashley Bloomfield reported that the Middlemore case identified Section 9(2)(a) [REDACTED]
 - 5.2. Ashley Bloomfield updated on the surveillance testing regime for essential workers, particularly those that will cross the Alert Level boundary.
6. The Chair invited Members to discuss implementation of a testing regime for essential workers.
 - 6.1. Ashley Bloomfield commented that there is large capacity in the system to perform and process nasopharyngeal testing, and that saliva testing has been rolled out as an available option to certain MIQFs, and a second provider Rako was brought on to support surveillance testing regime of essential workers crossing the AL boundary and essential workplaces. Ashley Bloomfield noted that the surveillance testing regime will not be saliva testing-based for now, but saliva testing should be more readily available as an option in the coming days.
 - 6.2. Carolyn Tremain referred to feedback that MBIE is receiving from businesses and industry that to implement testing regimes with essential work places it will take time to operationalise and to do it correctly. The ability to get testing capability and processes in place to operationalise within a week is complex for industry to work

through. Carolyn Tremain suggested that a key focus and high-priority piece of work today is to support businesses to be compliant with the surveillance testing regime. Carolyn Tremain has observed that essential workforces do not seem willing to uptake saliva testing and that the current option is to rely on nasopharyngeal testing twice/week. Section 9(2)(g)(i)

- 6.3. Christine Stevenson commented that from experience with implementing the border worker testing regime saliva testing could become central to the boundary testing regime if it is set up in a way that is convenient and makes it easy for individuals to partake in the regime.
- 6.4. Peter Mersi referred to feedback that MOT is receiving from businesses and industry on implementation of testing regimes. Peter Mersi sought clarity on the drafting of the Alert Level Order and how it operationalised the intent of the surveillance testing, the grace period for implementation and to whom the obligation falls (employer or employee).
- 6.5. The Chair summarised key considerations that should be worked through noting: Pace (or grace period) to transition to a surveillance testing regime; practically how to operationalise testing regime and working closely across government and with industry; how to make it easy for essential workers to provide evidence of tests; clarify the value of spot checks in this part of implementation.
7. The Chair invited Carolyn Tremain to provide an update on MIQF.
 - 7.1. Carolyn Tremain reported on quarantine availability in Auckland Section 6(a)
8. Caralee McLiesh reported on the wage subsidy thresholds and requirements:
 - 8.1. Cabinet agreed that the wage subsidy applies outside of AL 4 / 3 if those businesses can link an impact to their business to that alert level (so long as they meet the criteria). The third two-week payment would be triggered on Friday the 17th if Auckland is still on AL 3 or AL 4. The second two-week payment started Friday the 3rd.
9. Mac Leauanae commented that the AOG system is connecting across better to respond as a system to Pacific peoples' needs in Auckland.
10. The Chair invited Members to participate in an operational roundtable:
11. Section 6(a)
12. Social license – Andy Coster commented that social license will be difficult to maintain in Auckland with what might become a never-ending tail.
13. The Chair recommended that key CEs reconvene later today to discuss progress with the surveillance testing regime planning and operationalisation.
14. The Chair closed the meeting.

Signed

Rebecca Kitteridge
Acting Chair, National Response Leadership
Team

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Roundtable on operations – key points discussed at NRLT on 07 September

Note: This will be shared with NRLT members.

Key points and updates from NRLT members on 07 September	Lead
<p><u>Surveillance testing regime: essential workers and AL 4 boundary</u></p> <p>Clarify obligation – employer, employee.</p> <p>Update: The Order will provide an obligation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • on businesses to have systems and processes to ensure that their workers are not required to cross the alert level boundary unless they have been tested in the previous 7 days; • on businesses to facilitate their workers to undergo testing and examination during their working hours (if testing and medical examination are available during their working hours); and • on workers who are crossing the boundary to carry evidence of having had a COVID-19 test in the past 7 days. <p><u>Commencement</u> of the obligations to be worked through today. Cheryl to provide update at NRLT on Wednesday 8 Sept.</p>	<p>MOH (Bridget White) with: MBIE, MOT, DPMC, and relevant agencies</p>

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National Response Leadership Team meeting

Date: 08 September 2021, 0830hrs

Member attendance: Rebecca Kitteridge (Acting NRLT Chair), Ashley Bloomfield, Graham MacLean, Cheryl Barnes, Peter Mersi, Una Jagose, Andy Coster, Christine Stevenson, Caralee McLiesh, Dave Gawn

Other attendance: Rae Nathan (NRLT Secretariat), Hamish Rogers, Mac Leauanae, Peter Hughes, Ruth Fairhall, Richard Schmidt, Rachel Carter, Ben McBride, Nic Blakeley,


Purpose

This briefing records the discussion at the National Response Leadership Team meeting regarding the Alert Level 4 in effect across Auckland and Alert Level 2 in effect across the rest of the country.

Next steps

1. NRLT will meet at 0830hrs each day until at least Friday 10 September with a review on Friday for weekend requirements.
2. The COVID-19 Ministers group will meet at 1000hrs Tuesday and 1000hrs Thursday.
3. The CBC will meet on Wednesday at 1500hrs.

Minutes

4. The Acting Chair ('the Chair') of the National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) opened the meeting and noted she is Acting for Brook Barrington.
5. The Chair invited Ashley Bloomfield to give a situation update:
 - 5.1. Ashley Bloomfield reported that the Ministry of Health is working with ARPHS to investigate unlinked cases. Ashley Bloomfield reported that testing rates increased yesterday.
 - 5.2. Ashley Bloomfield commented that establishing clear governance and oversight across the employer/employee surveillance testing regime will be critical going forward to deliver the programme.
6. The Chair invited Members to discuss the Alert Level Order in effect last night and the boundary surveillance testing regime and to provide feedback from business and industry.
 - 6.1. Section 9(2)(g)(i) 
 - 6.2. Members discussed that it is important to clarify the governance and oversight of the surveillance testing regime, and to have a clear understanding of who are the decision-makers and when will decisions need to be made.
 - 6.2.1. Action: NRLT check-in on governance across agencies and CEs of the boundary surveillance testing regime.
 - 6.2.2. Ashley Bloomfield suggested governance is a tri-partite effort between MBIE, MOT, MOH.

6.3. Members discussed that there is an opportunity right now with establishment of the boundary surveillance testing regime to plan if this will be part of business operations going forward and for future outbreaks. Members heard that businesses may want clarity soon on if this is infrastructure they need to build into their business operations.

6.3.1. Ashley Bloomfield noted that the policy for ongoing testing surveillance should be led by the Ministry of Health, and that a focus for the Ministry now is on the effort toward getting clear, consistent, operational procedures in place for the next four to six weeks of the boundary surveillance testing regime.


6.4. Members discussed the longevity of the boundary surveillance testing regime and agreed more cross-agency planning must go into flushing out policy questions, including assessment of the conditions under which the system will continue or stop with a surveillance testing regime.

6.4.1. Action: Medium-term option for the boundary surveillance testing regime should be determined and what is envisioned at different scenarios, and how that might be communicated.

6.5. Members noted there are similar implementation challenges to the border worker testing register implementation challenges. Members noted that business owners are thinking through how the testing regime fits with their HSWA requirements.

6.6. Members discussed that the Alert Level Order drafting process and consultation with agencies for future Orders.

Section 9(2)(g)(i)



6.7. Action: Ruth Fairhall to follow up with legal team on the construction exemption for the Alert Level Order.

6.8. Action: Changes to the Alert Level Order are provided to Ruth Fairhall or legal team to amend the Order.

6.9. The Chair invited a roundtable on response operations and implementation:

6.10. Members heard that New Zealand Police intend to look primarily at travel exiting Auckland for compliance checks with the surveillance testing regime, Police intend to perform compliance checks away from the main checkpoint to keep traffic movement consistent, Police will check a proportion of vehicles, Police noted that the high-trust model applies to vehicle checks and to the movements through Auckland.

6.11. Members heard that MOT is hosting a meeting with freight industry leaders today 8 September.

6.12. Members heard that there is still an issue with food access for vulnerable communities, particularly Pacific communities. At a macro level the supply and initial logistics planning is strong but we need to improve the connection of the supply to communities that need it. NRLT should maintain focus on this issue.

6.12.1. Members heard there is a reported 5 to 7-day delay with Pacific providers to get food to communities. Members heard the spike of food access needs is yet

to come and that one difficulty is the high-rise and high-density living conditions which is challenging for food parcel delivery.

6.12.2. Action: NRLT to keep continued focus on access to food for Pacific and vulnerable communities.

6.13. Ruth Fairhall updated Members that today her team will commence planning on what an Alert Level 3 / 2 might look like.

7. Members heard that procuring more vaccine supply is going well, and that logistics are in place to facilitate movement of the vaccine supply.
8. Members discussed observations around social license and that we should consider enhanced communications to support conditioning expectations around how long Auckland will remain in Alert Level 4, or 3.
9. The Chair invited an update on MIQ capacity.

9.1. Carolyn Tremain reported that quarantine capacity is manageable Section 6(a)

9.2. Section 9(2)(a)

10. The Chair closed the meeting.

Signed

Rebecca Kitteridge
Acting Chair, National Response Leadership
Team

Roundtable on operations – key points discussed at NRLT on 08 September

Note: This will be shared with NRLT members.

Key points and updates from NRLT members on 08 September	Lead
<p><u>Boundary surveillance testing regime</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarify governance and oversight of the boundary surveillance testing regime, including identifying decision makers and when will decisions be needed. <p>Consideration needs to be given to the duration of the boundary surveillance testing regime (short and medium term), what is envisioned at different alert level boundaries (4/2 vs 3/2), and how that might be communicated.</p>	<p>Suggested tripartite leads: MBIE, MOT, MOH</p> <p><i>Peter Mersi to convene.</i></p>
<p><u>Alert Level Order changes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ruth Fairhall to follow up with COVID-19 Group legal team on the construction exemption for the Alert Level Order. Other required changes to the Alert Level Order can be provided to Ruth Fairhall or COVID-19 Group legal team. 	<p>DPMC / CLO</p>
<p><u>Social license and communications</u></p> <p>NRLT to consider communications that could support conditioning expectations around duration of Alert Level 4, or 3, around Auckland.</p>	<p>NRLT</p>
<p><u>Food access</u></p> <p>Food access for Pasikifa and vulnerable communities remains an issue.</p> <p>C4C to discuss today and provide readout to NRLT on 9 Sep.</p>	<p>C4C</p>
<p>Section 9(2)(g)(i)</p>	

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National Response Leadership Team meeting

Date: 09 September 2021, 0830hrs

Member attendance: Brook Barrington (NRLT Chair), Ashley Bloomfield, Graham MacLean, Cheryl Barnes, Carolyn Tremain, Chris Seed, Peter Mersi, Una Jagose, Andy Coster, Christine Stevenson, Caralee McLiesh, Dave Gawn.

Other attendance: Rae Nathan (NRLT Secretariat), Hamish Rogers, Mac Leauanae, Peter Hughes, Ruth Fairhall, Richard Schmidt, Rachel Carter, Ben McBride, Nic Blakeley, Antony Byers.


Purpose

This briefing records the discussion at the National Response Leadership Team meeting regarding the Alert Level 4 in effect in Auckland and Alert Level 2 in effect across the rest of the country.

Next steps

1. NRLT will meet at 0830hrs each day until at least Friday 10 September. A review on Friday to occur regarding weekend requirements.
2. The COVID-19 Ministers group will meet at 1000hrs Tuesday and 1000hrs Thursday.
3. The CBC will meet on Wednesday at 1500hrs.

Minutes

4. The Chair of the National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) opened the meeting.
5. The Chair invited Ashley Bloomfield to give a situation update:
 - 5.1. Ashley Bloomfield reported that the outbreak management measures are working, based on case numbers and case investigations. The Ministry of Health have stood up a team which is undertaking detailed case investigation of all unlinked cases to further understand the outbreak.
 - 5.2. On testing, Ashley Bloomfield reported testing numbers were up yesterday 8 September to 17,000. He commented that work was progressing at pace to establish the boundary testing surveillance regime.
 - 5.3. Section 9(2)(g)(i)

6. The Chair invited Members to discuss implementation of the boundary testing surveillance regime:
 - 6.1. Members heard that CEs had agreed to work together on governance of the boundary testing surveillance regime.
 - 6.1.1. MOH to lead on policy work; MOT and MBIE to work with the system and private sector on implementation.
 - 6.2. Members heard that yesterday's progress was significant. Peter Mersi noted that business and industry were relieved that there is a delay between the Alert Level

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Order coming into effect and commencement of compliance, but there will be challenges in the next 24hrs in engaging effectively with business and industry. Work with industry will continue for the foreseeable, to address any rub points and keep encouraging feedback from industry and business.

- 6.3. Members heard that there remain some unanswered questions around enforcement. Work is underway to clarify what enforcement and compliance could look like.
- 6.4. Members heard that the communications should reflect the reality of compliance and enforcement of these obligations and that it must be seamless and unified through various agency channels.
- 6.5. The Chair invited NRLT to consider the need to maintain a baseline level of surveillance for the long term, if it helps the system have an early-warning of a Delta incursion.

- 6.5.1. Members discussed signalling to business and industry that they may want to consider infrastructure to support ongoing surveillance to keep employees safe. Members discussed that for an ongoing surveillance regime that works across business and industry, Section 9(2)(g)(i)

- 6.5.2. Members discuss that the system could consider how business can better access surveillance testing technology to allow businesses to assist with the public health effort. Members heard that the system may need to consider any regulatory impediments to this.

- 6.5.3. Members heard that health system capacity under the current outbreak was a concern. There are urgent implications for reconfiguring the system as New Zealand moves toward reconnecting.

Section 9(2)(g)(i)

7. The Chair invited Members to discuss considerations for what an Alert Level 3/2 split might look like.
 - 7.1. Ruth Fairhall discussed options presented in the briefing to be considered by Ministers today. One is that you apply the Alert Level 4/2 permissions to Alert Level 3/2, and the other is that you broaden out the permissions for businesses and industry. The boundary testing surveillance regime is suggested to remain in place.
 - 7.2. COVID-19 Ministers Group will discuss this morning.

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8. The Chair invited a roundtable on response operations and implementation:
 - 8.1. Members heard that the Ministry of Health was progressing work on what Alert Level 1 would look like, and whether there were additional settings required.
 - 8.2. Members heard that Graham MacLean was working with the Northland mayors and iwi on messaging around crossing and moving through the Auckland boundaries, with the aim of clarifying the permission space for travel through an Alert Level 4 areas.
9. The Chair invited an update from the Caring for Communities governance group (C4C). Nick Blakeley updated members that:
 - 9.1. *Food supply*: work had been undertaken in the past 24 hours to understand the delay in families receiving food parcels. Noted that it doesn't appear to be a systemic issue. The system is closely linked up on this issue, and will be monitoring it moving forward. Additional funding for food supply had been prioritised.
 - 9.2. *Education/ schools*: awareness that there are likely to be children that don't return to school at Alert Level 2. Focus currently on ensuring these children can be identified and provided with the right support.
 - 9.3. *Mental health*: work continues in this area to ensure the right people are receiving support. Well joined up with the Ministry of Health.
 - 9.4. *Business*: additional wage subsidies and income support is being considered by Ministers for businesses at Alert Level 2, who continue to be impacted by restrictions.
10. The Chair invited Ashley Bloomfield to comment on testing. Members heard that:
 - 10.1. *Testing in Auckland*: there is both expanded and targeted testing underway in Auckland. Testing rates have gone up and they are expected to keep climbing over the next few days. Aiming to have results back by Sunday before Cabinet makes its decision on Monday.
 - 10.2. *Wastewater testing*: Ministry of Health considering a future move to daily wastewater testing in Auckland following the outbreak. Work is underway to establish funding for this.
 - 10.3. *Rapid tests*: There is no rapid antigen tests approved for use in New Zealand, except in connection to early work on re-opening the border. Noted that rapid tests are different from saliva testing, and that there was some system confusion regarding this.
 - 10.3.1. Action: Ministry of Health to provide a one-pager on testing approaches in New Zealand. This is to be circulated to NRLT.
11. Carolyn Tremain provided an update on MIQF capacity:
 - 11.1. There are no current quarantine capacity concerns. Some community members have now completed quarantine. Crowne Plaza will be re-opening as a MIF today.
 - 11.2. Members heard that work was still underway to determine the source of infection for the Holiday Inn worker that had tested positive, but that it was known to be connected to the current community outbreak in Auckland.

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12. Chris Seed provided an update to members on vaccine supply, noting that additional vaccines are on their way to New Zealand. Members heard that there would be a public announcement of this at 1300hrs today.
13. The Chair closed the meeting.

Signed

Brook Barrington
Chair, National Response Leadership Team

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Roundtable on operations – key points discussed at NRLT on 09 September

Note: This will be shared with NRLT members.

Key points and updates from NRLT members on 09 September	Lead
<p><u>Clarification on testing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Health to provide a one-pager to be circulated to NRLT on testing in New Zealand, including differences between rapid tests and saliva testing. 	MOH
<p><u>Food access</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issues with food access for Pasifika and vulnerable communities will be monitored. 	C4C
<p>Section 9(2)(g)(i)</p>	

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National Response Leadership Team meeting

Date: 10 September 2021, 0830hrs

Member attendance: Una Jagose (Acting Chair NRLT), Ashley Bloomfield, Graham MacLean, Cheryl Barnes, Carolyn Tremain, Andy Coster, Christine Stevenson, Dave Gawn.

Other attendance: Rae Nathan (NRLT Secretariat), Stefan Weir, Mac Leauanae, Peter Hughes, Ruth Fairhall, Richard Schmidt, Rachel Carter, Bryan Chapple, Nic Blakeley, Antony Byers.

Purpose

This briefing records the discussion at the National Response Leadership Team meeting regarding the Alert Level 4 in effect in Auckland and Alert Level 2 in effect across the rest of the country.


Next steps

1. Placeholder in Members' diaries for a National Response Leadership Team meeting on Sunday 12 September at 1000hrs. Una Jagose will cancel if not needed.

Minutes

2. Una Jagose, Acting Chair of the National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) opened the meeting.
3. The Chair invited Cheryl Barnes to update Members on the COVID-19 Minister Group yesterday.

Section 9(2)(f)(iv)



Section 9(2)(f)(iv)

4. The Chair invited Ashley Bloomfield to provide a situation update.
 - 4.1. Ashley Bloomfield reported that there are some cases causing the Ministry of Health (MOH) concern about transmission in the community. In addition to the case at Middlemore over the weekend, there was an additional case at Middlemore reported yesterday. MOH is investigating the origin of this case.
 - 4.2. Ashley Bloomfield reported that the Auckland DHB is pushing for a surge of testing around Auckland to gain a better understanding of the transmission landscape. The DG Health wants confidence before recommending a different Alert Level for Auckland next week.
 - 4.3. Ashley Bloomfield noted that from looking internationally our posture should remain that we stamp out this outbreak now and that we should not have Alert Levels off the table for outbreak management.
 - 4.4. Members heard that that the vaccine programme will be critical in the months to come.
 - 4.5. Andy Coster commented that New Zealand Police could support public health to progress contact tracing and case investigation.
5. The Chair invited Ruth Fairhall to update on the draft Cabinet paper.
 - 5.1. Section 9(2)(g)(i)
 - 5.2. The suggestion remains that the testing regime would remain.
 - 5.3. Section 9(2)(g)(i)
6. The Chair invited Carolyn Tremain to provide an MIQ update.
 - 6.1. Members heard that Auckland has 136 quarantine rooms available. Carolyn Tremain noted that there is not an immediate pressure on MIQ capacity but that can change quite quickly.
7. The Chair invited a discussion on the AL 4 / 2 boundary implementation.
 - 7.1. Members heard that the DG Health advice for travellers across the boundary is that every individual must have a nasopharyngeal test.
 - 7.2. Members heard that MOT and MBIE are supporting businesses to be in a position where they can comply with the requirements.
 - 7.3. Members heard MBIE is progressing how to enhance travel permission document and system to incorporate proof of testing.
 - 7.4. Members heard that from the Alert Level Order, 16 September is when the obligation comes into force that individuals have proof of testing to cross the Alert Level 4 / 2 boundary. New Zealand Police will opt for an education-first model for individuals to comply with the obligation.

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8. The Chair invited Mac Leauanae to provide an update on what he is hearing from the community and the Caring for Communities group, particularly on food access issues.
 - 8.1. Members heard that the regular Pacific Fono is a mechanism to engage with communities and hear what the view is on-the-ground.
 - 8.2. Members heard that the tone has shifted in Pacific Fono, that communities still raise operational delays to enabling food access.
9. The Chair invited Members to participate in an operational round table.
 - 9.1. Members heard that at the next CEs Advance is that we brief our non-NRLT colleagues into the COVID-19 response this last week.
10. The Chair discussed the NRLT meeting cadence. And confirmed that the NRLT will meet Sunday if required but not Saturday.
11. For Chris O’Gorman to circulate to NRLT today:
 - 11.1. One-pager scoping document on preventing movement back up Alert Levels following this outbreak – Practical measures pre-border, at-border, intra-border piece on keeping Delta out or at bay (Ruth Fairhall to send to Chris).
 - 11.2. International scan insights piece for New Zealand’s posture going forward (Graham MacLean to send to Chris O’Gorman).
 - 11.3. One-pager FAQ on testing options (Ministry of Health to send to Chris O’Gorman).
 - 11.4. Note on domestic use of vaccination certificate (Una Jagose to send to Chris O’Gorman)
12. The Chair closed the meeting.

Signed

Una Jagose
Acting Chair, National Response Leadership Team

Roundtable on operations – key points discussed at NRLT on 10 September

Note: This will be shared with NRLT members.

Key points and updates from NRLT members on 10 September	Lead
<p><u>Clarification on testing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Health to provide a one-pager to be circulated to NRLT on testing in New Zealand, including differences between rapid tests and saliva testing. 	MOH
<p><u>Domestic use of vaccination certificate</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chris O’Gorman will circulate to NRLT. 	Una Jagose
<p><u>International scan insights piece</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On what we are observing internationally to inform New Zealand’s posture going forward. Chris O’Gorman will circulate to NRLT. 	Graham MacLean
<p><u>Scoping one-pager</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One-pager scoping document of the pre-border, at-border, intra-border piece on keeping Delta out or at bay. Chris O’Gorman will circulate to NRLT. 	Ruth Fairhall
<p><u>Food access</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issues with food access for Pasifika and vulnerable communities will be monitored. 	C4C
<p><u>Boundary testing</u></p> <p>Proof of testing at the Alert Level boundary –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16 September is the date where the obligation for individuals to provide proof of testing comes into force. New Zealand Police maintaining educate-first approach. <p>Business and industry obligations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MOT, MBIE supporting businesses to be in a position where they can comply with the requirements. MBIE is progressing how to enhance travel permission document and system to incorporate proof of testing. <p>Nasopharyngeal test</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For travellers crossing the boundary, every individual must have a nasopharyngeal test. Other options are being worked through. 	MOH / MBIE / MOT / NZP
<p>Section 9(2)(g)(i)</p>	

National Response Leadership Team meeting

Date: 13 September 2021, 0830hrs

Member attendance: Una Jagose (Acting NRLT Chair), Brook Barrington, Ashley Bloomfield, Graham MacLean, Cheryl Barnes, Caralee McLiesh, Carolyn Tremain, Andy Coster, Christine Stevenson, Dave Gawn

Other attendance: Rae Nathan (NRLT Secretariat), Hamish Rogers, Mac Leauanae, Peter Hughes, Ruth Fairhall, Rachel Carter, Nic Blakeley, Toby Estall and Ian Brownlie (NAB), Sacha O'Dea, Heather Peacocke

Purpose

This briefing records the discussion at the National Response Leadership Team meeting regarding the Alert Level 4 in effect in Auckland and Alert Level 2 in effect across the rest of the country.

Next steps

1. Cabinet Ministers meet today 13 September to consider the Alert Level posture for Auckland.

Minutes

2. Una Jagose, Acting Chair of the National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) opened the meeting.
3. The Chair invited Ashley Bloomfield to provide a situation update.
 - 3.1. Members heard that the Ministry of Health (MOH) and the Auckland Regional Public Health Service (ARPHS) will continue to work together closely in the next few hours to investigate as much as they can about the new cases reported yesterday 12 September in Auckland. The last 48hrs of data and intelligence will be material to Cabinet's decision.
4. The Chair invited Ruth Fairhall to update on the Cabinet paper due today 13 September.
 - 4.1. Members heard the Cabinet paper due for discussion today will canvass options for the Alert Level settings around Auckland. The Cabinet paper will canvass what the boundary permissions might be under an Alert Level 3 or 2 split and at this stage the advice is to retain the Alert Level 4 / 2 boundary permissions. Members heard the Cabinet paper will also canvass the boundary testing regime for individuals that cross the boundary, frequently or on a one-off basis.
 - 4.2. Members discussed how to operationalise the Alert Level boundary testing regime for individuals. New Zealand Police confirmed they can manage checking evidence of tests but it will have trade-offs for the traffic flow across the boundary. Members heard the testing capacity can manage the surge in testing that might result from the boundary testing regime. Members discussed that public communications around boundary testing is critical to support a smooth implementation of the regime.
 - 4.3. Members commented that the volume of traffic across Alert Level boundary referenced in the Cabinet paper might underestimate the construction sector volumes that would need to cross the boundary. Members heard that MBIE and

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MOH are working together to integrate the business travel document to the evidence of testing that individuals need to present at the boundary.

- 4.4. Members discussed the rigour of checking at the Alert Level boundary to ensure individuals are travelling under permitted reasons. Members discussed trade-offs to a rigorous checking process versus a 'high trust' model. Members discussed that a rigorous checking process fits more closely with an elimination strategy approach.
- 4.5. Members commented that vaccination rates and vaccination of essential workers that cross the boundary are material factors to inform Ministerial decisions around management of the Alert Level boundary.
- 4.6. Ruth Fairhall summarised two key changes to the Cabinet paper proposed by the NRLT: present an option that Alert Level 4 in Auckland is extended for at least another week and that the approach to Alert Level boundary settings is that they can be tighter to begin with and loosen over time.
5. The Chair invited Graham MacLean to debrief on the National Assessments Bureau international comparators reports.
 - 5.1. Members heard there will likely be a follow-on piece of work to draw insights for the New Zealand context.
 - 5.2. Members heard from NAB colleagues on international COVID-19 strategies and how they have, or have not, changed in light of Delta. Members heard that more countries are moving away from elimination strategies and that countries are looking to adapt to COVID-19 as endemic and establish a 'new normal'. Beyond mass vaccinations there is not a shared way to reach a 'new normal', the biggest difference across countries is the pace at which restrictions are lifted. Members heard that trust and confidence in governments is a key factor with all comparators and should be front of mind for the New Zealand context.
 - 5.3. Members commented that we must think deliberately on what an elimination strategy means for different regions, the goal of elimination may need to be redefined, and prepare for the fact that new variants may have worse symptoms or higher transmissibility. For example, in Singapore they moved away from an elimination strategy but with an outbreak their health care systems were overwhelmed and they moved back to elimination approach.
 - 5.4. Members commented that the Alert Level framework sits alongside the elimination strategy and they should be reconsidered in parallel.
 - 5.5. Members discussed that finding the right balance of public health measures to prevent and contain outbreaks is like 'titrating' the measures in response to factors such as the New Zealand health care system capacity.
6. The Chair invited Carolyn Tremain to provide an update on MIQF capacity.
 - 6.1. Members heard an MIQF worker tested positive.
 - 6.2. Members heard that a maritime crew and an Antarctica exploration crew will dock in New Zealand soon and will go into MIQF.
7. The Chair closed the meeting.

Signed

Una Jagose
Acting Chair, National Response Leadership Team

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Roundtable on operations – key points discussed at NRLT on 13 September

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Note: This will be shared with NRLT members.

Key points and updates from NRLT members on 13 September	Lead
<u>Clarification on testing</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Health to provide a one-pager to be circulated to NRLT on testing in New Zealand, including differences between rapid tests and saliva testing. 	MOH
<u>International scan insights piece</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing discussion around what we observe internationally and what is relevant to a New Zealand context. 	Brook Barrington
<u>Alert Level posture</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cabinet decisions today. Ongoing discussion around operationalisation of the Alert Level boundary settings and the boundary testing regime, including the rigour of checks at the boundary. MOH and MBIE working together to integrate the business travel exemption document and the evidence of testing document. 	All
<u>Food access</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issues with food access for Pasifika and vulnerable communities will be monitored. 	C4C
<u>NRLT</u> Placeholder in diaries for Wednesday (15 Sept) and Friday (17 Sept) from 0800-0900hrs.	NRLT

Key points and updates from NRLT members on 13 September	Lead
<u>Clarification on testing</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Health to provide a one-pager to be circulated to NRLT on testing in New Zealand, including differences between rapid tests and saliva testing. 	MOH
<u>International scan insights piece</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing discussion around what we observe internationally and what is relevant to a New Zealand context. 	Brook Barrington
<u>Food access</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issues with food access for Pasifika and vulnerable communities will be monitored. 	C4C

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National Response Leadership Team meeting

Date: 17 September 2021, 0800hrs

Member attendance: Brook Barrington (NRLT Chair), Una Jagose, Ashley Bloomfield, Cheryl Barnes, Caralee McLiesh, Carolyn Tremain, Andy Coster, Christine Stevenson, Dave Gawn

Other attendance: Rachel Carter (NRLT Secretariat), Hamish Rogers, Mac Leauanae, Peter Hughes, Ruth Fairhall, Nic Blakeley, Sacha O'Dea, Aaron Wright, Chris Bunny

Purpose

This briefing records the discussion at the National Response Leadership Team meeting regarding the Alert Level 4 in effect in Auckland and Alert Level 2 in effect across the rest of the country.

Next steps

1. Cabinet Ministers will meet 20 September to consider the Alert Level posture for Auckland.

Minutes


2. Brook Barrington, Chair of the National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) opened the meeting.
3. The Chair invited Ashley Bloomfield to provide a situation update.
 - 3.1. Members heard that Auckland Regional Public Health Service (ARPHS) has a high level of confidence that the Auckland outbreak is contained. There are between two and three groups of households that have some residual complexity, but all are connected. There has been good progress in the past 48 hours in testing and vaccinations in these communities.
 - 3.2. Members heard that Auckland is likely to be on track to move to AL3 next week.
4. The Chair noted that Members would need to provide a view to Ministers come Monday on AL changes, and that it was an important period ahead. Conversation needed to focus on the practicalities of the current response.
5. The Chair invited Ruth Fairhall to update on the Cabinet paper due 20 September.
 - 5.1. Members heard that the Cabinet Paper has three parts: (1) options for Ministers to consider regarding the AL posture; (2) advice on boundaries, permissions and testing, including clarity on testing requirements for individuals crossing the boundary; and (3) what lighter AL2 settings may look like.
 - 5.2. Members discussed operationalising the advice, and whether or not it would be less complex than previous AL changes.
 - 5.2.1. Peter Mersi noted that the different exemptions and testing requirements for personal exemptions to cross the boundary would be complex on the ground, and that questions were already being raised.

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- 5.2.2. Ashley Bloomfield confirmed that Ministry of Health's exemptions team was well placed to deal with any additional categories of exemptions, should Auckland move to AL3 next week.
- 5.2.3. Chris Bunny noted the importance of clear communication of the rules, including around whether or not people were permitted to and ready their business should Auckland step down an AL. Agreed this should be made clear in the Cabinet Paper.
- 5.3. Members discussed the provision of advice to Ministers, and noted the importance of ensuring that the Cabinet Paper was clear as to what the system is geared up to do.
6. Members discussed the importance of ensuring that the system is simultaneously preparing for what could happen if the system is unable to eliminate this outbreak. Members heard that there was work underway on sharpening the tools required to grapple with Covid in a more isolated manner. Members discussed contingency planning, and noted that it was important to be focussed on the practicalities of the current response. Members agreed that elimination may not necessarily mean no cases, but that the priority for the system had to remain limiting the amount of cases in the community to the extent possible, and that vaccination rates remained key.
7. The Chair invited Cheryl Barnes to provide an update on strategic discussions with Ministers.
- 7.1. Members heard that the simple one-pager was an attempt to distil key building blocks for the response moving forward, so that the public service is aware what the key decisions points could be.
- 7.2. Members agreed that the one-pager was helpful, and should in time be circulated more widely.
- 7.3. Members discussed the strategy and direction of travel going forward. Una Jagose noted that it was important that any immediate changes were thought through, to ensure that changed settings were fit for future purpose. Members heard that there was work underway within the Prime Minister's Office, within Brian Roche's team, and within the DPMC Covid-19 Unit on this. These three threads of thinking would likely be strung together next week, to provide a more comprehensive view of the future work programme.
- 7.4. Members agreed that the goal has to be to minimise cases, to minimise the cost to society and to the economy.
- 7.4.1. Action: Cheryl Barnes to call the Chair to discuss next steps this afternoon.
8. The Chair opened the roundtable on operational rub points:
- 8.1. Commissioner Coster noted that there was some agitation within the Mangere community regarding not feeling sufficiently involved in the outbreak response occurring within that community. Ashley Bloomfield noted that some work had been done on this yesterday and that there had been an agreed way forward.

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8.2. Section 9(2)(g)(i)



8.2.1. Action: DPMC Covid-19 Operations to consider concurrent events that may impact the Police or Border Force during the Covid response.

8.3. Christine Stevenson noted the requirement for non-government border workers to be vaccinated would soon come into force. Noted that a significant amount of work had gone into ensuring that the system was well-placed for this change, and vaccination rates were high, but there could be some noise in the media on this over the coming weeks.

8.4. Una Jagose noted that the High Court was preparing to hear a challenge to the COVID-19 Public Health Response (Vaccinations) Order 2021 next week, and that there may be some media interest.

9. The Chair discussed the weekend cadence. Members agreed to not meet over the weekend, unless required on Sunday to discuss operational requirements ahead of Monday. Next meeting to be on Monday 20 September.

10. The Chair closed the meeting.

Signed

Brook Barrington
Chair, National Response Leadership Team

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Roundtable on operations – key points discussed at NRLT on 17 September

Note: This will be shared with NRLT members.

Key points and updates from NRLT members on 17 September	Lead
<u>Clarification on testing</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Ministry of Health to provide a one-pager to be circulated to NRLT on testing in New Zealand, including differences between rapid tests and saliva testing.	MOH
<u>Alert Level posture</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Cabinet decisions Monday.Ongoing discussion around operationalisation of the Alert Level boundary settings and the boundary testing regime, including testing of individuals permitted to cross the boundary.	All
<u>Strategic Plan</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Work to continue on Strategic Plan. CE DPMC and DCE Covid-19 Group to meet to discuss next steps.	DPMC Covid-19 Unit
<u>Concurrent events</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">DPMC Operations to consider concurrent events impacting Police Force during the Covid response.	DPMC Covid-19 Unit
<u>Food access</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Issues with food access for Pasifika and vulnerable communities will be monitored.	C4C
<u>NRLT</u> <p>Placeholder in diaries for Sunday (19 Sept). NRLT to meet again Monday (20 Sept) from 0800-0900hrs.</p>	NRLT

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National Response Leadership Team meeting

Date: 20 September 2021, 0800hrs

Member attendance: Brook Barrington (NRLT Chair), Una Jagose, Graham MacLean, Ashley Bloomfield, Cheryl Barnes, Caralee McLiesh, Carolyn Tremain, Andy Coster, Christine Stevenson, Dave Gawn, Peter Mersi, Chris Seed

Other attendance: Rae Nathan (NRLT Secretariat), Hamish Rogers, Mac Leauanae, Andrew Bichan, Ben McBride, Peter Hughes, Ruth Fairhall

Purpose

This briefing records the discussion at the National Response Leadership Team meeting regarding the Alert Level 4 in effect in Auckland and Alert Level 2 in effect across the rest of the country.

Next steps

1. Cabinet Ministers will meet 20 September to consider the Alert Level posture for Auckland.

Minutes

2. Brook Barrington, Chair of the National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) opened the meeting.
3. The Chair invited Ashley Bloomfield to provide a situation update.


3.1. Members heard that the situation in Auckland, excluding the Waikato development, is strong and the outbreak in Auckland is largely contained. The clusters are either dormant or contained, many of the cases reported over the weekend were expected as they were largely household contacts of positive case. The situation in Waikato/Northern Hauraki is materially important to the decision today. The school community will undergo testing. Section 9(2)(g)(i)

3.2. Members heard that the MOH feedback on the Cabinet paper Section 9(2)(g)(i)

3.3. The Chair invited Graham MacLean to provide a sense of operational possibilities if we had to intensify our posture in the Waikato/Northern Hauraki area.

3.3.1. Graham MacLean noted that what is material is that the cases involved are complex with dimensions of compliance and community context. Something material to informing a shift of Alert Level boundary would be the travel patterns around the area. Another dimension around the risk assessment is that there has been minimal movement around the Auckland region due to Alert Level 4.

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4. The Chair invited discussion on if there are reasons to keep Alert Level 2 'plus' (Delta) in place across the country while we see pop up cases.
 - 4.1. Ruth Fairhall discussed that if the decision was to not expand the Alert Level boundary, it would make sense to keep the rest of the country at Alert Level 2 plus. Ruth Fairhall summarised that there are testing requirement changes proposed in today's Cabinet paper. Confirmed the proposed timing for the next review is in 2 weeks, noting that if required, tweaks in the settings could be made in interim.
5. Ashley Bloomfield discussed that the cases in Waikato are concerning to the national response as it shows there is material risk of undetected chains of transmission. Ashley Bloomfield discussed that the cases are very Northern Waikato, is 3kms south of the Alert Level boundary and is a localised and contained. A response posture maybe a localised response and tightening/restricting of movement. The Chair noted that if we are confident in moving Auckland to Alert Level 3 then operational leads will assess how to put in place a localised and contained response to the cases in the Waikato/Northern Hauraki.
6. Members discussed that operationalising a new boundary somewhere around Hamilton or Tauranga will have an economic impact due to freight and travel patterns in that area. Members discussed that a boundary near Waikato/Norther Hauraki has lots of rural areas where access to testing may be a challenge.
7. Members discussed that the public health response in the past has been 'go hard, go early', when a case is identified.
8. Members discussed that a localised and contained response to restrict movement could be similar to a targeted outbreak management in a disease-control manner with a very tight contained response initially but broaden out quickly if required.
9. The Chair invited a roundtable on any other operational points:
 - 9.1. Carolyn Tremain reported that the MIAS lobby was opened this morning for vouchers. The demand has been high with 20,000 people in the lobby at 0820hrs.
 - 9.2. Section 9(2)(h) 
 - 9.3. Christine Stevenson reported there is a vessel with an unwell crew member in Taupo. The situation is being well managed, and work is underway to determine if the salt can be unloaded from the vessel. The crew has been in the Philippines and Australia.
10. Ashley Bloomfield reported that today there is a Health IMT at 0900hrs and a review of the public health risk assessment at 0945hrs.
11. The Chair confirmed to hold NRLT in diaries for tomorrow morning and will be reviewed if it is required, pending events today.
12. The Chair closed the meeting.

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Signed

Brook Barrington
Chair, National Response Leadership Team

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Roundtable on operations – key points discussed at NRLT on 20 September

Note: This will be shared with NRLT members.

Key points and updates from NRLT members on 20 September	Lead
<u>Alert Level posture</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cabinet decisions today 20 September.• Ongoing discussion around operationalisation of the Alert Level posture, boundary and testing settings, and permissions to cross the boundary.	All
<u>Ongoing focuses</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Food access – Issues with food access for Pasifika and vulnerable communities will be monitored.• Concurrent events – DPMC Operations to consider concurrent events impacting Police Force during the COVID-19 response.• Strategic Plan – Work to continue on Strategic Plan.	C4C DPMC COVID-19 DPMC COVID-19
<u>NRLT</u> Placeholder in diaries for Tuesday (21 Sept), will be reviewed if required	NRLT

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National Response Leadership Team meeting

Date: 1 October 2021, 0830hrs

Member attendance: Una Jagose (Acting NRLT Chair), Ashley Bloomfield, Cheryl Barnes, Caralee McLiesh, Chris Bunny (for Carolyn Tremain), Andy Coster, Christine Stevenson, Graham MacLean, Peter Mersi, Brook Barrington, Chris Seed

Other attendance: Rae Nathan (NRLT Secretariat), Hamish Rogers, Mac Leauanae, Peter Hughes, Ruth Fairhall, Debbie Power, Richard Schmidt

Purpose

This briefing records the discussion at the National Response Leadership Team meeting regarding the Alert Level 3 in effect in Auckland and Alert Level 2 in effect across the rest of the country.

Next steps

1. Cabinet will meet Monday 4 October to consider the Alert Level posture for Auckland and the rest of the country.

Minutes

2. Una Jagose, Acting Chair of the National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) opened the meeting.
3. The Chair invited Ashley Bloomfield to update Members on the current public health advice that informs the paper for Cabinet consideration Monday 4 October.
 - 3.1. Ashley Bloomfield commented that outbreaks in marginalised and vulnerable communities are of-concern, eg some outbreaks are around individuals in temporary accommodation and are in contact with other households. There are complex challenges playing out in the cases arising.
 - 3.2. Ashley Bloomfield commented that cases continue to arise in this outbreak, and we are still seeing people come to the hospital unwell, which could suggest that there were cases in the community that have not necessarily been identified yet.
 - 3.3. Ashley Bloomfield commented that high levels of testing are occurring in suburbs of interest, and there is a high level of effort going into surveillance testing around Auckland, including a focus on temporary accommodation areas.
 - 3.4. Ashley Bloomfield commented that public health advice has been provided for a staged approach to easing restrictions in Auckland. The first stage allows for outdoor gathering freedoms (with public health measures like distancing and limit of up to 10 people).
 - 3.5. Public health is considering requiring that teachers have a test before entering teaching facilities starting from next week. The DG Health is looking at the suggested increased capacity numbers for funerals (suggestion is to increase to 50) and the consistency with the suggestion to increase outdoor gathering capacity to up to 10 people.

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- 3.6. Public health advice is that the rest of the country stay at Alert Level 2.
- 3.7. Members discussed the boundary around Auckland and the rationale to keep the rest of the country at Alert Level 2. Members discussed the non-compliant groups in Auckland and that they are one factor impacting on the ability to safely move Auckland down Alert Levels.
4. The Chair invited Ruth Fairhall to summarise key parts in the paper for Cabinet consideration Monday 4 October:
 - 4.1. The Cabinet paper discusses Alert Level 3 changes and a proposed three-stage approach to gradually 'open up.' One phase to increase capacity for outdoor activities, following phase on increasing capacity of public spaces like retail, following is increased capacity of hospitality. The Cabinet paper discusses Alert Level 2 settings to increase capacity to allow more people into public spaces and removing the no-standing requirement on public transport. The Cabinet paper canvasses boundary settings and suggests certain permissions for the construction and forestry sectors.
 - 4.2. Members discussed the steps suggested to 'let air out of the tire' in Alert Level 3 and 2. Members discussed the role of surveillance testing around the border.
 - 4.3. Members discussed the possibility of increasing surveillance testing and more encouragement for vaccinations through the suggested phased approach and adjustment of any boundary settings.
 - 4.4. Members discussed the value of mapping out what the stages are, what we would expect to see to move between stages or move back up Alert Levels, to clarify public communications and reduce likelihood of non-compliance with rules due to confusion. Members discussed the value of communications to the public that explain how all the moving parts fit together and where we are going to support the public to do the right thing.
5. Members discussed the legal landscape around businesses requiring vaccination of their staff.
6. The Chair proposed the NRLT do not meet over the weekend unless something material occurs that requires the group to meet and noted an NRLT placeholder is in diaries for Monday 4 October. The Chair noted she will be acting NRLT Chair until 12 October.
7. The Chair closed the meeting.

Signed

Una Jagose
Acting Chair, National Response Leadership Team

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Roundtable on operations – key points discussed at NRLT on 1 October

Note: This will be shared with NRLT members.

Key points and updates from NRLT members on 1 October	Lead
<u>Alert Level posture</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cabinet decisions Monday 4 October.• Ongoing discussion around balance of loosening restrictions in Auckland with increased public health measures; Alert Level 2 settings around the country; boundary settings and schools in Alert Level 3.	All
<u>NRLT weekend cadence</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Absent any material change, no meeting over the weekend.• NRLT placeholder is in diaries for Monday 4 October. TBC Sunday evening.	All

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Amendment to National Response Leadership Team meeting Minute

Meeting date: 1 October 2021, 0830hrs

Amendment to attendance

Debbie Power was also in attendance for the 1 October 2021 National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) meeting.

Signed

Rae Nathan

NRLT Secretariat

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National Response Leadership Team meeting

Date: 3 October 2021, 1600hrs

Member attendance: Una Jagose (Acting NRLT Chair), Graham MacLean, Ashley Bloomfield, Cheryl Barnes, Caralee McLiesh, Carolyn Tremain, Glenn Dunbier (for Andy Coster), Christine Stevenson, Dave Gawn, Peter Mersi, Chris Seed

Other attendance: Rae Nathan (NRLT Secretariat), Hamish Rogers, Mac Leauanae, Debbie Power, Peter Hughes, Ruth Fairhall, Amber Bill, Lisa McPhail, Sacha Odea

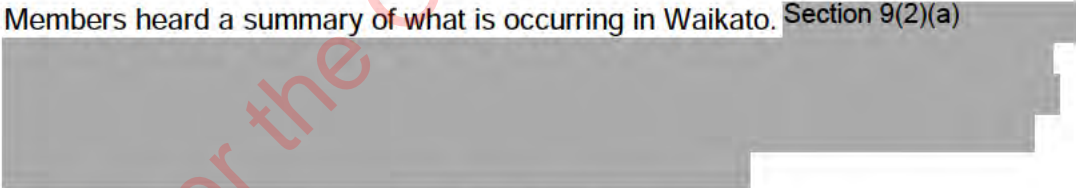
Purpose

This briefing records the discussion at the National Response Leadership Team meeting regarding new positive COVID-19 cases reported in the community in the Waikato.

Next steps

1. Cabinet Ministers will meet 4 October to consider the Alert Level posture for Auckland and the rest of the country.
2. In response to the developments today with cases in the Waikato, Minister Hipkins will consider a draft Alert Level Order tonight before Alert Level settings come into effect in Waikato from 2359hrs 3 October.

Minutes

3. Una Jagose, acting Chair of the National Response Leadership Team (NRLT), opened the meeting.
4. The Chair invited Ashley Bloomfield to provide a situation update.
 - 4.1. Members heard a summary of what is occurring in Waikato. Section 9(2)(a)

 - 4.2. Alert Level (AL) 3 arrangements will reduce chances of further transmission in Waikato. Community testing, wastewater testing, and contact tracing will give us an indication on how long the AL 3 arrangements may need to be in place around Waikato, there will be a review at day five.
5. The Chair invited Graham MacLean to update on the work of the National Response Group in response to today's developments:
 - 5.1. NRG is in favour of consistent approaches between AL 3 in Auckland to AL 3 settings in Waikato.
 - 5.2. Many factors were considered, particularly the ability to operationalise AL 3 settings and clarity of messages to the public. The NRG determined that implementing a testing regime across a Waikato boundary would be hard in this time frame and do not recommend the regime comes into place, however that requirement may come into effect later if the public health rationale determines it is necessary.

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- 5.3. NRG discussed the importance of encouraging the public to 'do the right thing', the New Zealand Police presence at the Waikato boundary will be more mobile in comparison to the 'hard' Auckland boundary.
- 5.4. The GIS team is working through drawing the boundary itself which will include consultation and engagement with local groups.
6. Section 9(2)(g)(i) [REDACTED] Members discussed that Business Travel Documents will not be needed for AL 3 in Waikato, which is one inconsistency with AL 3 settings in Auckland. Members also discussed that people may reside in AL 2 but work in AL 3, and that is acceptable if those individuals undergo some form of regular testing. Emphasis on the public 'doing the right thing' rather than relying heavily on a compliance-based model.
7. Members synthesised key points around the AL 3 advice and settings:
- 7.1. The main public health rationale of having AL 3 settings in effect is to reduce and restrict the amount of people moving and gathering.
- 7.2. Boundary movement settings: If you live in AL 2 and need to work in AL 3 you can travel to do that. If you live and work in AL 3 the AL 3 settings will apply. If you operate your business safely at AL 3 you can do so, but you cannot travel across the boundary into an AL 2 area.
- 7.3. Messaging nationally will need to be really clear to minimise confusion.
8. Members discussed the criticality of clear communications to maintain the rules within AL 3 and around travelling across the Waikato or Auckland boundary. And, communications around travelling home will be critical as there are families that have travelled to/from the district for school holidays.
9. Members discussed that the two AL 3 areas will be adjacent and the hard boundary at the southern Auckland boundary will remain with enforcement presence (eg permissions to travel across the boundary will be checked by NZ Police). The Southern Waikato boundary will have less enforcement presence in comparison.
10. The Chair opened a discussion on how today's developments might impact Cabinet decisions tomorrow 4 October. The Chair sought agreement that members that the advice tendered on Friday 1 October still stood. Members agreed.
11. Members discussed how the bespoke arrangements in response to today's developments would fit in with the traffic light model.
12. The Chair noted there is an NRLT placeholder in diaries for tomorrow morning 4 October but may not go ahead.
13. The Chair closed the meeting.

Signed

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Una Jagose
Acting Chair, National Response Leadership Team

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Roundtable on operations – key points discussed at NRLT on 3 October 2021

Note: This will be shared with NRLT members.

Key points and updates from NRLT members on 3 October	Lead
<u>Alert Level posture</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Cabinet decisions Monday 4 October on adjustments to AL 3 and 2 settings.	All
<u>Waikato Alert Level 3 settings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Bespoke Alert Level 3 arrangement for Waikato, adjacent to Southern Auckland boundary. There will be a review of the situation in Waikato area in five days, following widespread testing, wastewater testing, and contact tracing.Public health rationale of having AL 3 settings in effect is to reduce and restrict the amount of people moving and gathering.Minister Hipkins will receive draft Alert Level Order for Waikato area to sign tonight, before Alert Level 3 settings come into effect from 2359hrs 3 October."Boundary" definition (and specificity on crossing the boundary) to be confirmed asap. Messaging nationally will need to be clear to minimise confusion (with Waikato boundary but also with the existing Auckland boundary).C4C and CDEM groups have met today to discuss supports for people in the area.Covid-19 website to be updated with relevant comms by 9:30pm.	All
<u>NRLT</u> <p>NRLT tomorrow morning not required. Cadence for week tbc.</p>	Chair

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National Response Leadership Team meeting

Date: 8 October 2021, 1600hrs

Member attendance: Una Jagose (Acting NRLT Chair), Caroline McElnay (for Ashley Bloomfield), Cheryl Barnes, Caralee McLiesh, Carolyn Tremain, Andy Coster, Christine Stevenson, Dave Gawn, Peter Mersi

Other attendance: Rae Nathan (NRLT Secretariat), Hamish Rogers, Mac Leauanae, Tania Ott (for Peter Hughes), Ruth Fairhall, Aaron Wright, Natasha Dcosta, Nic Blakely, Richard Schmidt

Purpose

This briefing records the discussion at the National Response Leadership Team meeting regarding the unfolding situation in Northland after a positive case was detected there.

Next steps

1. NRLT will provide advice to Ministers on a potential Alert Level change in Northland region.

Minutes

2. Una Jagose, Acting Chair of the National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) opened the meeting.
3. The Chair invited Caroline McElnay (in place for Ashley Bloomfield) to provide a situation update.
 - 3.1. Members heard the individual who tested positive was infectious in Northland from 4 October to 6 October. The repeat test they had done in Auckland confirms they are an acute case and would have been infectious in Northland on 5 and 6 October. The individual travelled extensively around the region, and there are many unknown factors such as their whereabouts or activities. Northland DHB is concerned due to vulnerability of community which is compounded by low vaccination rates. Northland region leads have expressed they would prefer the region go to Alert Level 3 to suppress transmission.
 - 3.2. Members heard the Public Health recommendation suggested heavily restricting movement in Northland due to the level of movement by the individual and unknown number of contacts who could have possibly passed it on further. The recommendation is for Alert Level 3 for at least five days.
4. The Chair invited Members to discuss policy and operational considerations.
5. Ruth Fairhall discussed the boundary settings and possible crossing permissions. Members discussed that advice to Ministers could be that we keep the same settings regarding individuals who travel from Auckland into Northland, the main difference is that Northland would be in Alert Level 3.
6. Members discussed the careful messaging required for Alert Level 3 settings given there are different Alert Level 3 settings in place (for Waikato and Auckland).

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7. Members noted there are yachts en route to Northland (six in the next week).
8. Members discussed the readiness of the region to stand up as much testing and vaccination capacity in Northland. Northland DHB confirmed they have capacity for testing and vaccination and that an Alert Level change would likely result in a heightened uptake for both testing and vaccination measures.
 - 8.1. Members noted that the 40% reticulated water in Northland will impact the surveillance testing ability in the area.
 - 8.2. Members discussed that testing and vaccination in more rural areas it is the same workforces that enable testing and vaccinations. The Ministry of Health (MOH) will need to be appraised of workforce pressures to surge if needed.
9. Members discussed that the Alert Level Order can be amended to allow for individuals to return home after an Alert Level change.
10. Members heard the CDEM groups in the region will meet this evening to organise around looking after individuals affected in the region.
11. Members discussed timelines for implementation.
 - 11.1. Members heard the boundary at Northland (between Auckland) is already in place and the main focus for New Zealand Police would be communications regarding the boundary.
 - 11.2. Members heard that PCO are in place to provide an Alert Level Order change by tonight. Members heard that the briefing that accompanies the Alert Level Order will communicate the amount of time an Alert Level change would be in place (five days based on public health advice).
 - 11.3. Members noted travel documentation still in place for Northland to Auckland boundary would remain in place. Members discussed that for people leaving Northland for personal reasons should not need a test (noting individuals leaving Northland for work purposes are already required to receive a test).
12. Members discussed the alternative networks at play in Waikato and possibly Auckland and Northland that are sources of transmission.
13. Members agreed that we recommend to Ministers the following review points of active Alert Level settings:
 - 13.1. Northland review on Tuesday 12 October, with a public health risk assessment Tuesday morning and make Alert Level changes for Tuesday night.
 - 13.2. Waikato and Auckland review of situations on Monday 11 October (no change), further review of Auckland on Thursday 14 October (no change).
14. The Chair closed the meeting.

Signed

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Una Jagose
Acting Chair, National Response Leadership Team

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Roundtable on operations – key points discussed at NRLT on 8 October

Note: This will be shared with NRLT members.

Key points and updates from NRLT members on 8 October	Lead
<u>Alert Level posture – Northland</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Acting Chair and Caroline McElnay met with Ministers following NRLT on 8 October to discuss the situation unfolding in Northland.	All
<u>NRLT</u> <p>There will be a placeholder in diaries on Sunday and NRLT to meet again Monday (11 October) from 0830-0930hrs.</p>	NRLT

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National Response Leadership Team meeting

Date: 11 October 2021, 0830hrs

Member attendance: Una Jagose (Acting NRLT Chair), Ashley Bloomfield, Cheryl Barnes, Caralee McLiesh, Carolyn Tremain, Glenn Dunbier (for Andy Coster?), Christine Stevenson, Dave Gawn, Peter Mersi, Chris Seed

Other attendance: Rae Nathan (NRLT Secretariat), Hamish Rogers, Mac Leauanae, Peter Hughes, Ruth Fairhall, Antony Byers, Aaron Wright, Natasha Dcosta, Sacha ODea, Nic Blakely, Richard Schmidt, Debbie Power

Purpose

This briefing records the discussion at the National Response Leadership Team meeting regarding the situation inside and outside of Auckland and upcoming Cabinet discussions.

Next steps


1. Advice will be provided to Ministers on a potential Alert Level change in Northland region.

Minutes

2. Una Jagose, Acting Chair of the National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) opened the meeting.
3. The Chair invited Ashley Bloomfield to provide a situation update.
 - 3.1. Members heard there are two parallel responses, essentially, occurring simultaneously.
 - 3.2. One is in Auckland where the outbreak is less under control largely due to the size of the population group impacted, possibly overlaid with the AL 3 settings, but where the groups impacted by the virus means that the outbreak overall is growing reasonably slowly and the average is growing at around 30 cases/day.
 - 3.3. Outside of Auckland, such as Waikato those cases are all linked to the Hamilton East case and in a sense we are going for an elimination approach in Hamilton. And in Northland we are taking an elimination approach (eg rapid use of AL 3 to prevent any community transmission).
 - 3.4. What we have going on in the country is that we are shifting to a new approach predicated on a more highly-vaccinated population, and simultaneously have two approaches in place to control. In the short term, DG recommends we should not move settings drastically or go back to harder settings, rather we should 'hold' and continue with high-testing, high contact tracing, case isolation and quarantine that is needed to control outbreaks.
 - 3.5. One issue we need to canvass this week is about education settings in anticipation of next week.
 - 3.6. David Skegg SC19PHAG provided advice on Friday 8 October and that advice is summarised in the DPMC 'traffic light' paper for Cabinet discussion. And it is a


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useful piece of advice to use when we have higher vaccination rates and summarises broader public health measures we may want to have in place and strengthen them if cases go up (even if there are higher vaccination rates).

- 3.7. Carolyn Tremain's team did some urgent work this weekend for Minister Hipkins on MIQ Capacity and contingency planning should we reach a critical threshold of cases that need to be isolated.
4. The Chair invited Members to discuss the Alert Level Cabinet paper.
5. Ruth Fairhall discussed the Alert Level Cabinet paper due for discussion today 11 October. The Prime Minister is also considering a briefing paper on the 'traffic lights' (and for her to decide to forward onto Ministers)
 - 5.1. Advice remains the same as Friday 8 October: maintain current AL 3 settings, not to move to second stage (AL 3 'step 2') and no further changes to AL 2 settings and will be reviewed Monday, MOH are considering what to do about Waikato and Northland today (decisions needed from Ministers). Further discussion is needed on education settings, the Cabinet paper does contain recommendations about what controls need to be in place when they do open in Auckland and we will need to consider how it applies to schools in other AL 3 areas.
 - 5.2. Members discussed that if we remain in AL 3 for Auckland, government will need to clarify what you can/cannot do in Auckland under these settings (AL 3 'step 1' settings). Members discussed reopening schools in Auckland and transport to get kids to school and will increase movements, so travel permissions and other settings will need to be clear when schools reopen. The public health risk assessment of Auckland will canvass school settings in Auckland.
 - 5.3. Members discussed that AL 3 'step 1' settings could be clarified with Cabinet and communications to the public around the settings could be clarified.
 - 5.4. Section 9(2)(f)(iv)

 - 5.5. Members discussed the kind of messaging we might want to consider regarding the rest of the country and preparing for/adhering with restrictions. Members discussed that part of the messaging should include that outside of Auckland, we want to be eliminating COVID-19 hotspots and that we need to get people together to think about what that that might look like to retain elimination outside of Auckland.
 - 5.6. **Officials to think about if the settings are right at the internal boundaries (South Auckland/Waikato boundary; Cook Strait etc)**
 - 5.7. Members discussed how we get New Zealanders on board that getting cases down to zero outside of Auckland is still within our grasp.


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Section 9(2)(f)(iv)




5.9. The Chair commented that we have lots of pieces underway (strategic and response, and two COVID management regimes) and what is the appropriate governance across it.

Section 9(2)(g)(i)



Section 9(2)(g)(i)



5.9.3. Members discussed that tomorrow's CCB should cover the strategic direction and re-canvass what we have discussed in today's NRLT.

6. The Chair noted NRLT meeting diary placeholders will go out for this week.
7. The Chair closed the meeting.

Signed

Una Jagose
Chair, National Response Leadership Team

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Roundtable on operations – key points discussed at NRLT on 8 October

Note: This will be shared with NRLT members.

Key points and updates from NRLT members on 8 October	Lead
<u>Alert Level posture – Northland</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Acting Chair and Caroline McElnay met with Ministers following NRLT on 8 October to discuss the situation unfolding in Northland.	All
<u>NRLT</u> Placeholder in diaries for Sunday (19 Sept). NRLT to meet again Monday (20 Sept) from 0800-0900hrs.	NRLT

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National Response Leadership Team meeting

Date: 18 October 2021, 0800hrs

Member attendance: Brook Barrington (NRLT Chair), Ashley Bloomfield, Cheryl Barnes, Struan Little (for Caralee McLiesh), Carolyn Tremain, Glenn Dunbier (for Andy Coster), Christine Stevenson, Peter Mersi, Chris Seed, Aaron Martin (for Una Jagose)

Other attendance: Rae Nathan (NRLT Secretariat), Hamish Rogers, Mac Leauanae, Peter Hughes, Ruth Fairhall, Aaron Wright, Natasha Dcosta, Debbie Power


Purpose

This briefing records the discussion at the National Response Leadership Team meeting regarding the situation inside and outside of Auckland and upcoming Cabinet discussions around Alert Level settings and around the 'traffic light' framework.

Next steps

1. Cabinet will meet at 1pm 18 October to consider advice around Alert Levels in place for Northland, Waikato, and Auckland, and to consider advice around the 'traffic light' framework and strategy for a highly vaccinated New Zealand.

Minutes


2. The Chair of the National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) opened the meeting and recognised the success of the 'vaxxathon' event over the weekend.
3. Section 9(2)(g)(i)

4. The Chair stated that for the NRLT meeting, they would like to discuss the Alert Levels advice, the 'traffic lights' framework, duration of stay in MIQ, *Reconnecting New Zealand* work programme, and psychosocial impacts on individuals in Auckland.
5. The Chair praised the work led by Ruth Fairhall at DPMC, Public Health teams, and all the teams across the Public Service that have been deeply involved in progressing the COVID-19 public policy work.
6. The Chair invited Ashley Bloomfield to provide a situation update, particularly around the 'vaxxathon' over the weekend.
 - 6.1. Ashley Bloomfield reported that the 'vaxxathon' was very successful with high vaccination numbers and also re-highlighted the sentiment of a collective approach to protect communities in New Zealand from COVID-19.
 - 6.2. Ashley Bloomfield commented that regarding the Alert Level decisions, Public Health observed reasonably stable case numbers over the weekend, but challenges remain around residential settings and contact tracing & testing in hard-to-reach alternative social communities.

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6.3. Ashley Bloomfield reported the R value remains between 1.2 and 1.3, which does mean that we would reasonably expect to see case numbers grow over the next three to four weeks.

6.4. Ashley Bloomfield commented that the Northland situation is stable, that there are 'known unknowns' as in it is encouraging to see high testing numbers, no positive results detected in wastewater samples, and that the vaccination efforts in Northland continue.

6.5. Section 9(2)(g)(i)



7. The Chair commented that the public sentiment and testing/tracing data in Northland point toward 'easing' restrictions.

8. The Chair opened a discussion on the situation in Auckland.


8.1. Ashley Bloomfield commented that the Public Health teams in Auckland have expressed it will be hard to go 'back' to tighter Alert Level 3 settings.

8.2. Members discussed that the majority of people are abiding by the rules and that if we consider 'tightening' Alert Level 3 settings then we should consider how that might impact on social license sentiment (in that it may disproportionately impact those that are compliant) and that it might not deliver the desired public health result to reduce transmission.


8.2.1. Members discussed that small businesses in Auckland already under stress would likely not support 'tightening' of Alert Level 3 settings at this stage.

8.2.2. Members discussed that the communication around the rules and settings could be clearer for the public to understand.

8.3. Section 9(2)(f)(iv)




Section 9(2)(g)(i)



8.3.2. Carolyn Tremain commented that there is another paper going to Cabinet today that clarifies how businesses can engage with employees on vaccination status.

8.4. Members discussed that we may gradually move toward reporting mostly on acute cases (numbers of hospitalisations) as opposed to reporting numbers of cases.

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- 8.5. Ashley Bloomfield commented the goal is to suppress the virus as much as possible to reduce transmission inside the boundary and another important factor is about maintaining a strong boundary.
9. The Chair opened a discussion on the community cases in Waikato.
- 9.1. Ashley Bloomfield commented that localised, targeted, approaches in certain areas could be beneficial in terms of increasing testing rates, contact tracing, and vaccination.
- 9.2. The Chair opened a discussion on if the system could implement a localised boundary around Raglan and Te Awamutu. Members discussed that Raglan has one road in and out, which is possible to operationalise, however in Te Awamutu it would be very difficult to maintain a boundary because it has many ways to travel in and out.
10. The Chair opened a discussion on the settings that would allow for schools to open up safely under Alert Level 3. Members heard that the Ministry of Health will work with the Ministry of Education on what is needed to open schools safely.
11. The Chair opened a discussion on the 'traffic light' framework, referred to as COVID-19 Protection Framework.
- 11.1. Section 9(2)(f)(iv) 
- 11.2. Members heard the current plan for a Ministerial announcement on the framework is Friday 22 October.
12. Members noted that on Wednesday 20 October Ministers with PTA may meet to re-discuss some recommendations from today 18 October that require follow-up to any in-principal decisions from today.
13. The Chair closed the meeting.

Signed

Brook Barrington
Chair, National Response Leadership Team

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National Response Leadership Team meeting

Date: 21 October 2021, 0800hrs

Member attendance: Brook Barrington (NRLT Chair), Ashley Bloomfield, Cheryl Barnes, Graham MacLean, Caralee McLiesh, Stewart McRobie (for Carolyn Tremain), Andy Coster, Christine Stevenson, Peter Mersi, Chris Seed, Una Jagose, Dave Gawn,

Other attendance: Rae Nathan (NRLT Secretariat), Hamish Rogers, Amber Bill, Debbie Power, Mac Leauanae, Peter Hughes, Ruth Fairhall, Natasha Dcosta, Bronwyn Turley, Ben McBride, George Whitworth, Hayden Glass

Purpose

This briefing records the discussion at the National Response Leadership Team meeting regarding the situation inside and outside of Auckland and upcoming announcements regarding the COVID-19 Protection Framework.

Next steps

1. xxx

Minutes

2. The Chair of the National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) opened the meeting.
3. The Chair asked Ashley Bloomfield to debrief on the trajectory we might see in Auckland and Waikato.
 - 3.1. Ashley Bloomfield debriefed that in Auckland the Reff rate is between 1.2 and 1.3 at the moment.
 - 3.2. Ashley Bloomfield debriefed that for Waikato, the decision is to keep the Waikato in AL 3 until possibly Wednesday next week due to the outbreak there that is growing (albeit confined).
 - 3.3. Ashley Bloomfield commented that the 'soft' boundary south of Waikato may start to leak.
4. The Chair asked George Whitworth to brief NRLT on the modelling work that has been pulled together the past couple days to map out demand and supply pressures on public health, MIQ, and on the community which frames some of the issues we are confronting.
 - 4.1. George explained the current modelling work underway:
 - 4.1.1. Outbreak scenario projections – pessimistic, middle, and optimistic, and projects based on a Reff of between 1.2 and 1.3.
 - 4.1.2. The modelling group tried to map the projections onto our systems in New Zealand to show where cases might be managed (MIQ, hospital, etc). The 'middle' projection puts pressure on the system but with the assumptions made in the modelling, the MIQ system should not exceed capacity. The 'pessimistic' projection puts lots of pressure on the MIQ system and would exceed capacity.

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4.1.3. The 'pessimistic' projection translates into system load in a significant way and the COVID-19 systems would be under lots of pressures.

4.1.4. Members queried that the modelling could be expanded to model across different ethnic groups to support decisions on interventions.

4.2. The Chair discussed that this exercise is to support the COVID-19 system to prepare for 'worst case scenarios'.

Section 9(2)(g)(i)



6. The Chair opened a discussion on MIQ and the pressures on staff and those within MIQ regarding long term mental health and psychosocial problems.

6.1. Stewart McRobie discussed the cases going into MIQ from the community are different to cases going into MIQ as a requirement to cross the border. Stewart McRobie discussed that converting further facilities into MIQ is one way to relieve pressure, but converting facilities is not simple. The Chair queried if there are other parts of the system that could lean in to support MIQ to provide the service in a way that works for people with high-needs and high mental health support needs.

7. The Chair emphasised the importance of the vaccination programmes reaching out to harder-to-reach communities.

8. The Chair discussed readiness for community isolation and health system readiness and that we discuss this further next week in NRLT meetings.

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9. The Chair proposed NRLT does not meet over the weekend unless something unexpected and concerning occurs. The Chair proposed that for the next few weeks the NRLT meet regularly on a Tuesday and a Thursday.
10. The Chair closed the meeting.

Signed

Brook Barrington
Chair, National Response Leadership Team

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Roundtable on operations – key points discussed at NRLT on 18 October

Note: This will be shared with NRLT members.

Key points and updates from NRLT members on 18 October	Lead

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National Response Leadership Team meeting

Date: 26 October 2021, 0800hrs

Member attendance: Brook Barrington (NRLT Chair), Ashley Bloomfield, Amber Bill (for Cheryl Barnes), Graham MacLean, Caralee McLiesh, Megan Main (for Carolyn Tremain), Andy Coster, Richard Bargh (for Christine Stevenson), Bronwyn Turley (for Peter Mersi), Chris Seed, Una Jagose, Dave Gawn

Other attendance: Rae Nathan (NRLT Secretariat), Hamish Rogers, Peter Hughes, Aaron Wright, Mac Leauanae, Lisa McPhail, Nic Blakeley (for Debbie Power)

Purpose

This briefing records the discussion at the National Response Leadership Team meeting regarding the situation inside and outside of Auckland.

Minutes

1. The Chair of the National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) opened the meeting.
2. The Chair asked Ashley Bloomfield to debrief on what the Ministry of Health is observing regarding cases in Auckland, Waikato, and Northland.
 - 2.1. Ashley Bloomfield debriefed that in Auckland the situation is similar to last week, averaging 90 to 100 cases per day. He noted that hospital admissions dropped overall over the course of the weekend and that the Ministry of Health (MOH) is investigating to understand the severity of cases that are hospitalised against their vaccination statuses.
 - 2.2. Ashley Bloomfield reiterated that Auckland DHBs are at around 90% for first doses.
 - 2.3. Ashley Bloomfield noted that this week Ministers will make a decision around the Waikato and what options we have available to us.
 - 2.4. Ashley Bloomfield noted that cases in the mid to far North are concerning due to low vaccination rates.
 - 2.5. Ashley Bloomfield noted we will see cases increase overall. He noted that the case that travelled to Blenheim over the weekend was at the end of their infectious period.
 - 2.6. Ashley Bloomfield noted that the health system readiness programme (particularly community care “caring in the communities” component) is making good progress.
3. The Chair summarised the modelling work progressed across agencies (and what was presented to NRLT on Friday 22 October).
 - 3.1. The Chair commented that if the outbreak Reff number stays at 1.25 or lower, then the prediction is that the health system will operate within capacity and not necessarily become overwhelmed. The Chair stressed that an important role for NRLT is to intervene in ways to keep the Reff number lower rather than the ‘red line’.

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4. The Chair opened a discussion on health system readiness and community care in particular.
 - 4.1. Ashley Bloomfield commented that in Auckland the public health, DHBs, and social welfare providers is linked-up well to provide supports to those isolating within the community.
 - 4.2. Megan Main commented that outside of Auckland the connections could be improved across the system to provide services required for isolation care in the community. Megan commented that a key decision point for isolation care in the community is around the triaging of cases and which go into MIQ or can isolate elsewhere (eg in their home). Megan commented that it would be helpful to have an understanding of what the capacity is for isolation care in the community because if cases increase at an unprecedented rate (and hit the community isolation capacity ceiling) then MIQ capacity will be impacted as MIQ would likely house most of the cases.
 - 4.3. Mac Leauanae commented that the response has highlighted the equity gap in the Pacific communities and that self-isolation is a huge concern for Pacific communities. He commented that from the 2018 census, two out of five Pacific families live in an overcrowded home. Because of this, self-isolation would be difficult for those families to manage. He commented that how we manage self-isolation in case the outbreak worsens is critical going forward in this outbreak response and should be considered when we work through implementation of the COVID-19 Protection Framework. Mac Leauanae commented that overall central government appears to be working cohesively with Pacific providers to deliver supports through this response.
 - 4.4. Nic Blakeley commented that the health system readiness and caring in the community programme is progressing in a joined-up way and that there is a workshop the afternoon of 26 October to progress this work.
 - 4.5. The Chair asked Ashley Bloomfield to nominate someone to attend NRLT on Thursday for 15 minutes to discuss the health system readiness and caring in the communities work.
 - 4.6. Ashley Bloomfield commented that the majority of cases that will need to isolate at home will not need multiple wrap around supports from government but there will be groups of people that have more complex needs requiring wrap around support.
5. The Chair thanked everyone who was involved in the launch of the COVID-19 Protection Framework on Friday 22 October and asked that Chief Executives provide thanks back to their officials who were involved.
6. The Chair stated that members should expect an invite to an NRLT on Thursday 28 October and that it will include a conversation on community care.
7. The Chair opened a roundtable discussion on operational 'rub points'.
 - 7.1. Chris Seed debriefed that in Singapore they are seeing high numbers of cases and hospitalisations, and that unvaccinated individuals appear to be 8.5x more likely to die than vaccinated individuals.

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7.2. Megan Main commented that a shorter stay in MIQ (this paper is with Ministers for decision today 26 October) will require additional security staff, cleaners, transport staff, and public health officials.

7.3. Amber Bill noted that the COVID-19 Vaccine Certificates will be discussed with Ministers today and the system is working toward an end-November 'go live' date of COVID-19 vaccine certificates.

8. The Chair closed the meeting.

Signed

Brook Barrington
Chair, National Response Leadership Team

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National Response Leadership Team meeting

Date: 28 October 2021, 1100hrs

Member attendance: Brook Barrington (NRLT Chair), Ashley Bloomfield, Amber Bill (for Cheryl Barnes), Graham MacLean, Caralee McLiesh, Megan Main (for Carolyn Tremain), Glenn Dunbier (for Andy Coster), Richard Bargh (for Christine Stevenson), Peter Mersi, Chris Seed, Una Jagose

Other attendance: Rae Nathan (NRLT Secretariat), Hamish Rogers, Tania Ott, Ruth Fairhall, James Kane, Mac Leauanae, Nic Blakeley (for Debbie Power), Richard Schmidt,

Purpose


This briefing records the discussion at the National Response Leadership Team meeting regarding two positive cases reported overnight in Christchurch.

Minutes

1. The Chair of the National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) opened the meeting.
2. The Chair asked Ashley Bloomfield to debrief the NRLT on the positive cases reported in Christchurch overnight to today 28 October.
 - 2.1. Ashley Bloomfield debriefed that the two cases are a couple. One is a truck driver and it appears he was symptomatic from 18 October to 21 October during which he drove and made deliveries around the Christchurch area.
 - 2.2. Ashley Bloomfield noted that the two index cases are unvaccinated and that they did visit another household and the Ministry of Health (MOH) is expecting that the other households' tests will be returned by today, noting that their test results are material to Ministers' decisions on how to proceed.
 - 2.3. Ashley Bloomfield debriefed that the wastewater test results were negative and that testing period covers this past weekend up until Tuesday this week, and they are testing another batch of wastewater today 28 October.
 - 2.4. Ashley Bloomfield debriefed that public health officials in Christchurch believe that an Alert Level change in Christchurch would help provide assurance and give public health officials time to assess if there is wider spread in the community.
3. The Chair invited Graham MacLean to provide an update on operations of the National Response Group (NRG).
 - 3.1. Members heard that across agencies Officials have crafted boundary options for Canterbury or Christchurch in case they are needed. New Zealand Police and the Ministry of Transport have been engaged on operationalising a boundary change for preparedness. The preferred view is that a boundary covers a wider jurisdiction across Canterbury as opposed to a boundary within or through Christchurch.
 - 3.2. Members heard that officials are prepared to meet to operationalise a boundary if required, and the 11:30am call with Ministers will provide direction on how to proceed with preparations.

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3.3. Section 9(2)(g)(i)



3.4. Graham MacLean noted that in engagement thus far with this community, stakeholders have focused on impacts to education and businesses in particular.

4. The Chair summarised that the current proposition regarding the cases in Christchurch is that at this stage we do not recommend an Alert Level change, but to support decision-making the system will await further information on the following triggers:
 - 4.1. Tests of the households that the index cases visited.
 - 4.2. Wastewater results.
 - 4.3. Testing numbers, generally, for assurance across the area.
 - 4.4. Ability to contact trace and contain.
 - 4.5. If something comes to light that causes us concern (eg if it comes to light that index cases visited a heavily-attended event).
5. Members discussed the importance of communications for this situation and we need to be clear about our plan to cascade communications through stakeholders and how we frame the situation.
6. Members discussed our preparedness around establishing a boundary and that a key question to work through with officials is if the settings that apply to the Auckland boundary would apply to a Christchurch or regional boundary.
7. Members heard that the quarantine capacity in Christchurch is limited at this point in time and as at this morning there are 13 of 15 quarantine rooms available.
8. The Chair closed the meeting.

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National Response Leadership Team meeting

Date: 29 October 2021, 0800hrs


Member attendance: Brook Barrington (NRLT Chair), Robyn Shearer and Bridget White (for Ashley Bloomfield), Amber Bill (for Cheryl Barnes), Graham MacLean, Caralee McLiesh, Andy Coster, Richard Bargh (for Christine Stevenson), Peter Mersi, Chris Seed, Dave Gawn, Una Jagose, Chris Bunny (for Carolyn Tremain)

Other attendance: Rae Nathan (NRLT Secretariat), Hamish Rogers, Peter Hughes, Ruth Fairhall, James Kane, Mac Leauanae, Nic Blakeley (for Debbie Power), Ben McBride, Jason Raven

Purpose

This briefing records the discussion at the National Response Leadership Team meeting regarding the overall situation in New Zealand with positive cases around Auckland, Waikato, and in Christchurch.

Minutes

1. The Chair of the National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) opened the meeting. 3 agenda items – Christchurch update; advice to Ruth on AL paper; continuing arrangements for 11:30 meetings.
2. The Chair asked Bridget White to provide an update on Christchurch
 - 2.1. There were two cases reported overnight that were contacts of the index case. This is two out of the nine close contacts. Two still pending. Two contacts yet to be found to be tested. And three negative tests returned.
 - 2.2. Section 9(2)(a)

 - 2.3. There have been some difficulties getting in contact with known contacts.
 - 2.4. Regarding the delivery driver, businesses and locations have been notified that a positive case did visit there.
 - 2.5. The Chair reminded members that one of the triggers discussed at NRLT yesterday was that if we see significant spread among contacts, we would consider an AL change. The Chair recapped the other triggers discussed yesterday and concluded that a threshold has not been met to suggest AL changes.
 - 2.6. The Chair proposed that we maintain our current posture and that NRLT should stand ready in case data of concern comes to light.
3. The Chair asked Ruth Fairhall to debrief on the current Alert Level paper in draft.
 - 3.1. Ruth Fairhall debriefed that the recommendation at this stage is to keep Auckland at AL 3, at the first step, as opposed to move down to the second step. The rationale for that is to see how the return to school changes the landscape. The recommendation is to keep Waikato to Alert Level 3.

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3.2. The other main recommendations are around the boundary settings. A few weeks ago Ministers agreed to require that those travelling across the boundary must be vaccinated. Our position is to recommend this come into place once CVCs are activated.


3.3. The Chair opened a discussion on AL recommendations.

3.3.1. Members discussed that the AL paper could contain more information about health system readiness and about capacity in the health system.

3.3.2. Members discussed the importance of communicating clearly why we are holding this position and reinforcing that we have these measures in place to stop the health system being overwhelmed.

3.3.3. Graham MacLean noted that engagement in Auckland regarding the framework suggests we need more clarity around when the framework 'kicks in' and the importance of articulating the conditions to get there.

Section 9(2)(g)(i)



4. The Chair debriefed on the weekly rhythm with Ministers.

4.1. Daily 11:30am meetings will continue, focused on public health. PMO will send out revised invitations. With the exception of the Monday 11:30am meeting. This will focus more on the week ahead, strategy and operational matters looking further out.

5. The Chair noted that Ministers have been very complimentary of *Reconnecting*. And that now we are looking at CBC on 10 November.

6. The Chair noted:

6.1. On the vaccination programme – communications around the 90% should be framed around a national effort ('national drive') and the 'New Zealand spirit' of competitiveness and united.

6.2. On the framework – launch went well and the key point is simplicity and keep driving for simplicity.

6.3. On health preparedness – Ministers want more granular reporting from each DHB with metrics and reports from DHB level to draw a more fulsome picture with standard metrics to gauge progress across DHBs.

7. The Chair closed the meeting.

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Signed

Brook Barrington
Chair, National Response Leadership Team

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National Response Leadership Team meeting

Date: 30 October 2021, 1500hrs

Member attendance: Brook Barrington (NRLT Chair), Robyn Shearer, Amber Bill (for Cheryl Barnes), Aaron Wright (for Graham MacLean), Caralee McLiesh, Megan Main (for Carolyn Tremain), Glenn Dunbier (for Andy Coster), Richard Bargh (for Christine Stevenson), Peter Mersi, Chris Seed, Una Jagose

Other attendance: Emily Waterson (NRLT Secretariat), Hamish Rogers, Tania Ott, Ruth Fairhall, James Kane, Mac Leauanae, Nic Blakeley (for Debbie Power), Richard Schmidt

Purpose

This briefing records the discussion at the National Response Leadership Team meeting regarding case numbers, Alert Level settings and the situation relating to Tonga.

Minutes

1. The Chair of the National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) opened the meeting.
2. The Chair asked Robyn Shearer to brief the NRLT on Alert Levels and location of interests.
 - 2.1. Canterbury is under control. The new case overnight appears to be historic returning a second negative test this morning. Serology and Genomic Sequencing will occur to close loop. There have been no unexpected cases.
 - 2.2. Section 9(2)(a) [REDACTED] At this stage the Northland cluster is considered confined and there is no indication for the need to change Alert Levels.
 - 2.3. Auckland has 152 cases reported in the last 24 hours. ARPHs are moving to management of cases through a prioritisation tool. Contact Tracing is occurring through the National Contact Tracing System and is under stress and is likely to come under more pressure.
 - 2.4. Waikato had 7 cases overnight, mainly in the Hamilton region
 - 2.5. Blenheim had no new cases. The one case in Blenheim has recovered and will be released from isolation soon.
 - 2.6. MoH will be in contact with Tonga this afternoon to gain a better understanding of the cases infection. The case has returned another positive result; however, it still need to be determined if this is a historical case or not. The two close contacts in Christchurch have tested negative, and another two close contacts in Wellington are being tested, both are vaccinated and asymptotic.
 - 2.7. 29,000 tests were processed yesterday with a median process time of 19 hours.
 - 2.8. No wastewater results of concern.
3. Members agreed given the information provided no Alert Level changes are required at this time.

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- 4. The Chair invited Chris Seed to provide an update on Tonga.
 - 4.1. Members heard of the 215 passengers on plane, ~180 were Regional Seasonal Employees and 3 were diplomatic staff. All passengers returned a negative PDT prior to the flights, and all meet the requirement of being in the South Island 14 days prior to departure.
 - 4.2. All Tongan frontline airport staff are double vaccinated and are currently in isolation. A curfew from midnight to 5am will be coming into place, and it is believed there will be a lockdown for one week from Monday.
 - 4.3. The positive case is in isolation.
 - 4.4. Vaccination rates in Tonga are ~85% according to Post. Long queues have been reported outside pop up vaccinations centres.
 - 4.5. MFAT are monitoring flights into pacific next week:
- 5. The Chair invited Policy to talk to the group.
 - 5.1. Overview of paper provided. Paper is with Ministers Office.
- 6. The members discussed the delivery of Episurv data. It was outlined the Minister received slides from NRHCC yesterday which can be adapted to enable wider understanding of the system.
- 7. Members discussed testing numbers and Contact Tracing supplementation which may be required in the future. These topics are to be discussed Monday.
- 8. The Chair closed the meeting.

Signed

Brook Barrington
Chair, National Response Leadership Team

Roundtable on operations – key points discussed at NRLT on 30 October

Note: This will be shared with NRLT members.

Key points and updates from NRLT members on 28 October	Lead
Monitor flights in the Pacific and determine if additional measures are required.	DPMC and MoH
Adapt NRHCC slides for wider distribution	MoH

National Response Leadership Team meeting

Date: 14 November 2021, 1045hrs

Member attendance: Brook Barrington (NRLT Chair), Ashley Bloomfield, Graham MacLean, Cheryl Barnes, Peter Mersi, Una Jagose, Andy Coster, Chris Seed, Christine Stevenson, Caralee McLiesh, Dave Gawn, Carolyn Tremain, Alice Hume, Carolyn Macnaly

Other attendance: Ella Jones (NRLT Secretariat), Hamish Rogers, Peter Hughes, Richard Schmidt, Ben McBride, Liam McNamara, Kevin Short, Carl Crafar, Debbie Power

Purpose

This briefing records the discussion at the National Response Leadership Team meeting regarding the Alert Level settings across the country.

Next steps

1. Cabinet will meet on Monday 15 November to assess advice on the Alert Level posture.
2. NRG will meet today at 1230hrs.
3. A cross agency working group will convene on Wednesday to discuss the operationalisation for implementation of the COVID-19 Protection Framework.

Minutes

4. The Chair of the National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) opened the meeting.
5. The Chair invited Ministry of Health to give a situation update:
 - 5.1. Ashely Bloomfield updated the Auckland and Northland situation appeared stable. There are 190 cases in Auckland. Northland has 2 new cases, 1 of which is still under investigation, within an expected area.
 - 5.2. Waikato reported 11 new cases, mostly children of a known family. There are have been 3 incursions from Auckland into Waikato. Section 9(2)(a) [redacted]
[redacted] The view is that this level of activity will continue regardless of Alert Level changes. The advice provided on Thursday for Waikato to step down to AL2 remains.
 - 5.3. Taranaki - no new cases to report. Close contacts have all tested negative and reported increased testing in the area. There is a clear link to Auckland and situation appears contained. Currently no need for escalation.
 - 5.4. Taupo has 4 new cases, including 3 brothers and 1 associate. Section 9(2)(a) [redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted] The index case was symptomatic from 8th November, tested on 11th. Section 9(2)(a) [redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted] Significant testing in Taupo. Based on information available, currently do not seek an AL change.
 - 5.5. Woodville reported 2 new cases, Section 9(2)(a) [redacted] Both symptomatic from 12th November and sought immediate testing and self-isolated. Section 9(2)(a) [redacted]

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Section 9(2)(a) Cases are on septic tanks however; wastewater testing is currently being arranged in area. More information is needed.

6. The Chair summarised that based on information currently available, the advice will be for the AL to remain unchanged. There are a number of seeding events occurring and 2 potential hubs for secondary transmission at Taupo and Masterton. Expect more information in the next 24-36hrs and should prepare for what could come.

The Chair invited NZ Police to provide an update:

7. Section 6(c)
8. There is an expectation that will continue to see seeding events and we should act soon if we want to adopt a strategy to protect at risk communities. Noted the beneficial engagement role Maori leaders can play in this community space.

The Chair invited Graham MacLean to provide an update from the National Response Group.

9. Graham MacLean updated that yesterday work was undertaken to identify boundaries, in alignment with new cases. These quickly become difficult to enforce and messaging can get complex.
10. The NRG has undertaken predatory work for a N/S Island split, including requirements for ferry terminals and air boundaries. NRG will sit at 1230 today.
11. Work is currently underway to prepare messaging for communities and individuals on the CPF changes. Further work is required and there is increasing scepticism by locals on the effectiveness of Government communication.
12. Ashely Bloomfield noted moving to the CPF provides greater protection. The CPF has less focus on where cases come from, but instead limits the movement of unvaccinated people so they cannot participate in activity that spreads the virus easily. There is a need for clear public messaging to prepare for a change in response. An earlier nationwide flip would enable an additional layer of protection that is not currently provided by the Alert Level settings.
13. There was consensus from the group that the current situation highlights we are on the tipping edge between the two Frameworks.
14. Dave Gawn updated that CDEM has a program of work looking at communication, including sending 'get ready' messages through the CDEM network. This should be on track for next week.
15. Debbie Power shared that in the welfare support space, the role, responsibilities and intersections between agencies to providers is unclear. This needs to be resolved with urgency in next 2-3 days, noting the welfare model is hamstrung until responsibilities are sorted out.
16. Caralee McLiesh offered consideration by the group on if there is anything else that we do to support greater protection through the transitional period, i.e. use of masks, WFH arrangements etc. while operational readiness is being built.

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17. Graham MacLean updated the group on a full day workshop, scheduled next week to focus on the operational detail. This will be based on scenarios and stepping through the CPF and will feed readiness considerations into the Cabinet paper on 22 November.
18. The Chair concluded that based on the discussion no further work will be progressed on the N/S Island split. However, this may be considered again later in week as part of the operational detail.
19. The Chair closed the meeting.

Signed

Brook Barrington
Chair, National Response Leadership Team

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Roundtable on operations – key points discussed at NRLT on 14 November

Note: This will be shared with NRLT members.

Key points and updates from NRLT members on 14 November	Lead
<p><u>Cabinet Paper:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No changes in the Alert Level posture for the Cabinet Paper 	DPMC
<p><u>NRG:</u></p> <p>As an outcome of the workshop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify any areas of CPF readiness that can be accelerated, timeframes for operationalisation, and where further work is required. In the next week, create clarity on the triage and handover between health and welfare support services. 	DPMC
<p><u>Comms</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further work to be undertaken on preparing public and communities for the transition to the CPF. 	DPMC/ MoH

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National Response Leadership Team meeting

Date: 26 November 2021, 0800hrs

Member attendance: Brook Barrington (NRLT Chair), Ashley Bloomfield, Cheryl Barnes, Graham MacLean, Caralee McLiesh, Paul Stocks (for Carolyn Tremain), Mike Rusbach (for Andy Coster), Christine Stevenson, Peter Mersi, Una Jagose, Dave Gawn

Other attendance: Rae Nathan (NRLT Secretariat), Hamish Rogers, Carl Crafer, Aaron Wright, Mac Leauanae, Liam McNamara, Peter Hughes, Ruth Fairhall, Sacha Odea, Ben McBride,

Purpose

This briefing records the discussion at the National Response Leadership Team meeting regarding the COVID-19 Protection Framework (the Framework) and upcoming Cabinet decisions around the settings before the country transitions to the Framework on 2 December 2359hrs 2021.

Minutes

1. The Chair of the National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) opened the meeting.
2. The Chair asked Ruth Fairhall to debrief on the draft of the Monday 29 November 2021 Cabinet paper on confirming settings for the transition to the COVID-19 Protection Framework.
3. Ruth Fairhall noted the focus of the paper is on what colours different regions will transition to next week.
 - 3.1. Ruth noted a key question to Cabinet is on how they want to treat more-vulnerable regions. Vaccination rates is one consideration around the colours that regions will transition to.
 - 3.2. There will be a Cabinet review of Framework settings on 13 December.
4. Ashley Bloomfield debriefed that the risk of cases seeding from Auckland will possibly decline, instead of increase. Ashley debriefed that the Red level is an escalation point so if we start Auckland in Red we will need to be clear about the triggers for de-escalating.
 - 4.1. Ashley Bloomfield explained that there are some areas that may be at-risk of shifting in subsequent assessments based on public health advice, but it is an acknowledgement not necessarily a pre-text to justify those areas starting at a higher level.
5. The Chair queried on the obligations to Māori in terms of active protection of Māori health which is taonga. The NRLT discussed if this obligation means we start at a certain level due to this consideration and that Cabinet will need to consider this obligation on balance with other considerations.
6. The Chair asked Aaron Wright to talk about operationalisation of the CPF.
7. Aaron Wright debriefed that compliance with the settings is key to the architecture of the system around the CPF. Aaron debriefed that public communications and engagement

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will be critical to support compliance with the settings of the CPF. Aaron noted that movement over summer could be complicated by regular moves between levels. Aaron noted there will be a discussion with the COVID-19 Chief Executives Board (CCB) on Tuesday around compliance. Aaron noted that the systems and architecture around advice will be raised with Chief Executives next week. Aaron noted that Carl Crafar has set up an operational DCEs group to oversee welfare provision under the CPF in the summer period.

8. Ashley Bloomfield discussed that the travel patterns and groups of people travelling (and vulnerability) are a consideration for summer preparedness and CPF settings.
9. The Chair opened the meeting to discussion on views of the transition to the CPF. Members noted:
 - 9.1. that the rationale for advising regions start in a higher level is a precaution.
 - 9.2. that one consideration for advising to start a region in Orange under the Framework is vaccination rates of the region.
 - 9.3. that local communities may want to put certain measures in place and officials will need to advise Government carefully on how this could occur.
 - 9.4. that the paper should be clear on what the pathway to Green might be and why we do not advise that any region should start at the Green level of the framework.
 - 9.5. that the compliance framework for how we manage over the summer period will be critical particularly during the summer period where there will be lots of travel.
10. The NRLT noted the next review points of the CPF settings is 13 December 2021 and 17 January 2022.
11. The Chair closed the meeting.

Signed

Brook Barrington
Chair, National Response Leadership Team

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National Response Leadership Team meeting

Date: 28 November 2021, 1100hrs

Member attendance: Brook Barrington (NRLT Chair), Ashley Bloomfield, Cheryl Barnes, Aaron Wright, Graham MacLean, Caralee McLiesh, Carolyn Tremain, Andy Coster, Christine Stevenson, Peter Mersi, Chris Seed, Una Jagose, Peter Hughes, Bronwyn Turley, Paul Stocks

Other attendance: Emily Waterson (NRLT Secretariat), Hamish Rogers, Ben White,

Purpose

This briefing records the discussion at the National Response Leadership Team meeting regarding case numbers, Alert Level settings and the situation relating to Tonga.

Minutes

1. The Chair of the National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) opened the meeting.
2. The Chair invited Ashley Bloomfield to give an update to the Group
 - 2.1. Ashley Bloomfield updated a public health risk assessment was yesterday developed and provided to Minister. The assessment concluded due to good border regimes New Zealand is in a good position in light of the new variant. Ashley Bloomfield also noted that the approach to undertake Whole Genome Sequencings for all positive cases also aids with early detection.
 - 2.2. Ashley Bloomfield stated that those arrivals from the new very high risk countries, including those which have arrived recently, will now be required to do a full 14 days in MIQ rather than 7 days plus 3 in home isolation. Those arrival who have already left MIQ will eb contacted and requested to isolate further with a day 12 test required.
 - 2.3. Ashley Bloomfield highlighted MoH are continuing to monitor the situation internationally, stating some European countries are reporting a number of cases with the new strain.
 - 2.4. Ashley Bloomfield noted Healthline are receiving queries regarding booster shots and MoH are on communications around this.
3. Members noted:
 - 3.1. that other countries are taking quick action to limit travel.
 - 3.2. that there are 827 MIAS vouchers allocated over the summer period. There will be operational implications moving these arrivals from 7 day stays to 14.
 - 3.3. that Australia has a 14 day review of high risk countries. The Chair agreed a 14 review cycle, but any additions required should be done as required.
4. The Chair invited Graham Maclean to update from NRG.

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5. The NRG discussions were on the implications for MIQ, international observations and how we can operate the system to ensure good information sharing without this becoming burdensome.
6. The Chair invited Chris Seed to update the Group who noted London, Canberra and Singapore are aligned with the approach New Zealand is taking to the new strain.
7. The chair opened a discussion on the COVID-19 Protection Framework (CPF) inviting Cheryl Barnes to comment on any implications the discovery on a new strain may have on its implementation. Members were told that given the protections at the border, there is not an immediate need to change the plan to introduce the CPF this week.
8. The Chair agreed there is no need to change the course at the moment, emphasizing the need for decisions to be driven by science, with lockdowns to remain in the toolkit. The Chair stated a key element to understand will be vaccine efficacy.
9. The chair highlighted the need for engagement with Iwi who have raised initial queries and concerns about the new framework. Members agreed.
10. The Chair invited Graham Maclean to discuss summer readiness. Graham Maclean noted next week the COVID-19 Readiness and Planning team will undertake some scenario testing in light of the new variant to test summer readiness. Outcomes will be given into CCB.
11. The chair closed the meetings.

Signed

Brook Barrington
Chair, National Response Leadership Team

Roundtable on operations – key points discussed at NRLT on 28 November

Note: This will be shared with NRLT members.

Key points and updates from NRLT members on 28 November	Lead
Ensure all MoH, DPMC and the system are linked up appropriately and sharing information	DPMC
Keep on eye on international insights	MoH
Messaging to New Zealanders offshore through the consular	MFAT
Speak to Iwi re CPF	DPMC

COVID-19 Chief Executives Board Minutes

Date 23 November 2021
Time 0800 to 0930hrs
Venue Microsoft Teams

Attendance

CCB Members

Brook Barrington (Chair)	DPMC	Ashley Bloomfield	MOH	Caralee McLiesh	TSY
Christine Stephenson	NZCS	Peter Mersi	MOT	Andrew Kibblewhite	MOJ
Rebecca Kitteridge	NZSIS	Dave Samuels	TPK	Tania Ott	PSC
Una Jagose	CLO	Chris Seed	MFAT	Debbie Power	MSD
Cheryl Barnes	DPMC	Chris Bunny	MBIE	Rob Fyfe	Business Forum

Apologies

Carolyn Tremain	MBIE	Peter Hughes	PSC	Kevin Short	NZDF
Sir David Skegg	SPHAG	Sir Brian Roche	CICRIAG	Sarah Sparks	Community Panel

In attendance

Amber Bill	DPMC	Hamish Rogers	DPMC	Carl Crafar	DPMC
Graham MacLean	DPMC	Ruth Fairhall	DPMC	James Correia	DPMC
Rob Huddart	DPMC	Rachel Sutherland	DPMC		

Agenda and apologies

1. Brook Barrington, Chair of the COVID-19 Chief Executives' Board (CCB), welcomed participants to the discussion.

Chair Updates

2. The Chair invited Rob Fyfe to update members on international approaches to COVID-19, building on his practical experiences in several countries. He highlighted significant uptake of rapid antigen testing; the effective operation of the New Zealand COVID-19 travel pass; widespread consideration of reactivating vaccine mandates and the relatively isolated nature of protests against these; and varying restrictions across countries. Rob also noted his sense of an easing of domestic pressure and business uncertainty in Aotearoa.
3. The Chair responded that as pressure eases internally, the international border is likely to increasingly become the point of tension.

Immunisation and Response Update

4. The Chair invited Ashley Bloomfield to provide a situational update, who noted:

- 4.1. Increasing numbers of DHBs reaching 90% vaccination threshold for first doses;
 - 4.2. Easing pressure on Auckland healthcare facilities due to high vaccination rates;
 - 4.3. Growing concentration of cases in vulnerable and marginalised communities;
 - 4.4. Considering extension of vaccination to 5-11 age group, to expand coverage and advance equity; and
 - 4.5. Shifting focus toward administering booster shots and registering these within vaccine passes, to address waning immunity and increasing infectiousness.
5. The Chair highlighted the dynamic relationship between increasing case numbers as public health restrictions are eased, and decreasing pressure on healthcare facilities as vaccination efforts proceed. He mentioned the need to refocus efforts on addressing future waves of infection as borders reopen, protecting vulnerable communities, and delivering boosters.

Impacts of Shift in Strategy on Pacific Partners

6. Chris Seed presented the international implications of the domestic shift from elimination and protection for Pacific partners, which included:
- 6.1. Increasing likelihood of transmission from New Zealand to the Pacific;
 - 6.2. Integrating this risk into Pacific partners' plans, supported by a dedicated paper on reconnecting under development;
 - 6.3. Addressing constraints in New Zealand's ability to extend support, as a result of workforce strains, travel bottlenecks, and economic difficulties;
 - 6.4. Acknowledging the different risk perceptions, vaccination coverage, and socioeconomic status across Pacific partners; and
 - 6.5. Recognising New Zealand's special and strengthened obligations to the Pacific.
7. Members reaffirmed that these issues will require concerted and continued attention, and noted the need to strike a balance between domestic and international concerns.

Concurrency Planning for Parallel Challenges

8. Marika Hughes, Director of National Security Systems, provided an overview of concurrency planning for parallel challenges. She underlined ongoing work in:
- 8.1. Entering a 'new normal' in which every event now coincides with COVID-19;
 - 8.2. Aligning concurrency planning with the COVID-19 Protection Framework (CPF);
 - 8.3. Building an interagency response architecture across DPMC and NEMA;
 - 8.4. Addressing crises which overwhelm designated agency in scale and intensity;
 - 8.5. Reaffirming principles of preserving life and safety from direct threats, seeking culturally competent responses, and pursuing appropriate escalation pathways;
 - 8.5. Ensuring contingency capacity during the holiday period, through a dedicated working group and CE roster; and
 - 8.6. Focussing on virtual responses and scaling up to physical presence as needed.
9. Over the holiday period, Tony Lynch will Chair the Officials Committee for Domestic and External Security Coordination (ODESC) in the event non-COVID-19 activation of the national security system. The National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) will continue to convene for COVID-19 related matters (roster and revolving Chair tbc). If responses run concurrently over the holiday period, Brook will maintain strategic oversight over both responses.
10. MOH will establish a National Health Coordination Centre (NHCC) from mid-December to mid-January, led by Ashley Bloomfield and Robyn Shearer. While operations will be primarily virtual, MOH may require support in the initial stages.

11. **Action:** DPMC will clarify NRLT roles and responsibilities under the CPF settings, and confirm the roster over the holiday period.

Disinformation and Harmful Content

12. Rachel Sutherland updated the CCB on several key developments in the COVID-19 disinformation landscape, including:
 - 12.1. Increasingly divisive and extreme content;
 - 12.2. Growing scale and significance of disinformation;
 - 12.3. Intensifying concentration among a small but firm anti-vaccination population;
 - 12.4. Approaching trigger points and security risks, including implementation of vaccine mandates and offering vaccination to 5-11 year olds; and
 - 12.5. Establishing interagency coordination group to minimise gaps, share information, and maximise coverage of disinformation work.
13. Members welcomed the paper and presentation, and underscored that:
 - 13.1. Far-right groups coexist with a diversity of anti-vaccination actors, which share a common antipathy towards authority;
 - 13.2. Isolated individuals represent a threat to which is difficult to respond effectively;
 - 13.3. Dissemination of disinformation raises several risks which cut across agency responsibilities, including non-compliance, threats of violent protest, extremism and terrorism, and challenges to social cohesion and stability;
 - 13.4. COVID-19 provides only one sphere of disinformation, which will endure beyond the current focus on the pandemic and present threats to democracy at large;
 - 13.5. Focus is shifting from anti-vaccination and anti-lockdown toward anti-mandate, and is now broadening to encompass wholesale opposition to government;
 - 13.6. International influences are central to proliferating disinformation domestically, with extremist groups using COVID-19 as a 'trojan horse' to advance their perspective and build support in New Zealand;
 - 13.7. Content is highly gendered, with a disproportionate focus on the Prime Minister and female journalists;
 - 13.8. A robust and careful process is central to managing the trigger points involved with vaccinating 5-11 year olds, and to setting a precedent for effectively tackling disinformation in future; and
 - 13.9. Disinformation will present difficulties to ensuring compliance with the CPF.
14. Members raised questions regarding the coordination arrangements underpinning the interagency response to disinformation, and the mechanisms to capture and address material that does not reach a statutory threshold. Rachel responded that the a virtual team would be established in the coming days, followed by the allocation of agency responsibilities and development of a scenario paper on grey area cases.
15. **Action:** members agreed to elevate disinformation within the assurance framework, NRLT checklist, and CPF, as it will gather pace and scale throughout the new year. DPMC was encouraged to establish a dashboard of key metrics and leading indicators to shape more regular reporting to Ministers.

Transition to the COVID-19 Protection Framework

16. The Chair invited Cheryl Barnes to provide members with an updated on the COVID-19 Protection Framework (CPF). This encompassed:
 - 16.1. Establishing a date of 3 December for triggering the CPF;
 - 16.2. Focussing decision-making on assigning colours to regions;

- 16.3. Stepping up communication efforts and the public information campaign;
 - 16.4. Coordinating the delivery of sector guidance through DPMC;
 - 16.5. Ensuring system workforce capacity;
 - 16.6. Building the compliance and enforcement approach; and
 - 16.7. Shifting tempo towards more systematic and regularised exchanges, setting out the CPF institutional landscape, enabling the regional leadership groups in concert with Carl Crafar and Debbie Power, and bolstering testing and tracing capacity.
17. Members were informed of the paper outlining key milestones to be reached in the coming months, and expressed their gratitude to Graham Maclean for his role in supporting the COVID-19 response over the past 18 months.
 18. **Action:** DPMC will distribute an email outlining key steps to be pursued this week, in preparation for meeting with Ministers.
 19. Members underlined the importance of shifting to a fortnightly cadence, supporting compliance and enforcement, clarifying commissioning for regional leadership groups, and forging pathways to government for raising regional risks and advice.
 20. DPMC highlighted that RLGs are in the process of establishing clear roles and responsibilities, and noted that the occurrence of a compliance workshop later this week represents a moment to shift focus toward local concerns. While the responsibility to reflect advice is centralised, responsibilities for implementation and communication need to be devolved.
 21. **Action:** members agreed to address issues of compliance and enforcement over the coming weeks, underpinned by a paper from DPMC.

Summer Readiness

22. Carl Crafar provided a brief overview of the mandate, communication channels, advice, and decision-making for the summer readiness framework.
23. He highlighted that the Care in the Community comprises several pipelines, which will apply differentiated approaches to those who are required to i) self-isolate, ii) self-isolate with welfare support, iii) self-isolate in the community. Housing presents a key question, particularly where emergency, transitional, and MIQ facilities are needed.
24. Preparedness will also be critical going forward, both nationally and regionally. Carl noted that the holiday period beginning on 15 December poses a greater concern in this regard than the shift of framework on 3 December.
25. Members affirmed the need for an integrated focus on Care in the Community, and to resolve questions and risks related to accommodation. The possibility of a testing alternative to vaccine mandates, applicability of such mandates to court proceedings, and potential for rapid antigen testing in some settings were also discussed.

CCB Cadence

26. Members agreed to conduct shortened verbal sessions of the CCB, on a fortnightly basis alternating with the regular format, until the holiday period.

Reconnecting New Zealanders

27. Cheryl Barnes provided a shortened intervention on Reconnecting New Zealanders, noting her expectation that pressure on the border will increase following the transition in domestic settings toward minimisation and protection. She highlighted that work is progressing on several fronts, and a paper on the medium term risk pathway will be delivered to Cabinet this week.

28. **Action:** Acknowledging the time constraints surrounding the Reconnecting New Zealanders item, members agreed to allocate greater time and advance this in the agenda for the next CCB.

Minutes and Action Points

29. **Action:** the Chair moved to include an agenda item on workforce at the next CCB. Members recognised the broad pressures on staff, widespread fatigue, and short-term contracts, and the need for further attention to these issues.

30. The CCB minutes from November 9 were confirmed, with minor amendments to the wording of Paragraph 10 and list of participants.

Action Log #	Mtg date	Action	Due date	Responsibility
78	23-Nov-21	Clarify the roles and responsibilities of the National Response Leadership Team (NRLT).	Dec-21	DPMC
79	23-Nov-21	Integrate a focus on disinformation within the assurance framework, NRLT checklist, and CPF, and establish a dashboard to shape regular reporting to Ministers.	Dec-21	DPMC
80	23-Nov-21	DPMC will distribute an email outlining key steps to be pursued in relation to the CPF this week.	Nov-21	DPMC
81	23-Nov-21	Explore issues of compliance and enforcement at the next CCB.	Dec-21	DPMC
82	23-Nov-21	Establish an item to address Reconnecting New Zealanders, and raise this in the agenda.	7-Dec-21	DPMC
83	23-Nov-21	Discuss key workforce challenges and concerns at the next CCB meeting on 7 December, supported by an agenda item and working paper.	7-Dec-21	DPMC

COVID-19 Chief Executives Board Minutes

Date 9 November 2021

Time 0800 to 0930hrs

Venue Microsoft Teams

Attendance

CCB Members

Brook Barrington (Chair)	DPMC	Ashley Bloomfield	MOH	Caralee McLiesh	TSY
Christine Stephenson	NZCS	Peter Mersi	MOT	Carolyn Tremain	MBIE
Rebecca Kitteridge	NZSIS	Dave Samuels	TPK	Tania Ott	PSC
Andrew Kibblewhite	MOJ	Chris Seed	MFAT	Nic Blakeley	MSD
Cheryl Barnes	DPMC				

Apologies

Debbie Power	MSD	Peter Hughes	PSC	Una Jagose	CLO
Kevin Short	NZDF				
Sir David Skegg	SPHAG	Sir Brian Roche	CICRIAG	Rob Fyfe	Business Forum

In attendance

Amber Bill	DPMC	Hamish Rogers	DPMC	Rae Nathan	DPMC
Graham Maclean	DPMC	Ruth Fairhall	DPMC	James Correia	DPMC

Agenda and apologies

1. Brook Barrington, Chair of the COVID-19 Chief Executives Board (CCB), welcomed participants.
2. The Chair informed members of a reordering of the agenda for the closed session, to focus on the COVID-19 Protection Framework and COVID-19 Work Programme and Future Outlook for PSLT in parallel, followed by the COVID-19 Care in the Community Work Programme, System Assurance Framework, and System Response to CICRIAG Recommendations.

Chair Updates

3. In the absence of representatives from the independent advisory groups, the Chair delivered the most recent updates received from them.
 - 3.1. Brian Roche emphasised the need to ensure clarity in public communications, prepare the population for endemic COVID-19, and broaden awareness of upcoming challenges – including for those who have been vaccinated.
 - 3.2. David Skegg reaffirmed this sentiment, highlighting that upcoming difficulties will involve notable increases in case numbers, some sickness among the vaccinated, and pressures on the public health workforce. He noted that DHB readiness and redoubled testing and tracing capacity will be vital going forward.

4. The Chair concluded that these observations reflect a growing recognition of the shift in emphasis from containing COVID-19 in Auckland towards preparing the country for broader spread of the disease.

Immunisation and Response Update

5. The Chair invited Ashley Bloomfield to provide a situational update, who noted:
 - 5.1. Vaccination coverage is poised to cross the 90% threshold across all Auckland DHBs, and this has already been achieved for over-65s nationwide. The key emerging challenge is to continue to drive demand among the hesitant.
 - 5.2. The healthcare system will face significant tests over the coming months, and testing, contact tracing, primary care, and hospital capacity will have to scale up to manage the spread of COVID-19 throughout the country.
 - 5.3. Booster shots will be offered to those over 18 next week, with a core focus on the border, health, and aged care workforce.

COVID-19 Protection Framework, Work Programme, and Future Outlook

6. The Chair invited Ruth Fairhall to update participants on recent developments and revisions to the COVID-19 Protection Framework (CPF), which include:
 - 6.1. Reopening Auckland and facilitating travel;
 - 6.2. Shifting the central focus from Auckland to other areas of the country;
 - 6.3. Transitioning to the CPF nationally when Auckland reaches 90% vaccination, with settings in other regions depending on vaccination rates and virus spread,
 - 6.4. Targeting vaccination efforts to those areas with low uptake;
 - 6.5. Issuing a travel advisory to support public understanding of the CPF;
 - 6.6. Establishing a legal requirement for vaccination and testing as a condition for travel, enforced through spot checks in transit points and 'red' areas; and
 - 6.7. Adopting the COVID-19 Vaccination Certificate (CVC) and limits on gatherings.
7. Ruth outlined the process for advancing these points, including pursuing discussions with Ministers, integrating updates into a Cabinet Paper, consulting stakeholders, and reaching a final decision.
8. The Chair opened discussion to CCB members, who highlighted the need to:
 - 8.1. Clarify the relationship between easing domestic travel restrictions and reopening the trans-Tasman border. As 38% of those in MIQ have travelled from Australia, this could ease pressure on facilities and workforce.
 - 8.2. Address workforce issues by identifying areas in which constraints can be eased, and locating where staff can be reallocated and upskilled;
 - 8.3. Delineate scenarios that may direct people to MIQ or self-isolation;
 - 8.4. Ensure clarity in public communications, to broaden awareness of the next phase of the response and shift focus from cases to hospitalisations;
 - 8.5. Establish roles and responsibilities for enforcing public health measures;
 - 8.6. Devolve and decentralise decision-making in the response, while maintaining national-level oversight and accounting for variation in capacity across regions;
 - 8.7. Account for increasing economic pressures, including high inflation, tight labour markets, supply chain constraints, exporter concerns;
 - 8.8. Ensure readiness and capacity in healthcare and across the system;
 - 8.9. Develop advance agreements for therapeutic drugs through PHARMAC, and build on the strong response and low ICU usage in Auckland nationwide;

- 8.10. Rethink economic supports with a view to shifting from a broad-based to tailored approach;
- 8.11. Refocus efforts on most crucial workstreams and vulnerable areas;
9. Participants agreed that a collaborative and integrated approach will be critical going forward, as issues of public health are increasingly coupled with social and economic concerns. There was broad acceptance that a whole-of-government approach was needed and that health aspects of the response will require cross-government support if objectives are to be achieved.
10. **Action:** the Chair welcomed these interventions, noting that a framework for addressing the concerns raised should be built in six weeks and delivered over three months. To ensure system-wide readiness, he underscored the need to assign agency responsibilities, determine an operational lead official, and agree on a work programme.
11. The Chair outlined the key elements of this programme, and members agreed that this should include:
- 11.1. Health system readiness (DHB and national);
 - 11.2. Caring in the Community;
 - 11.3. Legal orders;
 - 11.4. Compliance and enforcement;
 - 11.5. Iwi and Maori, and engagement more generally;
 - 11.6. Strategic public communications;
 - 11.7. Workforce;
 - 11.8. Economic supports;
 - 11.9. Surge capacity;
 - 11.10. National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) and response framework; and
 - 11.11. Work programme commissioning and decision rights.
12. **Action:** The Chair instructed the DPMC COVID-19 Group to further develop the pillars set out in 11.1-11.11. Agencies were requested to identify areas in which workforce could be freed up and reallocated, and notify Cheryl of these.

COVID-19 Care in the Community

13. Robyn Shearer, operational lead of the Caring in the Community programme, provided members with an update on its progress. She highlighted that:
- 13.1. The Care in the Communities programme is situated within the broader context of preparedness, and will proceed in parallel to ensuring that every DHB has a preparation plan in place. These plans cover public health, specific aspects of the COVID-19 response, continuity of services such as planned care, and workforce status.
 - 13.2. The Ministry of Health is working with primary care and community providers to facilitate the transition to the new pathway, and progressively recalibrating the approach as implementation advances.
 - 13.3. The relationship between health and social support is central to the Care in the Community programme, and arrangements for their provision need to be triggered as soon as possible following calls to self-isolate.
 - 13.4. A regional coordination team is being established to share lessons emerging from the Auckland outbreak and build capacity in other regions.

- 13.5. DHB plans have been submitted and will be stress tested in the coming weeks. DHBs are being actively encouraged to work with Auckland to glean and integrate their experiences.
- 13.6. MOH is engaging with DPMC to deliver public communications on how to respond to positive individual cases and cases in the community.
14. Robyn concluded her presentation by calling for cross-government support to ensure MOH delivers on the programme. MSD set out some key questions that need to be addressed over the coming weeks, including determining the precise scope for isolation, how to monitor compliance, which welfare package will be made available to those isolating, and addressing questions of accommodation, and noted that work is underway to bring these dimensions together within the programme.

System Assurance Framework (SAF)

15. The Chair canvassed the core concerns and priorities raised by members in the SAF, including:
- 15.1. Alleviating workforce pressures and fatigue, and ensuring readiness for COVID-19 Protection Framework (CPF) and Reconnecting New Zealanders;
 - 15.2. Sustaining international reputation and relationships in a context of gradual reconnection;
 - 15.3. Clarifying future border and MIQ arrangements;
 - 15.4. Building and ensuring adequate healthcare capacity;
 - 15.5. Managing disproportionate impacts of endemicity on vulnerable communities in general, and Maori in particular;
 - 15.6. Addressing accommodation needs, specifically in terms of affordable and transitional housing;
 - 15.7. Facilitating the implementation of vaccine mandates;
 - 15.8. Tackling inter-regional disparities in capacity and vaccination rates;
 - 15.9. Accounting for the impacts of shifting from elimination to protection for Pacific partners;
 - 15.10. Navigating economic risks and supply chain issues; and
 - 15.11. Ensuring adequate provision and delivery of social support.
16. Members affirmed the alignment between these concerns and workstreams outlined in 11.1-11.11. Assigning agency roles and responsibilities, ensuring monitoring and compliance, clarifying workforce recruitment and retention, reworking immigration settings, navigating iwi and Maori relationships, and adopting a longer-term strategic outlook, were all raised as central to the effectiveness of the work programme.
17. **Action:** The Chair welcomed these contributions, and reconfirmed the actions set out in 10 and 12. He set out several follow-up activities for DPMC to pursue in the coming days, including engaging with Treasury on the budget horizon, MOH on health reforms and managing Delta, and PMO on the international border.

System Response to CICRIAG Recommendations

18. Amber Bill provided a brief overview of the process for addressing the CICRIAG recommendations. This involves submission to SWC next week, and Cabinet thereafter. The substance of the paper has been largely preserved, with minor changes to the agency responses.

Minutes and Action Points

19. The Chair confirmed the CCB minutes from 12 and 28 October noting that a minor clarification amendment regarding home isolation for domestic cases and international arrivals would be applied by DPMC, summarised the actions emerging from the discussion, and closed the meeting.

Actions

Action Log #	Mtg date	Action	Due date	Responsibility
76	9-Nov-21	Develop and deliver a summer readiness framework, including the assigning agency responsibilities, determining an operational lead official, and agreeing on a common work programme.	Dec-21	DPMC; all agencies
77	9-Nov-21	Notify DPMC COVID-19 Group of areas in which workforce capacity can be freed up and reallocated to the response.	Nov-21	All agencies
78	9-Nov-21	DPMC to engage with Treasury on the budget horizon, Ministry of Health on health reforms and managing Delta, and the Prime Minister's Office on the international border.	Nov-21	DPMC

COVID-19 Chief Executives Board Minutes

Date 28 October 2021

Time 1000 to 1130hrs

Venue Microsoft Teams

Attendance

CCB Members

Brook Barrington (Chair)	DPMC	Ashley Bloomfield	MOH	Caralee McLiesh	TSY
Richard Bargh	NZCS	Peter Mersi	MOT	Kevin Short	NZDF
Una Jagose	CLO	Chris Bunny	MBIE	Tania Ott	PSC
Andrew Kibblewhite	MOJ	Chris Seed	MFAT	Nic Blakeley	MSD

Apologies

Debbie Power	MSD	Peter Hughes	PSC	Rebecca Kitteridge	NZSIS
Carolyn Tremain	MBIE	Dave Samuels	TPK	Christine Stephenson	NZCS
Sir David Skegg	SPHAG	Sir Brian Roche	CICRIAG	Rob Fyfe	Business Forum

In attendance

Amber Bill	DPMC	Hamish Rogers	DPMC	Rae Nathan	DPMC
Graham MacLean	DPMC	Anneliese Parkin	DPMC	James Correia	DPMC
Ruth Fairhall	DPMC				

Agenda and Apologies

1. Brook Barrington, Chair of the COVID-19 Chief Executives Board (CCB), welcomed participants.
2. The Chair noted the removal of the standing item concerning updates from the independent advisory group chairs, due to their absence from the meeting.

Response Update

3. The Chair invited Ashley Bloomfield to provide an update on the COVID-19 response and immunisation programme. He noted that:
 - 3.1. The Auckland outbreak is contained, with daily case numbers stabilising and hospitalisations and ICU use within capacity. This reflects the efficacy of the vaccination drive, public health readiness and response, widespread understanding and application of testing and tracing, and low infection rates among elderly communities.
 - 3.2. Waikato is also under control, though challenges remain with outbreak impacts concentrated among marginalised and vulnerable populations. In Northland, all close contacts have been identified. New cases in Christchurch have been positive for 7-9 days, despite testing negative prior to travelling to the city.
 - 3.3. Recent weeks have seen steady progress in the vaccination rate, with roughly 40,000 doses delivered per day. This is supporting the response and

establishing the foundation for a transition to the COVID-19 Protection Framework.

System Assurance Framework

4. The Chair underlined the importance for the CCB to continue to meet its assurance function, by providing a comprehensive overview of system risks and readiness.
5. To serve the core mandate of CCB providing assurance to the Minister for the COVID-19 Response, two channels of communication and coordination are needed:
 - 5.1. Raising key risks at the working level, across agencies managing the response, and elevating to the CCB.
 - 5.2. Gathering headline insights from CCB CEs, to provide strategic direction.
6. The Chair raised several substantive pillars that could frame these efforts and inform a coordinated approach, including:
 - 6.1. Resurgence planning and preparation;
 - 6.2. Managing cases in hospitals, MIQ, and the community; and
 - 6.3. Preparedness, readiness and support.
7. Building on the paper on key COVID-19 Response Deliverables, members discussed the question of workforce and raised a range of risks and constraints:
 - 7.1. Courts are addressing increasing amounts of challenges to COVID-19 measures, and work is underway on how to alleviate system pressures;
 - 7.2. Workforce retention represents an emerging issue, particularly with regard to fixed-term staff enlisted in the response, and consideration of available options to provide incentives is ongoing;
 - 7.3. Funding certainty is critical to this end, and conversation is needed at the next CCB on the forecast horizon as a basis for pursuing this with Ministers;
 - 7.4. Increasing strategic uncertainty and ambiguity will aggravate workforce constraints; and
 - 7.5. Returning to BAU may detract from the workforce available to support the ongoing response.
8. The Chair noted the relationship between the points mentioned and the state of public health, and the need to remain flexible and adaptable to a changing outlook.

Strategic Roundtable

9. The Chair invited members to discuss emerging concerns in their areas of work.
10. Building on the points outlined in 6.1-6.3, members raised a range of ongoing challenges at the housing, MIQ, and social support interface:
 - 10.1. If people cannot isolate at home, there is ambiguity about where isolation should be facilitated – MIQ or temporary accommodation;
 - 10.2. A clear outlook is needed in relation to how MIQ is adapted and implemented over the next six months;
 - 10.3. Agency responsibility for providing accommodation for those isolating is yet to be fully established, and is under discussion;
 - 10.4. Welfare and social support for those isolating a key concern, and will be rolled out in the coming weeks;
 - 10.5. Purpose-built facilities will be required to effectively manage COVID-19 cases in the medium to longer-term;
 - 10.6. Section 9(2)(f)(iv) [REDACTED]

Section 9(2)(f)(iv)

- 10.7. Expectations around home isolation are going to shift very quickly, particularly among low-risk and vaccinated groups.
11. Members pledged to work together to address these issues, under the strategic leadership of MOH. Members confirmed that MOH is the lead agency in this respect, and that this leadership encompasses three dimensions:
 - 11.1. Vertical – ensuring alignment between public health, primary care, and hospital systems;
 - 11.2. Horizontal – to facilitate coordination across DHBs; and
 - 11.3. Delivery – provision of wraparound support, in concert with other agencies.
12. **Action:** Members reaffirmed the need to ensure that the COVID-19 Care in Communities programme is in operation and agreed to discuss this at the next CCB on November 9.
13. Members noted that the focus of MIQ will shift from the border to the community and contingent capacity in an endemic environment. Although this works for those in cities, concerns remain regarding those in rural settings. In parallel, greater responsibility for the management of MIQ arrangements will be progressively devolved to DHBs, with ongoing support from MOH and MBIE. Systems must be in place to respond quickly to cases and contain outbreaks. Questions remain around the medium-term role of MIQ throughout and beyond the transition to the COVID-19 Protection Framework.
14. Members highlighted the difficulties associated with addressing workforce constraints, the need to avoid the excessive diversion of scarce resources from other areas to the COVID-19 response, and the importance of vaccination and maintaining a low R-value in reducing strain on healthcare capacity.
15. Members mentioned that decision-making regarding whether cases and contacts undergo MIQ, community or home isolation depends on a public health assessment, and highlighted that the speed of case identification is critical to informing the inter-agency response and facilitating the provision of wraparound support.

Reconnecting New Zealanders Governance

16. Members noted the need to remain conscious of the depth and breadth of issues confronting the successful rollout of Reconnecting New Zealanders, and called for a more realistic outlook to underpin future versions of the document.
17. Members underlined the importance of clarifying the relationship between the COVID-19 Protection Framework and Reconnecting New Zealanders, to ensure their alignment. Greater consideration is required regarding the implications of the strategic shift towards endemicity for Pacific partners, Section 6(a)
DPMC noted that work is underway on aligning these frameworks and addressing ambiguities between them, and that a first attempt on this front will be contained in an upcoming Cabinet paper.
18. **Action:** Members agreed to discuss the implications of the COVID-19 Protection Framework and Reconnecting New Zealanders for the Pacific region in greater detail, at the CCB meeting on November 23.

Minutes and Action Points

19. **Action:** the Chair deferred the approval of the minutes, discussion of the System Response to the CICRIAG Recommendations paper, and consideration of the work programme and future outlook to the next CCB meeting on November 9.

General business

20. The Chair closed the meeting.

Actions

Action Log #	Mtg date	Action	Due date	Responsibility
72	28-Oct-2021	Clarify and discuss the framework for providing community care and supporting those in isolation.	9-Nov-2021	MOH
73	28-Oct-2021	Approve the minutes from 12 October and discuss the System Response to the CICRIAG Recommendations.	9-Nov-2021	All agencies
74	28-Oct-2021	Consider the updated COVID-19 Work Programme and Future Outlook.	9-Nov-2021	DPMC; all agencies
75	28-Oct-2021	Discuss the implications of the adoption of the COVID-19 Protection Framework and shift towards Reconnecting New Zealanders for the Pacific region.	23-Nov-2021	All agencies

COVID-19 Chief Executives Board Minutes

Date 12 October 2021
Time 0800 to 0930hrs
Venue Microsoft Teams

Attendance

CCB Members

Una Jagose (Acting Chair)	DPMC	Ashley Bloomfield	MOH	Cheryl Barnes	DPMC
Rebecca Kitteridge	NZSIS	Peter Mersi	MOT	Peter Hughes	PSC
Una Jagose	CLO	Carolyn Tremain	MBIE	Caralee McLiesh	TSY
Andrew Kibblewhite	MOJ	Chris Seed	MFAT	Cheryl Barnes	DPMC
Dave Samuels	TPK	Nic Blakeley	MSD	Christine Stevenson	NZCS
Debbie Power	MSD	Brook Barrington	DPMC	Kevin Short	NZDF

In attendance

Amber Bill	DPMC	Hamish Rogers	DPMC	Rae Nathan	DPMC
Aaron Wright	DPMC	Anneliese Parkin	DPMC	James Correia	DPMC
Tania Ott	PSC	Sir David Skegg	SC19PHAG	Sir Brian Roche	CICRIAG
Rob Fyfe	Business Forum	Sarah Sparks	Community Panel		

Agenda and apologies

1. Una Jagose, Acting Chair of the COVID-19 Chief Executives Board (CCB), welcomed members.
2. The Chair noted that the agenda may shift for today, with less consideration of the National Response Plan Q4 than anticipated in the meeting pack and a stronger emphasis on the strategic roundtable.

Update from the Chairs

3. The Chair acknowledged Sarah Sparks and Sir David Skegg in attendance, and asked them to provide an overview of key insights observed in the Community Panel and Strategic Public Health Advisory Group (SPHAG), respectively.
4. The Chair invited Sir Brian Roche to update Members on the most recent advice delivered to Minister Hipkins by the COVID-19 Independent Continuous Review, Improvement and Advice Group (CICRIAG).
5. The Chair invited feedback on the advice, noting that Delta is spurring rapid adaptation in response to a changing environment.
6. Members discussed:
 - 6.1. Re-prioritising efforts in the system, and available resources, toward key areas of the Delta response in the community;
 - 6.2. Ensuring clarity of public consultation on the 'traffic light' paper under consideration, and in external communications;

- 6.3. Setting shorter- and longer-term objectives to inform the response; and
- 6.4. Addressing the risks arising at the border and those emerging in the domestic outbreak, with due consideration that the balance between these may vary across the country.
7. DPMC acknowledged that clarity of communications had been challenging to sustain in light of shifting arrangements, and noted that the 'traffic light' framework needs to be embedded within the context of a broader strategy by:
 - 7.1. Building on a weekly cycle of briefing papers and meetings, rebalancing toward longer-term considerations;
 - 7.2. Conducting a roundtable with key stakeholders to discuss the strategy that sits around the 'traffic lights', planning and a communications approach.
8. Members noted the difficulties associated with this particular phase of the response, with both the public service and the public at large facing mounting fatigue. This is evidenced in waning compliance with public health measures in Auckland, as well as in diminishing proportion of bookings for first vaccine doses. Members agreed that ensuring the highest possible vaccination rate in all communities remains a core priority.
9. The Chair invited the independent Chairs to leave the meeting, in advance of the closed session.

Lessons management

10. The Chair invited Amber Bill to provide a snapshot of the system-level insights that have emerged from the ongoing response to Delta in Auckland. Amber underscored the importance of several factors, including:
 - 10.1. Conducting readiness planning, which provided for clarity and pace in the initial response;
 - 10.2. Tailoring the approach, which continues to be a key element of effectiveness;
 - 10.3. Engaging early with relevant stakeholders, to ensure up-front planning;
 - 10.4. Striking a balance between immediate response work and business-as-usual in the workforce.
11. She also acknowledged that managing the closure of trans-Tasman quarantine-free travel (QFT) arrangements had posed challenges to the full realisation of points 10.1-10.4, and contributed to fatigue. She also highlighted that further coordination was needed to adequately capture the lessons of the current Delta outbreak.

Roundtable strategic discussion

12. The Chair opened a discussion on how we understand our future model and the directions and steps needed to get there, noting that we are at a pivotal point in the response to COVID-19. Members then discussed:
 - 12.1. Increasing the pace at which funding is delivered to Māori providers, to support their efforts to boost vaccination rates in their communities;
 - 12.2. Learning from the MIQ capacity work with Tainui, which represents a success story on how community and iwi can be mobilised in the management of community isolation. Self-isolation for low-risk populations also warrants further exploration; and
 - 12.3. Framing the strategy around a selection of key pillars and initiatives, which may help to sharpen the focus and recalibrate efforts over the coming months;

13. The Chair invited Cheryl Barnes and Ruth Fairhall to discuss the latest briefing to the Prime Minister, which aimed to take stock of the response and the feedback received on the 'traffic light' framework to date. Members heard that there was a need to:
 - 13.1. Facilitate a change in overall approach to account for shifting circumstances;
 - 13.2. Provide for stronger measures than those contained in the 'red light' settings of the current framework;
 - 13.3. Ensure appropriate timing for a transition, in light of the current outbreak;
 - 13.4. Ensure that the transition is informed by vaccination rates, health system readiness, and health advice; and
 - 13.5. Situate the 'traffic light' system within a broader strategy and plan, which includes *inter alia* border settings.
14. Members focussed their reactions on the timing of the transition, the need for an interim approach, and the in-depth joint reflection required to formulate a renewed strategy. The importance of establishing a set of conditions for raising and lowering public health measures, redefining the overall strategy, and using the interim approach to create room for longer-term planning were all highlighted in this context.
15. Members were encouraged by the widespread agreement on the key dimensions of such a strategy across the CCB, and collectively underlined the importance of gathering key chief executives, deputy chief executives, and independent chairs to set aside time to discuss feedback received on the framework with stakeholders.
 - 15.1. **Action:** DPMC to organise a roundtable discussion with key stakeholders and relevant Ministers (e.g. Minister Hipkins and Prime Minister), to gather and examine feedback received on the framework.
16. Members discussed that in this next phase it is important to provide a pathway forward for Cabinet to consider, which provides the contours of a broader strategy, sets out a plan for how to navigate its various phases, and offers a realistic outlook of various scenarios that may emerge in the coming months.
17. The Chair reaffirmed that the CCB should retain strategic oversight of the strategy going forward, confirm the reality of the outlook throughout its implementation, and support the delivery of a clear plan for how we move through the strategy, to the PM.

Draft minutes

18. The CCB confirmed the minutes and actions from 28 September 2021.
19. The Chair closed the meeting.

Actions

Action Log #	Mtg date	Action	Due date	Responsibility
#71	12 Oct	DPMC to organise a roundtable discussion with key stakeholders, relevant Ministers (e.g. Minister Hipkins and Prime Minister), to gather and examine feedback received on the framework	ASAP	COVID-19 Group

COVID-19 Chief Executives Board Minutes

Date 28 September 2021

Time 0800 to 0930hrs

Venue Microsoft Teams

Attendance

CCB Members

Brook Barrington (Chair)	DPMC	Ashley Bloomfield	MOH	Cheryl Barnes	DPMC
Rebecca Kitteridge	NZSIS	Peter Mersi	MOT	Peter Hughes	PSC
Una Jagose	CLO	Carolyn Tremain	MBIE	Caralee McLiesh	TSY
Andrew Kibblewhite	MOJ	Chris Seed	MFAT	Cheryl Barnes	DPMC
Dave Samuels	TPK	Nic Blakeley	MSD	Christine Stevenson	NZCS
Debbie Power	MSD				

Apologies

Rebecca Kitteridge	NZSIS
Kevin Short	NZDF

In attendance

Amber Bill	DPMC	Hamish Rogers	DPMC	Rae Nathan	DPMC
Graham MacLean	DPMC	Anneliese Parkin	DPMC	James Correia	DPMC
Sir David Skegg	SC19PHAG	Sir Brian Roche	CICRIAG	Rob Fyfe	Business Forum
Tania Ott	PSC				

Agenda and apologies

1. Brook Barrington, Chair of the COVID-19 Chief Executives Board (CCB), welcomed members.
2. The Chair noted a change in the order of meeting items to: Response update; Strategy and planning update from the Chair and Cheryl Barnes; Discussion with the independent Chairs; and an Immunisation programme update.

Response update

3. The Chair invited Ashley Bloomfield to provide a situational update, who noted:
 - 3.1. Section 9(2)(g)(i)
 - 3.2. Hospitalisation numbers were not high, despite the emergence of clusters of concern.
 - 3.3. Vaccination uptake is slowing (at time of meeting) and a core focus for the Ministry of Health (MOH) is to increase the amount of first doses delivered to vulnerable groups with a view to broadening coverage.
4. Members heard insights from modelling work regarding the trajectory of the Auckland outbreak. One insight is that the original cluster is 'tailing off', and that

emergent sub-clusters of concern have connections through neighbourhoods or social networks.

5. Members heard that research into international trends and cases suggest New Zealand cannot rely on high vaccination rates alone. Rather, vaccination must be deployed in conjunction with public health measures, travel restrictions, testing and tracing, and other measures. These measures will be required in order to transition away from hard lockdowns to limit transmission.

Section 6(a)



Strategy and planning update

8. The Chair opened a discussion on recently commissioned strategy and planning work. The Chair distilled four key pieces of work.
 - 8.1. Discussing how the system can safely 'loosen' some restrictions in Auckland (e.g. in areas such as retail and transport) to increase economic activity.
 - 8.2. Building a traffic light system to move away from a strict Alert Level approach and shift toward a 'degrees of activity' approach. In a more highly vaccinated population, a traffic light system could allow for activity that we can do safely.
 - 8.3. Managing the *Reconnecting New Zealanders* portfolio and work programme and considering what it will look like to open the border at the right time.
 - 8.4. Preparation for a 'worst-case scenario', and if the Auckland outbreak and clusters do not reduce in numbers and size. Members heard that different parts of the system are taking a 'worst-case scenario' lens across their work.
9. The Chair stressed the importance of an integrated story to tell the public, and that these four pieces of work are the building blocks that underscore a coherent approach.
10. In relation to the commissioned work, Members then discussed:
 - 10.1. It is imperative New Zealand learns from other countries' experiences to inform our own 'reopening' settings in Auckland.
 - 10.2. There may be additional sectors that could 'loosen' rules alongside strengthened health measures to increase economic activity (i.e. reducing the cap for sectors such as hospitality, while maintain social distancing).
 - 10.3. As we move to a traffic light system, the economic supports will need to be re-evaluated or re-shaped, in light of the new system.
 - 10.4. Anecdotal evidence suggests although many businesses are going back to work, employees are quite hesitant.
 - 10.5. The ongoing supply chain issues could be elevated in discussions regarding economic activity.

- 10.6. There are labour and supply shortages, so having an ability to resource labour and goods is critical, and that problem may get worse in the next three to six months.
- 10.7. The long-term impacts of lockdowns in Auckland are concerning for the social and mental health sectors, and the socioeconomic impacts for vulnerable groups will outlast the long tail of the lockdown.

Discussion with the independent Chairs

11. Rob Fyfe commented that he is observing more non-compliance in Auckland and that suggests a fraying social license. Businesses are expressing frustrations with the way government engages with them, particularly on *Reconnecting New Zealanders* work, such as the self-isolation pilot.
 - 11.1. The Chair acknowledged the observation on engagement and undertook to follow up with officials.
 - 11.2. Members noted that the pace of border work is constrained by complexity, the legislative framework, and international standards. Available resources, particularly those in relation to public health, are focussed on the current outbreak in Auckland. Other complex considerations are around accepting vaccination status of individuals from other countries, when they have received a variety of different vaccines and have different ways of certifying this.
 - 11.3. Members discussed that some vaccinated members of the public may start to question the requirement around their isolating if they become infected. It is likely that self-management of asymptomatic cases in a highly vaccinated population will be done in a traffic light context.
12. The Chair invited Cheryl Barnes to discuss the traffic light work.
 - 12.1. Engagement is taking place over the next few days, in advance of Cabinet consideration next week. Engagement will be primarily led by Ministers. To note, this specific paper is the first in a series of advice to Cabinet.
 - 12.2. Another Cabinet paper is being developed for the end of October on case and contact management protocols, as the traffic lights work is drafted.
 - 12.3. A parallel piece of work focusses on domestic vaccine certificates and a framework for requiring vaccine certificates in higher-risk settings.
13. David Skegg commented that although New Zealand is in a preferable position than other countries, the Auckland outbreak is developing in a way that we wish it had not. He echoed the sentiment on social license, but noted that this must be balanced against the risk that we do not contain that outbreak and its rapid growth endangers our plans.
14. David Skegg noted that the system (and the public) cannot neglect the possibility of a major outbreak throughout the country between now and Christmas. The priority over this period should be to control the current outbreak and increase vaccination coverage - noting high vaccination rates are only part of the public health measures that will be required.
15. The Chair underscored the importance of the following factors in this response:
 - 15.1. Ensuring that the Auckland outbreak is under control
 - 15.2. Promoting and advancing vaccination uptake
 - 15.3. Building surveillance capacity to pick up future outbreaks within days rather than weeks
 - 15.4. Preparing for our posture in a highly vaccinated New Zealand (traffic lights)

- 15.5. Supporting and retaining social license through periods of ambiguity
- 15.6. Nursing the system through the next three months
- 16. The Chair called for a final roundtable of updates from various agencies. Members discussed:
 - 16.1. The importance of keeping the supply chain issue front of mind, gauging its scope and implications, and exploring the sustainability of our current stance.
 - 16.2. The need to consider and reflect on the various pathways to alleviate pressure on Auckland. The Chair noted that this could involve raising gathering limits and adopting innovative approaches to contact tracing and testing, Section 6(a)
 - 16.3. The need to prepare the public for the eventuality that when vaccination rates are high, some restrictions will remain. The public should be primed for 'the new abnormal' and that although there will be more freedoms, there will not be total freedom.
 - 16.4. That housing insecurity is a prominent issue in this response.
 - 16.5. That there appears to be less pressure on food supply/access than earlier in the response. Relevant agencies are monitoring this closely. Members heard that this outbreak did see confusion about welfare support provision across the system, and that C4C is advancing a piece of policy work to make that more clear for future outbreaks.
 - 16.6. That benefit numbers have increased week on week, but this week the numbers have reduced by about a thousand.
 - 16.7. That work is underway on the next set of economic support measures for the traffic light system, and that these will be more selective and tailored in nature.
 - 16.8. That the funding went out to Whānau Ora to target where needs are most pronounced among Māori, and data is being gathered on vaccine uptake across Māori populations.

General business

- 17. The Chair invited Members to provide any updates or raise any items of general business. Members commented that it would be helpful for CEs to have early line of sight about when papers are coming up.
- 18. The Chair closed the meeting.

Actions

Action Log #	Mtg date	Action	Due date	Responsibility
70	28-Sept-2021	DPMC to reflect on consultation and engagement, particularly with business, and work on further integrating the activities of various engagement groups into CCB work.		DPMC

COVID-19 Chief Executives Board Minutes

Date 14 September 2021
Time 0800 to 0900hrs
Venue Microsoft Teams

Attendance

CCB Members

Cheryl Barnes (Acting Chair)	DPMC	Ashley Bloomfield	MOH	Peter Hughes	PSC
Rebecca Kitteridge	NZSIS	Peter Mersi	MOT	Caralee McLiesh	TSY
Una Jagose	CLO	Carolyn Tremain	MBIE	Cheryl Barnes	DPMC
Andrew Kibblewhite	MOJ	Chris Seed	MFAT	Christine Stevenson	NZCS
Dave Samuels	TPK	Nic Blakeley	MSD		

Apologies

Debbie Power MSD

In attendance

Amber Bill	DPMC	Hamish Rogers	DPMC	Rae Nathan	DPMC
Graham MacLean	DPMC	Anneliese Parkin	DPMC	Tania Ott	PSC
Sir David Skegg	Chair, SC19PHAG	Sir Brian Roche	Chair, CICRIAG	Rob Fyfe	Chair, Business forum

Item 1. Agenda and apologies

1. Cheryl Barnes, the Acting Chair of the COVID-19 Chief Executives Board (CCB), welcomed all in attendance.

Item 2. Response update

2. The Chair opened with a response situational update.
3. The Chair invited Ashley Bloomfield to provide a situational update.
 - 3.1. Ashley Bloomfield noted that of the 53 cases reported in the last few days, all but two were unable to be linked to known transmission chains.
 - 3.2. Ashley Bloomfield noted the Elimination Strategy is still the strongest approach and while we may need to accelerate, or amplify certain parts of our work, but the approach can yield positive results. The current approach gives the system time to prepare for what the counterfactuals might be.
 - 3.3. Ashley Bloomfield commented that an important aspect of health care system capacity is broader than ICU capacity although the public tend to focus on ICU capacity.

Item 3. Updates on work programmes: Chairs of the COVID-19 Independent Continuous Review, Improvement and Advice Group (CICRIAG), Strategic COVID-19 Public Health Advisory Group (SC19PHAG), and Business Leaders Forum.

Item purpose: to engage and update on work programme of the Ministerial Advisory Groups and the Business engagement forum. This is a standing agenda item.

4. The Chair invited the Chairs of the CICRIAG, SC19PHAG, and Business Leaders' Forum to discuss what they are observing in this current response.
5. Sir David Skegg commented that the situations in Sydney and the state of Victoria are good examples of what can happen in New Zealand if we pivot quickly away from Elimination without a phased approach. Sir David Skegg's view is that we have an opportunity to beat this now but his Group is concerned that the response is using a similar approach as last year despite that this outbreak is Delta. Sir David Skegg commented that the vaccine is critical but it does take time for immunity to kick in. Sir David Skegg commented that the testing capacity could be increased and that the system could utilise saliva testing and should be utilising any available testing methods. Surveillance testing could be broadened and community leaders engaged to actively go out to their communities to bring testing to the communities.

6. Section 9(2)(g)(i)

6.1. Action: Rob Fyfe to synthesise the areas where businesses have expressed they want to get involved with the response and develop an approach to filter in the solutions that can be utilised in the response.

7. Sir Brian Roche commented that his Group is focusing on the four or five key learnings from this response that will be critical to opening up next year under the Reconnecting New Zealanders approach.
8. The Chair invited members to discuss what more might the system do in this next week or so time period to give this opportunity the best shot.
9. Members discussed that there are levers to draw on across government to stimulate demand for vaccination and testing and drawing on those levers will give us a good opportunity to contain the outbreak.
10. Members discussed that there is not a supply concern with testing and vaccination access, it is rather a demand problem. Members discussed that there is testing hesitancy among families to come forward as that may result in going to quarantine. Members discussed that while Auckland is in Alert Level 4, there is an opportunity for government and businesses to work together with employers to increase testing.
11. Members discussed the testing options available to us and how it could be used in different sectors.
 - 11.1. **Action: Ashley Bloomfield to circulate primer on testing options available to New Zealand.**
12. Members discussed messaging and communications approach to employers to support them to encourage their employees to get vaccinated. Members discussed that interventions that take 'solutions to the people' will be more successful than waiting for

'people to come to government' and that the solution should be about mobilising more points of access. Members heard about an example in Canada where a grouping of businesses came together to deliver vaccinations to a group of businesses in a business park setting.

13. Rob Fyfe commented on what the scale up process and speed might look like to enable rapid antigen testing in New Zealand and increasing testing surveillance in the workplace. Rob Fyfe commented that businesses appear to be very interested in this tool to use across business sectors. Members discussed the importance of a public health perspective across these testing options and assessment of which sectors it might be appropriate for.
14. Sir David Skegg commented that rapid testing should be available quickly given the changing context this year than last year, and that a daily rapid test would be less of an inconvenience for people crossing the boundary frequently and would be more sensitive for surveillance if this kind of testing was done daily as opposed to a weekly PCR test.

Item 4. Update on COVID-19 Immunisation Programme

Item purpose: to update the CCB on the programme/implementation and communications. This is a standing agenda item.

15. The Chair invited Ashley Bloomfield to update Members on the immunisation programme.
16. Ashley Bloomfield commented that the vaccine supply is strong and the priority is to get as much two-dose coverage as possible. Ashley Bloomfield commented that PHARMAC is looking at COVID-19 infection therapeutics and assessing the efficacies.
17. The Chair invited that Independent Chairs can exit the meeting if they would like and they exited the meeting.

Item 5. Update on the development of a Strategic Investment Horizon

Item purpose: to update the CCB on the strategic investment horizons work.

18. Cheryl Barnes recapped the background of the strategic investment horizon work and noted that the meeting pack's draft presentation is updated to reflect the strategic choices in light of the current response and how we might weigh-up the strategic choices. The outbreak has showed us that the case for investing in community resilience is strong and that there is a case for investing in community quarantine or isolation options for cases or contacts, in a way that is outside of putting individuals into a facility. Cheryl Barnes noted that the updated presentation is for comment and feedback and reflects some of those lessons, and that there is more work to do on a future set of scenarios. While DPMC will support this work, Members may wish to lean into this more as and how they see fit.
 - 18.1. Carolyn Tremain suggested that economic factors and investment in schemes to protect business resilience should be weaved more fully into the piece of work. It would also be useful for this work to note that businesses could be more involved in testing mechanisms and support the delivery of testing regimes in workplaces. In an employment sense, we may see more pressure from businesses seeking direction on vaccination in context of employment legislation schemes.
 - 18.2. Caralee McLiesh suggested the presentation canvass leveraging technology capability in the private sector and that how we think about technologies in the COVID-19 context could be enhanced in the piece of work. In a broad sense, how will vaccination, quarantine, or other public health measures fit into the immigration,

training, employment scheme. Suggested that the presentation pull out urgent investment needs as the things to invest in regardless of how the virus develops, to maintain options going forward.

18.3. Nic Blakely suggested the piece of work prompt discussion on what the sustainable economic supports might look like if the COVID-19 response is ongoing in the 'long haul'.

18.4. Peter Mersi suggested that understanding behavioural change is important to considering how different scenarios may unfold.

18.5. Dave Samuels commented on community resilience and inequity and that vulnerable communities will be severely impacted if there were to be further outbreaks and that supports and resources will need to be targeted to different communities to reflect their particular needs.

18.6. Andrew Kibblewhite suggested the piece of work give more emphasis to social license and community cohesiveness in the framework and that the system could be more deliberate in bringing the community with us.

19. Action: Incorporate feedback from CCB Members into the strategic investment horizon presentation.

20. The Chair concluded that the recommendations are taken as read.

Item 7. General business

21. The Chair invited Members to provide any updates or raise any items of general business. There were no other items of general business. The Chair closed the meeting.

Actions

Action Log #	Mtg date	Action	Due date	Responsibility
#68	14-Sept-2021	Ashley Bloomfield to circulate primer on testing options available to New Zealand.		Ashley Bloomfield
#69	14-Sept-2021	Rob Fyfe to synthesise the areas where businesses have expressed they want to get involved with the response and develop an approach to filter-in the solutions that can be utilised in the response.		Rob Fyfe
#70	14-Sept-2021	Incorporate feedback from CCB Members into the strategic investment horizon presentation.		Cheryl Barnes

COVID-19 Chief Executives Board Minutes

Date 31 August 2021
Time 0800 to 0900hrs
Venue Microsoft Teams

Attendance

CCB Members

Brook Barrington (Chair)	DPMC	Ashley Bloomfield	MOH	Peter Hughes	PSC
Rebecca Kitteridge	NZSIS				
Una Jagose	CLO	Peter Mersi	MOT	Caralee McLiesh	TSY
Audrey Sonerson (for Chris Seed)	MFAT	Carolyn Tremain	MBIE	Cheryl Barnes	DPMC
Andrew Kibblewhite	MOJ	Debbie Power	MSD	Christine Stevenson	NZCS
Dave Samuels	TPK			Apologies Chris Seed	

In attendance

Amber Bill	DPMC	Hamish Rogers	DPMC	Rae Nathan	DPMC
Graham MacLean	DPMC	Anneliese Parkin	DPMC		
Sir David Skegg (via Zoom)	Chair, SC19PHAG	Sir Brian Roche (via Zoom)	Chair, CICRIAG	Rob Fyfe (via Zoom)	Chair, Business forum

Item 1. Agenda and apologies

1. Brook Barrington, the Chair of the COVID-19 Chief Executives Board (CCB), welcomed all in attendance.

Item 2. Response update

2. The Chair invited Ashley Bloomfield to open the meeting with a response update.
3. Ashley Bloomfield reported that Dr McElnay is going to Auckland to meet with the intelligence team at Auckland Regional Public Health Service (ARPHS) to collectively look at key questions around the outbreak (eg transmission occurring, and what we might expect to see with the outbreak over the next couple weeks, and how we can draw a net around the outbreaks).
4. Ashley Bloomfield confirmed we have capacity in the system for testing and contact tracing (extra capacity procured). An area of concern is the number of people that need to go into quarantine facilities and the number of people who need to go into managed isolation facilities, at a quick rate, due to the community outbreak. Ashley Bloomfield

commented that health staff are stretched in Auckland and DHBs are offering to loan staff to help the effort in Auckland.

- 4.1. The Ministry of Health is observing that particularly Pacific health providers are stretched and tired.
5. The Chair commented that a large percentage of essential workers is Pacific people and that communications and public information must be accessible.
6. Members echoed Ashley Bloomfield's sentiment about workforces that are stretched.
7. The Chair commented that oscillating between Alert Levels should be avoided and that the extension of Alert Level 4 in Auckland may impact on social license.
8. Members heard that quarantine capacity will increase with the Holiday Inn becoming available as a facility. Members noted that if new case numbers stay consistent then the new available capacity will help with the pressure.
 - 8.1. Members noted that the Afghanistan returnees will be accommodated in MIQFs.

Item 3. Updates on work programmes: Chairs of the COVID-19 Independent Continuous Review, Improvement and Advice Group (CICRIAG), Strategic COVID-19 Public Health Advisory Group (SC19PHAG), and Business Leaders Forum.

Item purpose: to engage and update on work programme of the Ministerial Advisory Groups and the Business engagement forum. This is a standing agenda item.

9. The Chair invited the Chairs of the CICRIAG, SC19PHAG, and Business Leaders' Forum to discuss what they are observing in this current response.
10. Sir David Skegg commented that a large amount of work has been undertaken since the previous CCB meeting which was the day the community case of the current outbreak was announced.
11. Sir David Skegg noted that the modelling from Te Puna Matatini completed on Sunday 29 August estimated that it would likely be early October before new case numbers would be less than 10. Sir David Skegg noted that it is important to manage public expectations around when a lockdown might end and that strict maintenance of Alert Level 4 settings will be a determining factor for the duration of lockdown.
12. Sir David Skegg also canvassed that: positive cases seem to go to the hospital earlier in the infectious period; he would have expected the list of essential services to be tighter for this current lockdown; and that the future of the self-isolation pilot settings may need to change in light of Delta.
13. Rob Fyfe commented that the business community appears to be relatively compliant and understanding of the lockdown in place. One frustration communicated from the business community around 'drip-feeding' announcements of Alert Level extensions. The business community would like to know what a realistic scenario is to get back to Alert Level 3 to give clarity to how they manage their operations with Alert Levels in place.
14. Rob Fyfe commented that the outbreak is driving a push for the private sector to ensure people to get vaccinated.
15. Rob Fyfe commented on the MIQF capacity pressure and that businesses are concerned about the capacity taken up by community cases which limits the ability for business people to return from overseas business operations.
16. Sir Brian Roche commented that the system should learn from the current outbreak on the level of preparedness and capacity needed to respond to subsequent outbreaks. Sir Brian Roche and Sir David Skegg are contemplating working closer together so that their insights can complement each other and draw off the same public service agency data and intelligence requests.

17. Section 9(2)(g)(i)

18. Ashley Bloomfield noted that the health system capacity is stretched and one reason for this was the decision to widen the category of contacts required to isolate due to the transmissibility risk of Delta. Ashley Bloomfield commented that to maintain social license we should put a lot of our communications effort at the start because AL 4 is our strongest tool to prevent growth of the outbreak.
19. Members discussed the high-trust model for the business category exemptions and the highest level was from construction sector, and this time the exemptions are more strict. Members noted that the number of exemption applications from the construction sector is less than anticipated. The highest proportion for exemptions are from: primary industries and transport. Members discussed that distribution hubs are an area being worked through to understand the implications should their operations be limited under Alert Levels.

Item 4. Update on COVID-19 Immunisation Programme

Item purpose: to update the CCB on the programme/implementation and communications. This is a standing agenda item.

20. Ashley Bloomfield reported that the current outbreak is an opportunity to emphasise the importance of the vaccination programme and deliver vaccinations at a larger scale. Ashley Bloomfield reported that the Ministry of Health is working closely with MFAT to procure more vaccine doses through September.
21. Ashley Bloomfield reported that the Ministry is planning how to deliver more vaccines to Maori and Pacific peoples under Alert Level 4 or 3 settings.

Item 5. Update on Reconnecting New Zealand strategy and portfolio

Item purpose: to update the CCB on the key deliverables and overall framework, the self-isolation pilot, and health declaration pass.

22. The Chair invited Cheryl Barnes to update the CCB on the *Reconnecting New Zealanders* portfolio.
23. Cheryl Barnes noted the context has shifted significantly since the previous CCB.
24. Cheryl Barnes reiterated the five areas that the CCB indicated they wanted particular focus on and that the portfolio is prioritising and focusing on areas that might be needed earlier than we thought (eg rapid testing, self-isolation pilot).
25. Cheryl Barnes updated on the five areas that the CCB is interested in:
- 25.1. **Self-isolation pilot:** Progressing the policy work of the pilot, noting lots of interplay between policy and operations is critical to its success. The plan remains that the pilot run in October. SRO remains Cheryl Barnes and Christina Sophocleous is in place to operationalise the pilot.
 - 25.2. **Travel health declaration:** Pilot of digital certification will be underway through September and likely to be available end of November. It is aligned to international standards.
 - 25.3. **Rapid testing:** Trials will be in place at airports soon, there are links to the self-isolation pilot and the TAG will feed into the advice on rapid testing use.
 - 25.4. **Health measures (scanning, face coverings):** Mandatory scanning and face coverings will strengthen current response. The Ministry of Health has work underway to look at what public health measures and settings may need to be

reviewed in light of Delta. The current outbreak underscores how important this work is.

25.5. **Ability to determine traveller history:** One important challenge here is to work through how our systems can validate traveller history if the flight journey is broken.

26. Cheryl Barnes concluded the item.

Item 7. General business

27. The Chair invited Debbie Power to update the CCB on delivery of social supports to communities under Alert Level 4.

28. Members heard that there is funding available to improve food access supports. Members heard that more funding will likely be needed for an enduring Alert Level 4 lockdown.

29. Members heard food access issues resulted from a combination of factors such as: more food banks emerged in the last Alert Level 4 lockdown, but that for this current lockdown there was less funding available to rollout food access supports quickly and at that scale.

30. Members heard that the amount of families under stress might start to increase and calls for mental health supports might increase (eg Youthline calls are up 300%).

30.1. **Action: Amber Bill to connect across the system to ensure more joined-up communications is available for individuals to access mental health supports and support future alignment that may be needed for communities and people affected by the lockdown.**

30.2. Andrew Kibblewhite noted that crime statistics do not show a high increase in family harm during the current Alert Level 4 lockdown.

31. The Chair closed the meeting

Actions

Action Log #	Mtg date	Action	Due date	Responsibility
#67	31-Aug-21	Amber Bill to connect across the system to ensure more joined-up communications is available for individuals to access mental health supports and support future alignment that may be needed for communities and people affected by the lockdown.	31-Aug-21	Amber Bill

COVID-19 Chief Executives Board Minutes

Date 17 August 2021
Time 0800 to 0930hrs
Venue Executive Wing, Room 8.5

Attendance

CCB Members

Rebecca Kitteridge (Acting Chair)	NZSIS	Ashley Bloomfield	MOH	Peter Hughes	PSC
Una Jagose	CLO	Peter Mersi	MOT	Caralee McLiesh	TSY
Chris Seed	MFAT	Carolyn Tremain	MBIE	Cheryl Barnes	DPMC
Richard Bargh	NZCS	Andrew Kibblewhite	MOJ		

Dave Samuels	TPK	Debbie Power	MSD	Apologies	
Chris Seed	MFAT			Christine Stevenson	NZCS

In attendance

Amber Bill	DPMC	Hamish Rogers	DPMC	Rae Nathan	DPMC
Tania Ott	PSC	Graham MacLean	DPMC	Emma Broaderlow	DPMC
Ben McBride	DPMC				
Sir David Skegg (via Zoom)	Chair, SC19PHAG	Sir Brian Roche (via Zoom)	Chair, CICRIAG	Rob Fyfe (via Zoom)	Chair, Business forum

Item 1. Agenda and apologies

1. Rebecca Kitteridge, acting Chair of the COVID-19 Chief Executives Board (CCB), welcomed all in attendance.

Item 2. Updates on work programmes: Chairs of the COVID-19 Independent Continuous Review, Improvement and Advice Group (CICRIAG), Strategic COVID-19 Public Health Advisory Group (SC19PHAG), and Business Leaders Forum.

Item purpose: to engage and update on work programme of the Ministerial Advisory Groups and the Business engagement forum. This is a standing agenda item.

2. The Chair invited the CICRIAG, SC19PHAG, and Business Leaders' Forum Chairs to share reflections on the public forum held by the Prime Minister the previous week (12 August). The Chairs expressed their appreciation of all the work to organise a successful public forum event.
3. Rob Fyfe commented that there is a high level of interest in the self-isolation pilot from business communities, and that a high level of media interest may remain. Rob Fyfe commented that he is observing an increase in the number of airlines requiring that their staff are vaccinated.

4. Members heard from Chris Seed that internationally we are observing governments limiting international (cross-border) travel, and that governments are readjusting expectations about opening-up further between now and Christmas.
5. The Chair invited the CICRIAG, SC19PHAG, and Business Leaders' Forum Chairs to debrief their thinking across five key areas and dependencies that directly enable us to move to reconnection, through the Reconnecting New Zealanders strategy. The independent Chairs suggest the CCB drive the agenda and have line-of-sight across key areas in order to deliver by early next year. The five key areas are:
 - 5.1. A successful home isolation pilot, that is robust in a public health context and operationally scalable.
 - 5.2. ICT solutions to determine vaccination status and the ability to move across the New Zealand border.
 - 5.3. An evolved testing regime (pre-border, at border, post-border) which makes use of validated rapid testing innovations without losing robustness.
 - 5.4. Confidence in our ability to determine traveller history, ensure that rules around travellers from countries of high and very high COVID-19 risk are not circumvented
 - 5.5. A stronger domestic public health position based on greater use of the QR app, strengthened contact tracing and wider use of masks in risk situations.
6. Members agreed these areas are critical dependencies to reconnect with the world.
7. Members discussed the elimination strategy going into the future four or five years and if there is a clear view on maintaining the strategy or if the objectives of our strategy may shift. Sir David Skegg commented that from an epidemiological perspective 'elimination' does not equal 'eradication'.

Item 3. Delta variant readiness planning workshop

Item purpose: to update the CCB on the Delta variant readiness planning workshop, key points discussed, and actions that agencies agreed to progress.

8. The Chair invited Graham MacLean, Head of Planning and Readiness COVID-19 Group, to present on item 3.
9. Graham MacLean summarised that the system approach to shifting Alert Levels (ALs) this year will be different to last year when we shifted to AL 4. Members heard that the workshop held on 10 August focused on readiness planning to shift to AL 3 or 4. Members heard that if the system needed to move to AL 3 tomorrow, it could, but that his team will do further readiness planning to ensure a shift through ALs is smooth, fast, and effective.
10. Members heard that the key outcome of the workshop is further work to stress test the system. The Planning and Readiness team at the COVID-19 Group will progress a sprint programme this week on how the system would respond to a Delta outbreak. The specific scenario is operationalising a shift to AL 4 in 24 hours.
11. Members heard that for the sprint programme, the working assumptions are:
 - 11.1. Restrict people-movement in AL 4.
 - 11.2. Boundaries would be across islands to achieve a wider approach given that targeted approaches have gaps due to speed of transition (based on what has been observed in Australian states' responses).
 - 11.3. Duration of lockdown would be seven to ten days.
 - 11.4. Vaccination programme remains high priority and that its progress cannot be disturbed or disrupted.

- 11.5. MIQ and community isolation availability is a key tool for AL 4 and that there are thresholds and trade-offs to effectively use MIQ and community isolation options.
 - 11.6. Effective communications to support maintenance of social license is essential.
 - 11.7. And that the key focuses of the sprint are on education settings in AL 4, exemption process review, social welfare supports, compliance workstream, social license, iwi and Māori obligations, and that readiness planning reaches into iwi and Māori and community leaders.
12. Members provided feedback to Graham Maclean on focuses that should be included in the sprint work programme and the assurance that CCB want across the Delta readiness planning work:
- 12.1. Develop high level principles across operationalising a shift to AL 4, such as clearly identifying people-movements in the 24 hours to AL 4 (eg can individuals 'get home if they can' or 'stay where they are').
 - 12.2. First principle is to restrict movement immediately as a fundamental objective for an AL shift.
 - 12.3. Before shift to AL 4, identified essential service and goods categories, processes in place to expedite production of travel documents to allow for essential travel, and definition of 'front line' staff may need to expand if we were in AL 4 for longer (eg licensed people to provide essential services, couriers to deliver essential goods).
 - 12.4. Prioritisation to communicate as early as possible with the public and community leads regarding changes to AL settings to ensure there is time for individuals to prepare for AL changes and how community leaders can support their communities and vulnerable populations.
13. **Action: Members agreed that for assurance across Delta readiness planning, DPMC appoint workstream leads and notify CEs of this.**

Item 4. Update on COVID-19 Immunisation Programme

Item purpose: to update the CCB on the programme/implementation and communications. This is a standing agenda item

14. Ashley Bloomfield reported that pace of the immunisation programme is gathering.
15. Ashley Bloomfield reported that the Ministry is progressing plans for the rollout of the immunisation programme to 12 to 15yr olds.
16. Ashley Bloomfield reminded Members that the vaccination rates with ethnicity breakdowns is published weekly, and that in group 4 rollout we see higher vaccination rates among Māori and Pacific communities than pakeha.

The Chair closed the open session of the meeting and Graham MacLean, Emma Broaderlow, Sir Brian Roche, Sir David Skegg, and Rob Fyfe exited the meeting.

Item 5. System Assurance Framework

Item purpose: monthly reporting on system assurance updates and a system-level focus area for discussion. Focus area: Data, privacy, and technology

17. Amber Bill, Head of System Assurance COVID-19 Group, reiterated the purpose of the System Assurance Framework (SAF) is to provide assurance to the CCB across macro enablers, risk management across programmes, governance, and assurance frameworks.
18. Technology, data, privacy enabler is the focus for the current SAF report.

19. The Government Chief Digital Office is engaged to fulfil an assurance function across COVID-19 technology components.

19.1. Section 9(2)(g)(i)

Members commented that through development of COVID-19 technology components, the GCDO was engaged on assurance.

20. Skills and workforce pressures around the travel health declaration piece of work was raised through the SAF. Members expressed concern regarding the ability to recruit people with the specific skills required to progress the ICT work. The Public Service Commissioner expressed that this type of request should go through the Mobility Hub.

20.1. Section 9(2)(g)(i)

21. Members discussed that there is a review underway to clarify roles and responsibilities, to streamline, across Maritime-related COVID-19 events.

22. Members further discussed the five key areas to progress the Reconnecting New Zealand (RNZ) strategy:

23. (1) A successful home isolation pilot that is robust in a public health context and operationally scalable.

23.1. Members agreed that Cheryl Barnes is the lead overall on end-to-end of the self-isolation pilot. Members heard that Ruth Fairhall is lead on policy design of the self-isolation pilot, and that the RNZ portfolio team are working through SROs for operational implementation of the self-isolation pilot.

23.2. **Action: Members requested a clear overview programme of SROs for the self-isolation pilot is developed and shared with CCB.**

24. (2) ICT solutions to determine vaccination status and the ability to move across the New Zealand border.

25. (3) An evolved testing regime (pre-border, at border, post-border) which makes use of validated rapid testing innovations without losing robustness.

26. (4) Confidence in our ability to determine traveller history, ensure that rules around travellers from countries of high and very high COVID-19 risk are not circumvented

27. (5) A stronger domestic public health position based on greater use of the QR app, strengthened contact tracing and wider use of masks in risk situations.

28. Members discussed that across all five areas DPMC coordinate policy and Ministerial interface.

29. Section 9(2)(f)(iv)

Members heard that the MIAS system is under pressure.

Item 6. COVID-19 Review Recommendations update; and CICRIAG Auckland Outbreak Review Recommendations update

Item purpose: to discuss the monthly report of progress against COVID-19 review recommendations. And discuss one-off reporting of progress against the Auckland Outbreak Review recommendations.

30. **Action: amend recommendation 7.2 in the paper Monthly Report on Progress Against Reviews and Recommendations to: "Note the categories justifying the "Superseded / Not agreed" recommendations."**

Item 8. Minutes and action points

- 31. The Chair invited any amendments to the 03 August CCB minutes and actions.
- 32. Members confirmed the 03 August minutes and actions.

Item 7. Development of a Strategic Investment Horizon discussion

Item purpose: to update the CCB on the strategic investment horizon work and discuss a possible conversation between CCB members and relevant Ministers on the presenting strategic choices, prioritisation, and timeframes.

- 33. Cheryl Barnes opened this item by summarising the DCEs workshop held on 5 August 2021. The strategic investment horizon work is starting with the COVID-19 system functions that we might need over a timeframe and starting the conversation around being strategic in investing in those functions. This work precedes assessing if a machinery of government change is required.
- 34. Members commented that there are some system enablers missing from the presentation such as workforce and IT. The Public Service Commission offered to take leadership on defining the enablers.
- 35. Members raised that the horizon work presentation extrapolates where the system is currently at with present settings, rather than expanded horizon planning. Members discussed that there are a range of scenarios to consider and decisions will need to be made regarding the commonalities across scenarios that enable us to continuing delivering the response.
- 36. **Action: Presentation is amended to include system enablers (workforce, IT) and refine range of horizons or scenarios for the future of the COVID-19 system response.**
- 37. **Action: Presentation is amended to include balance of onshore risk versus offshore management of risk.**

The Chair closed the meeting

Actions

Action Log #	Mtg date	Action	Due date	Responsibility
#63	17-Aug-21	For assurance across Delta readiness planning, DPMC appoint workstream leads and notify CEs of this.		Graham MacLean
#64	17-Aug-21	Clear overview programme of SROs for the self-isolation pilot is developed and shared with CCB.		Cheryl Barnes
#65	17-Aug-21	Amend recommendation 7.2 in the paper Monthly Report on Progress Against Reviews and Recommendations to: Note the categories justifying the "Superseded / Not agreed" recommendations.	17-Aug-21	Amber Bill

IN-CONFIDENCE

#66	17-Aug-21	<p>Strategic investment horizon presentation is amended to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• System enablers (workforce, IT) and refine range of horizons or scenarios for the future of the COVID-19 system response.• Strategic choice around balance of onshore risk versus offshore management of risk.		Cheryl Barnes
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COVID-19 Chief Executives Board Minutes

Date 03 August 2021
Time 0800 to 0930hrs
Venue Executive Wing, Room 8.5

Attendance

CCB Members

Brook Barrington (Chair)	DPMC	Ashley Bloomfield	MOH	Peter Hughes	PSC
Una Jagose	CLO	Peter Mersi	MOT	Caralee McLiesh	TSY
Chris Seed	MFAT	Carolyn Tremain	MBIE	Cheryl Barnes	DPMC
Christine Stevenson	NZ Customs	Rebecca Kitteridge	NZSIS		
Dave Samuels	TPK	Debbie Power	MSD	Apologies	
Chris Seed	MFAT			Andrew Kibblewhite	MOJ

In attendance

Amber Bill	DPMC	Hamish Rogers	DPMC	Rae Nathan	DPMC
Sir David Skegg	Chair, SC19PHAG	Sir Brian Roche	Chair, CICRIAG	Rob Fyfe	Chair, Business forum

Item 1. Agenda and apologies

1. Brook Barrington welcomed all in attendance.

Item 2. Updates on work programmes: Chairs of the COVID-19 Independent Continuous Review, Improvement and Advice Group (CICRIAG), Strategic COVID-19 Public Health Advisory Group (SC19PHAG), and Business Leaders Forum.

Item purpose: to engage and update on work programme of the Ministerial Advisory Groups and the Business engagement forum. This is a standing agenda item.

2. CCB heard from Sir Brian Roche, Chair of the CICRIAG, who acknowledged the importance of scenario planning for the Delta variant.
3. Graham MacLean, Head of System Readiness and Planning (DPMC), told the CCB that he is holding a Delta variant readiness planning workshop week of 9 August. The focus is on breadth and depth of response, and the ability of the system to respond faster.
4. **Action: Graham MacLean to report back to the next CCB, or the following, on the Delta variant readiness planning workshop.**
5. CCB members suggested some considerations for the Delta workshop such as enablement of quick movement through Alert Levels, the role of public communications, business and welfare supports, and maintenance of social license. The Chair suggested that the workshop plans for movement into Alert Level 4 as a starting point, then work their way down through Alert Levels.

6. Sir David Skegg, Chair of the SC19PHAG, commented that their group's recent report reflects that the Delta variant is more transmissible and infectious than prior variants, and that evidence from the United States suggests that breakthrough infections circulate as easily among the vaccinated as the unvaccinated.
7. The CCB acknowledged that system planning will need to respond to Delta, and that the variant's presence further affirms the importance of the immunisation programme.
8. The Chair invited CCB members to be ready and prepared to offer resource toward Delta readiness planning to Graham MacLean's team.
9. The CCB heard from Sir David Skegg and Ashley Bloomfield on international research developments regarding vaccinating children. Sir David Skegg commented that this research is mixed, but that vaccine coverage across children is important for community protection. Ashley Bloomfield commented that there is a strong equity argument to vaccinate children in Maori and Pacific populations at the same time as adults in those whanau, so that all family members are vaccinated simultaneously.
10. Ashley Bloomfield emphasised that Delta readiness planning is critical for the next few weeks, and that movement through Alert Levels is a strong public health tool in response to a Delta outbreak.
11. The CCB heard from Rob Fyfe, Chair of the Business Leaders Forum, on preparations among business communities for Delta and subsequent variants. Rob Fyfe commented that public communications to businesses should specify that they need to plan for scenarios where they have to respond to Delta, and subsequent variants, over the long-term (i.e. more than 2 years).
12. The CCB discussed that cohort-ing of individuals into MIQ has helped contain the virus, including cases with the Delta variant, to the facilities. The CCB discussed that the Ministry for Business, Innovation, and Employment are providing options for more MIQFs to the Minister for COVID-19 Response. The CCB discussed that workforce pressures are a key consideration to establish more MIQFs, and that these would exist whether MIQFs were run by public servants or the private sector.

Item 3. Update on COVID-19 Immunisation Programme

Item purpose: to update the CCB on the programme/implementation and communications. This is a standing agenda item.

13. The Chair invited Ashley Bloomfield to update the CCB on the vaccination programme.
14. The CCB heard that the programme is close to delivering its twelve-millionth dose, which equates to 25% of the population having received one dose. The CCB acknowledged the Ministry of Health teams for organising the mass vaccination event.
15. Ashley Bloomfield commented that a Pfizer-based vaccination programme is still the preferred option, but that we will have AstraZeneca and Jansen join the COVAX facility to deliver vaccines to the Pacific.
16. Ashley Bloomfield commented on the equity lenses across the vaccination programme, and that we are seeing equal or even higher vaccination rates among Maori and Pacific as non-Maori and Pacific in Group 3 (to 60-year olds).
17. Ashley Bloomfield commented that vaccine hesitancy generally increases when you move down age groups.
18. The Chair asked that Ashley Bloomfield pass on thanks to Mat Parr who is leaving the Ministry of Health.

Item 5. Update on Reconnecting New Zealanders portfolio

Item purpose: to provide an update on the Reconnecting New Zealanders approach and the establishment of the Reconnecting New Zealanders Portfolio Team.

19. The Chair requested the meeting move to discuss item 5 and discuss item 4 at the next CCB on 17 August.
 - 19.1. **Action: Amber Bill presents item 4: COVID-19 Review Recommendations update, and CICRIAG Auckland Outbreak Review Recommendations update at the next CCB on 17 August.**
20. The Chair invited Cheryl Barnes to discuss item 5 on Reconnecting New Zealanders.
21. The CCB heard that the Reconnecting New Zealanders programme team is trying to strike a balance between being agile and remaining connected across work programmes, without adding significant reporting burdens to agencies.
22. The CCB heard that the emphasis is on piloting and testing interventions (e.g. travel health pass, rapid testing, self-isolation pilot), so that we are prepared to open safely when needed.
23. The CCB heard that there will be a funding Cabinet paper that cuts across all Reconnecting New Zealanders work programmes.

Item 6. Update on strategic investment horizon and DCEs workshop, CE roundtable

Item purpose: to update on the agenda and plan for the DCEs workshop scheduled for 5 August. The workshop builds on the paper circulated 9 July to CCB on COVID-19 System Assessment and Investment Horizon.

24. The Chair invited Cheryl Barnes to present on item 6.
25. Cheryl Barnes summarised the paper circulated to the CCB on 9 July, the COVID-19 System Assessment and Investment Horizon.
 - 25.1. The CCB agreed with the recommendation to direct DCEs to provide initial advice using this approach, for CCB to consider at the next CCB meeting on 17 August (para 14.3 of 9 July CCB paper).
 - 25.2. **Action: DCEs provide initial advice on a strategic investment horizon at the CCB on 17 August.**
26. The Chair opened for a roundtable on what the CEs would like the DCEs to discuss at the workshop on 5 August, regarding the strategic investment horizon.
27. The discussion points raised by CCB members fit into broad themes.
28. Workforce:
 - 28.1. Common across all CEs was investment in workforce, given the capacity and capability pressures that are observable across the COVID-19 response system.
 - 28.2. Investments to explore:
 - 28.2.1. Toward surge capacity for the healthcare system. This could partly be addressed by investing to develop training pathways to support individuals to become part of the healthcare system (e.g. ability to train non-GPs to administer vaccines), which has shorter-term (1 years) and longer-term benefits (5+ years).
 - 28.2.2. To alleviate the increasing pressure on workforce. This will be important longer-term as the system will likely need workforce relief or additional staff to cope with the challenges that will come with reconnecting with the world.
 - 28.2.3. To increase staff attraction and retention.
 - 28.2.4. For core rostering systems to support workforce capacities.
29. Border, investments to explore:

- 29.1. Additional public health capacity at the border. This would bring benefits for the COVID-19 response system and for the management of other communicable diseases that present at the border.
- 29.2. Improvement of MIAS system to deliver the functionality needed for a high-demand environment, shorter-term and longer-term benefits as we reconnect with the world.
- 29.3. Technological solutions at the border to understand intentions of travellers leaving New Zealand.
- 29.4. Investment in MIQFs, including workforce to staff MIQFs.
- 29.5. Investment in research and development, e.g. COVID-19 surveillance technologies and risk management technologies.
- 30. Community:
 - 30.1. Explore investment to expand the COVID-19 vaccination programme as the model for other vaccination programmes. Opportunity to leverage new infrastructure built in response to COVID-19 to support improved vaccination programmes for the future.
 - 30.2. Explore investments in contact-tracing and surveillance systems.
 - 30.3. Explore continued investment toward community resilience support (e.g. self-isolation requirements may increase and supports may need to be available).
- 31. Other: Public Service system focus
 - 31.1. Explore investment in national security and disaster planning.
 - 31.2. Explore investment in an end-to-end COVID-19 system to sustain an adequate response long-term (e.g. for 10 years). Explore a model that could alleviate workforce pressures (e.g. creating a separate workforce for COVID-19 response).
 - 31.3. Explore investment in Whanau Ora as a delivery option to relieve some pressures and supplement the public service workforce.
- 32. On the framework for strategic investment horizons, CCB discussed 'double hatting' investments (e.g. MIQFs investment for use across COVID-19 response and possibly other emergency management needs) and that the framework should reference prioritisation of investments.

Item 7. Confirmation of minutes and action points

- 33. The Chair invited any amendments to the 6 July CCB minutes and actions.
- 34. The CCB agreed no changes needed to the 6 July minutes and actions.
- 35. The Chair closed the meeting.

Actions

Action Log #	Mtg date	Action	Due date	Responsibility
#60	03-Aug-21	DCEs provide initial advice on a strategic investment horizon using the agreed framework from the 3 August CCB paper: COVID-19 System Assessment & Investment Horizon	17-Aug-21	Cheryl Barnes
#61	03-Aug-21	Presentation of item 4 at next CCB on 17 August. Item 4: COVID-19 Review Recommendations update, and CICRIAG Auckland Outbreak Review Recommendations update	17-Aug-21	Amber Bill

COVID-19 Chief Executives Board Minutes

Date 06 July 2021
Time 0800 to 0930hrs
Venue Executive Wing, Room 8.5

Attendance

CCB Members

Brook Barrington (Chair)	DPMC	Ashley Bloomfield	MOH	Andrew Kibblewhite	MOJ
Caralee McLiesh	TSY	Peter Hughes	PSC	Debbie Power	MSD
Ben King (for Chris Seed)	MFAT	Peter Mersi	MOT	Una Jagose	CLO
Christine Stevenson	NZ Customs	Carolyn Tremain	MBIE	Cheryl Barnes	DPMC
Dave Samuels	TPK	Rebecca Kitteridge	NZSIS		

Apologies

In attendance

Amber Bill	DPMC	Hamish Rogers	DPMC	Apologies	
Rae Nathan	DPMC	Graham MacLean	DPMC	Rob Fyfe	Chair Business forum
Sir David Skegg	Chair, SC19PHAG	Sir Brian Roche	Chair, CICRIAG		
Aaron Wright	DPMC				

Open session

Item 1. Agenda and apologies

1. The Chair welcomed all in attendance and noted the apologies.

Item 2. Chair of COVID-19 Independent Continuous Review, Improvement and Advice Group (CICRIAG) and Chair of the Strategic COVID-19 Public Health Advisory Group (SC19PHAG).

Item purpose: to engage and update on work programme of the group and the Business engagement forum. This is a standing agenda item.

2. The CCB heard from Sir Brian Roche, Chair of the Independent Continuous Review, Improvement and Advice Group (CICRIAG) on the Group's work programme. The main areas of focus are on contact tracing, system capacity and capability, and system-wide scenario planning.
3. The CCB discussed the value of short, sharp reviews and recommendations.
4. The CCB heard from the CICRIAG that from the 'outsider' perspective, the system is exhibiting fatigue.
5. **Action: DPMC COVID-19 Group circulate COVID-19 Independent Continuous Review, Improvement and Advice Group work programme.**
6. The CCB heard from Sir David Skegg, Chair of the Strategic COVID-19 Public Health Advisory Group, on their recent report to Minister Verrall on phased reopening of the

borders, and that subsequent reports will adopt the same process to address two to three questions.

7. Sir David Skegg noted that our context that we operate within is changing all the time, there will be new variants to respond to, and variants that may be more transmissible or have more-severe symptoms. Sir David Skegg expressed that he would like to see public release of his group's report to Minister Verrall on phased reopening of the borders.
8. **Action: DPMC COVID-19 Group to circulate Strategic COVID-19 Public Health Advisory Group papers.**

Item 3. Update on COVID-19 Immunisation Programme

Item purpose: to update the CCB on the programme/implementation and communications. This is a standing agenda item.

9. The Chair invited DG Health Ashley Bloomfield to provide an update on the COVID-19 Immunisation programme.
10. Ashley Bloomfield acknowledged the work of the immunisation programme teams. He acknowledged the emphasis from the Ministry of Health (MOH) on equity and delivering vaccines to at-risk communities and populations.
11. The Chair invited questions from the CCB.
 - 11.1. The CCB discussed diversification of vaccine procurement and that MOH is in the process of approving other providers and developing purchase agreements to keep New Zealand's options open in the future.
 - 11.2. The CCB discussed that we will see different vaccination rates across population groups.
 - 11.3. The CCB discussed Whanau Ora providers becoming accredited to deliver vaccines under supervision, and that in Gisborne we saw a successful outreach and delivery programme of vaccinations (Hauora Tairawhiti). Ashley Bloomfield and Dave Samuels discussed the value of using the Gisborne experience as an example for other Whanau Ora providers to support expansion of this work.

Item 4. Update on Winter Resurgence Readiness Workshop.

Item purpose: to update the CCB on the Readiness Pathway work programme, particularly the winter resurgence readiness workshop held on 15 June.

12. The CCB heard from Graham MacLean on the Readiness Pathway work programme. The winter resurgence workshop was focused on Queenstown and the Delta variant was part of the scenario planning. Graham MacLean summarised the key points:
 - 12.1. Speed to turn on alert level changes was incredibly effective tool. Suggestion is that phase 2 of the workshop is how to operationalise AL changes with rural communities and infrastructure in or near Queenstown.
 - 12.2. Testing and contact tracing essential.
 - 12.3. Police have contingency plan in place to implement checkpoints and boundary settings.
 - 12.4. MSD and MFAT worked through what their responses would look like and the nuances of responding to the traveller types in Queenstown.
 - 12.5. Plan is to have a flyaway team ready to support South DHB, comprised of the COVID Directorate and IMT, if needed to respond quickly.

13. The CCB heard the follow-up actions or points to take further from the workshop are to engage Ngai Tahu as key stakeholder and being part of the response when the time comes, and that the regional district/council structure was preferred over the regional leadership structure because of the infrastructure and communications to respond sits more with the district/council structure.
14. The CCB endorsed that the Readiness Pathway programme outputs should be provided to the CCB for assurance.
15. **Action: Readiness Team provide assurance to the Board as and when Readiness Pathway workshops occur.**
16. Sir Brian Roche noted that readiness planning will aid in the resiliency of the system when it comes under pressure.
17. The Chair thanked Graham MacLean, Sir Brian Roche, Sir David Skegg, for their updates to conclude the open session and asked that non-CCB members exit the meeting.

Closed session

Item 5. COVID-19 Review Recommendations update.

Item purpose: to provide the second monthly report of progress against COVID-19 reviews and recommendations.

18. The CCB discussed the increasing pressure on the system.
19. The Chair noted that the CCB could come together to form a view on prioritisation of effort.
20. Peter Hughes suggested that the Public Service Leadership Team retreat could focus on materially capturing the work programmes that are under pressure, opportunity costs, and identify where there is capacity.

Item 6. Response: situational update.

Item purpose: to discuss the response situations underway.

21. Ashley Bloomfield acknowledged that the Wellington response was efficient. The CCB noted that the complexity of Quarantine-free travel is growing, and that the next three months (winter) is a time to be more protective. And that in three months our vaccination rates will be higher, and we will be in a much better position to assess what is sustainable for our quarantine-free travel systems.

Item 7. Confirmation of minutes and action points.

22. The Chair invited amendments to the 22 June CCB minutes and actions. Members had no amendments to the 22 June CCB minutes and actions.

Actions

Action Log #	Mtg date	Action	Due date	Responsibility
#57	06-July-21	Circulate COVID-19 Independent Continuous Review, Improvement and Advice Group work programme	July 21	Secretariat
#58	06-July-21	Circulate Strategic COVID-19 Public Health Advisory Group papers.	July 21	Secretariat
#59	06-July-21	Readiness Team provide assurance to the Board as and when Readiness Pathway workshops occur.	Ongoing	Graham MacLean

COVID-19 Chief Executives Board Minutes

Date 22 June 2021
Time 0800 to 0930hrs
Venue Executive Wing, Room 8.5

Attendance

CCB Members

Brook Barrington (Chair)	DPMC	Ashley Bloomfield	MOH	Caralee McLiesh	Treasury
Una Jagose	CLO	Andrew Kibblewhite	MOJ	Peter Hughes	PSC
Chris Seed	MFAT	Peter Mersi	MOT	Debbie Power	MSD
Christine Stevenson	NZ Customs	Carolyn Tremain	MBIE	Rebecca Kitteridge	NZSIS
Dave Samuels	TPK	Andrew Bridgman (on behalf of Rebecca Kitteridge)	MoD		
Cheryl Barnes	DPMC				

In attendance

Amber Bill	DPMC	Hamish Rogers	DPMC	Rae Nathan	DPMC
Rob Fyfe (Zoom)	Chair Business forum	Ruth Fairhall	DPMC	George Whitworth	DPMC

Discussion on agenda items

Open session

Item 1. Agenda and apologies

1. Brook Barrington welcomed all in attendance.

Item 2. Chair of COVID-19 Independent Continuous Review, Improvement and Advice Group (the Group) and Chair of the Business Engagement Forum.

Item purpose: to engage and update on work programme of the group and the Business engagement forum. This is a standing agenda item.

2. CCB heard from Rob Fyfe, Chair of the Business Engagement Forum (the Forum) who discussed that the focus remains on the vaccination programme rollout. The topics that are top of mind in the Forum are: labour shortage (increased focus on this), and the impacts of MIQ availability on businesses looking to reconnect with international markets.
3. Sir Brian Roche was an apology for this CCB, Rob Fyfe provided an update on the work of the COVID-19 Independent Continuous Review, Improvement and Advice Group (the Group):
 - a. The Group focus is beyond the immediate horizon, and looking to the one, five, ten-year horizon.

- b. The Group is considering selective media around their work. Updated the CCB that the Group's review of the February outbreak will be available soon.

Item 3. Professor Shaun Hendy on vaccination modelling and initial report by Te Pūnaha Matatini (TPM)

Item purpose: presentation of initial results and high-level messages of vaccine modelling.

4. Professor Shaun Hendy presented the high-level key messages of the vaccination modelling work by Te Pūnaha Matatini (TPM). These key messages are in the slide pack provided in the 22 June CCB meeting pack.
5. The modelling work will be public around mid-July.
6. The vaccine rollout impacts on the risk balance with border management. TPM are looking at models to assess population-immunity and for risk at the border. Shaun Hendy noted that there are lots of choices for the system to make at the border, and these choices impact on risk models.
7. Shaun Hendy updated the CCB on the regional and ethnicity-based modelling they can produce from mid-July and that this modelling will help to assess regionally-based risk or community/ethnicity-based risk. This will help the system pre-empt approaches to mitigate risk in areas where the risk might be higher.
8. Shaun Hendy raised a concern that people might be less likely to get tested or participate in the contact-tracing systems if they are vaccinated.
9. The Chair invited CCB members to ask Shaun Hendy questions:
 - a. Andrew Kibblewhite asked if there is a point where we have an acceptable fatality rate after reaching population-immunity? Shaun Hendy noted that there will be a fatality rate for COVID-19 when we get to a 'new normal' similar to how we have a fatality rate for flu. He explained that to keep COVID-19 at a fatality rate similar to the flu, for example, the system will need more stringent public health measures than we have for flu. Shaun also noted that even at certain levels of population-immunity, the pressures on the border (eg travellers from high-risk countries) would lead us to expect seeing variable fatality rates across the population.
 - b. Ashley Bloomfield noted that vaccination rates are in context of other public health measures (eg pre-departure testing, proof of vaccinations status, post-arrival testing) and that we will swing backwards and forwards between vaccination rates and measures. Ashley Bloomfield noted to the CCB that the elimination strategy applied to a 'new normal' is our strongest approach. And that the 'stamping out' approach in the community will keep all options open to New Zealand to prepare us for unknowns or uncertainties such as new variant spread.
 - c. Peter Mersi commented that modelling can be tricky in scenarios where sound-judgement is relied on, and asked Shaun Hendy and the CCB if there is something we can give to Ministers to enable them to publicly paint a sense of risk exposure balance with the risk mitigations.
 - i. Shaun noted that over the next few months of the vaccination programme, the public will perceive the risk tolerance is changing and that pressure will be on the government to relax border restrictions. Shaun commented that there is a suite of mitigations we can do at the border beyond MIQ and that we need to build a system that can flexibly implement new measures.

- d. Chris Seed noted that the situations in New Zealand and Australia appear to be outliers in the COVID-19 international landscape. Ashley Bloomfield commented that the trade-offs we have made by using the elimination strategy is other-worldly to what others have (eg New Zealand has minimal restrictions on intra-New Zealand movement which is not true for most of the world).
- e. Section 9(2)(g)(i)
[REDACTED]
- f. Rob Fyfe commented that the modelling capability is a key strategic tool for COVID-19 decisions in the long-term, and that some of the tools in the elimination strategy were fit for purpose to capture everything at the border but some of the tools may need to strengthen for the long-term 'new normal'.

Item 4. Discussion on vaccination modelling, how it relates to *Reconnecting New Zealanders* Strategy, discussion with CEs

Item purpose: lead discussion on implications of initial vaccine modelling results, particularly in relation to *Reconnecting New Zealanders* work.

- 10. Cheryl Barnes opened the session on the timeframe of the strategy to Cabinet, noting that it had shifted since the 25 May CCB meeting.
- 11. Cheryl Barnes reiterated Shaun Hendy's key message that as we move through the phases in the Strategy, balance of risk and judgement will come up regularly.
- 12. Cheryl Barnes discussed that the CCB will be important to input into what the system settings might be for the longer-term 'new normal'. And that the CCB is a helpful forum for prioritisation of the *Reconnecting New Zealanders* strategy (eg system settings).
- 13. Carolyn Tremain and members discussed the Public Health Reforms and the relation to COVID-19 system. The Chair noted that institutional arrangements for the COVID-19 system are not determined yet. The Chair suggested that an investment horizon would be a key determinant going forward.

Item 5. Update on COVID-19 Immunisation Programme

Item purpose: to update the CCB on the programme/implementation and communications. This is a standing agenda item.

- 14. Ashley Bloomfield notified the CCB that the national booking system will come online through July and reiterated the vaccination programme announcements delivered by the Prime Minister last week.
- 15. The Chair and CCB members commended the vaccination programme team on the work done to date.
- 16. The Chair thanked Professor Shaun Hendy for his presentation to conclude the open session and asked that the non-CCB members exit the meeting. Professor Shaun Hendy, Ruth Fairhall, George Whitworth and Rob Fyfe exited the meeting.

Closed session

Item 6. System Assurance Framework (SAF)

Item purpose: to update the CCB on system-level focus areas that the System Assurance team are seeing across the COVID-19 system (monthly agenda item).

17. The Chair opened the SAF item by identifying the two key priority areas identified through the SAF: (1) system workforce and (2) system collaboration.
 - a. On (1) system workforce, the Chair stressed the importance of this issue and that the focus of the CCB should be on progressing a solution.
 - b. On (2) the Chair invited Amber Bill to summarise what the SAF is seeing in relation to this priority area.
18. Amber Bill summarised that accountabilities could be clearer for those inside and outside the COVID-19 system and noted that one opportunity to clarify accountabilities is through the risk assurance and management functions.
19. CCB members discussed vertical and horizontal accountabilities and considered it beneficial to examine where any gaps (real or perceived) exist. It was acknowledged there is a high transaction 'cost' to working across agencies when you are working in the COVID-19 system environment that works at pace.
20. Ensuring clarity will also assist the progress of the Reconnecting New Zealanders work.
21. **Action to COVID-19 Group: COVID-19 system accountability map.**
22. Una Jagose noted it would be beneficial to seek direction on the longer-term strategic questions of the future state of our COVID-19 response system. CCB members agreed.
23. **Action to COVID-19 Group: Provide a paper to the CCB on an investment horizon approach, key strategic questions, and a suggested process to take this forward with officials.**

Item 7. COVID-19 Review Stocktake update

Item purpose: to provide the first monthly assessment of progress on reviews, noting the contents before providing to Minister.

24. Amber Bill opened this item and discussed the current officials group that convenes to inform the reviews stocktake and inform which recommendations/reviews are priority, and reiterated that from the next COVID-19 Review Stocktake to the CCB on 6 July, updates will be published online.
25. Carolyn Tremain noted that we should work toward a narrative about all the reviews that communicates the system is continuously improving.

Actions

Action Log #	Mtg date	Action	Due date	Responsibility
#55	22-June-21	COVID-19 system accountability map.	July or August	COVID-19 Group
#56	22-June-21	Provide a paper to the CCB on an investment horizon approach, key strategic questions, and a suggested process to take this forward with officials.	6-July-21	COVID-19 Group