



**MINISTRY OF BUSINESS,
INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT**
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI



**DEPARTMENT OF THE
PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET**
TE TARI O TE PIRIMIA ME TE KOMITI MATUA



BORDER EXECUTIVE BOARD



**NEW ZEALAND
FOREIGN AFFAIRS & TRADE**
MANATŪ AORERE



COVID-19 Response Weekly Report

03 December 2021

Contents

1. Status Summary 2

2. COVID-19 Insights 7

 2.1 Insight of Note Written by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet 7

 2.2 Insight of Note Written by the Ministry of Health 9

3. Ministry of Health 12

 3.1 Policy/Programme Updates 12

 3.2 Upcoming Publications..... 19

4. Managed Isolation and Quarantine Weekly Report 20

 4.1 Top Items to Note 20

 4.2 Policy Update 21

 4.3 Operational Update 22

 4.4 Current Judicial Review, Ombudsman and OPCAT cases 26

 4.5 Invoicing 26

 4.6 Upcoming Communications and Activities 28

 4.7 Large Group Arrivals Update 28

 4.8 Emergency Allocation Applications 30

5. Border Executive Board Report 31

 5.1 Key Issues Being Considered 31

6. New Zealand Customs Service Weekly Report 32

 6.1 Items to Note/Updates 32

7. COVID-19 Chief Executives Board 33

 7.1 Items to Note/Updates 33

8. COVID-19 Independent Continuous Review, Improvement and Advice Group 33

 8.1 Items to Note/Updates 33

9. Strategic COVID-19 Public Health Advisory Group 33

 9.1 Items to Note/Updates 33

10. Business Leaders Forum 33

 10.1 Items to Note/Updates 33

11. Community Panel..... 33

 11.1 Items to Note/Updates 33




12. Government Modelling Group..... 34

 12.1 Items to Note/Updates 34







13. Upcoming Cabinet Papers..... 35

14. Appendix – Audit..... 36

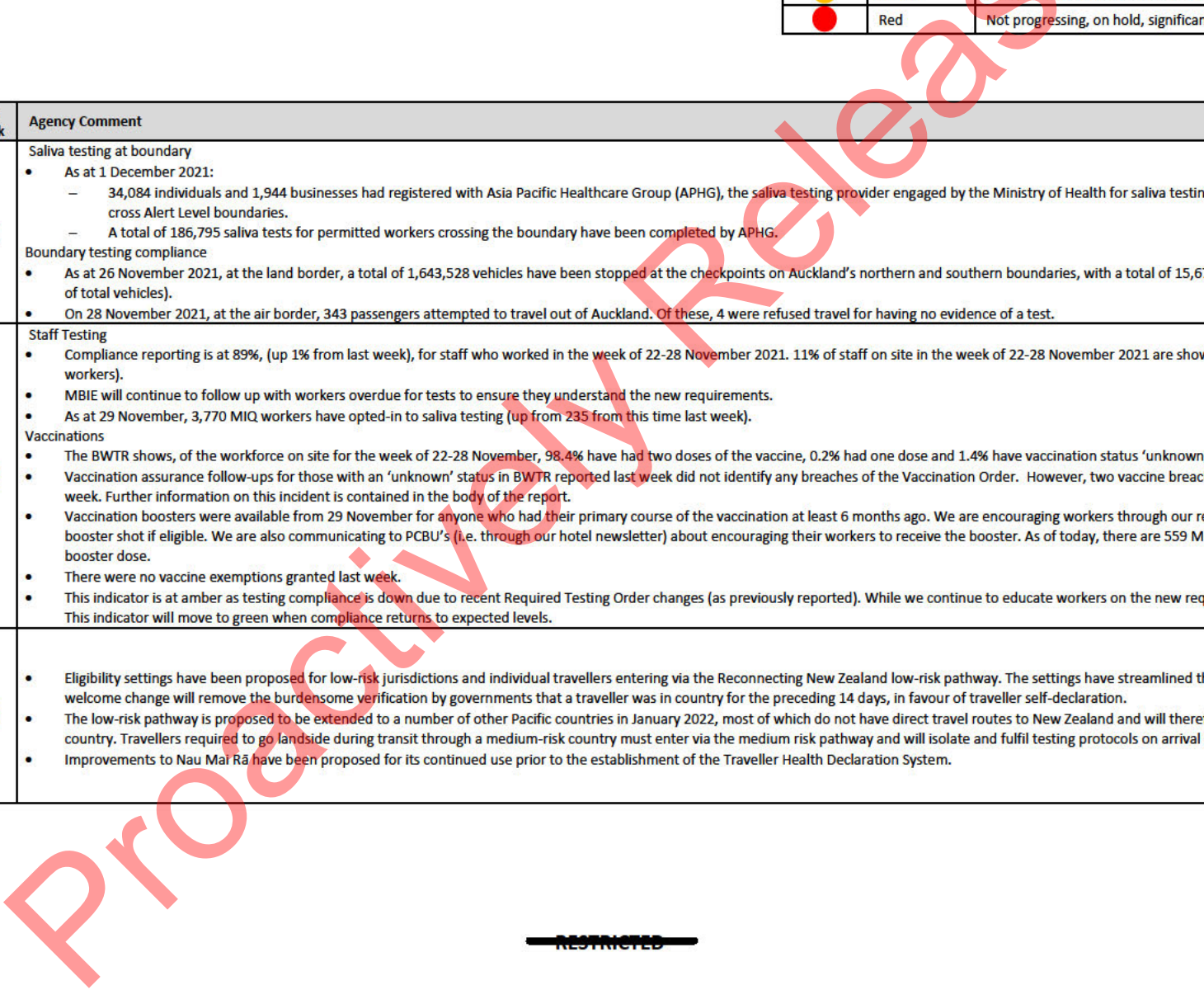
1. Status Summary

| Key | | |
|---|--------|--|
| Symbol | Colour | Meaning |
|  | Green | On track, no roadblocks, no significant delays anticipated |
|  | Amber | Slow progression, some delays, some roadblocks present |
|  | Red | Not progressing, on hold, significant delays |

Border

| Agency | Last Week | This Week | Agency Comment |
|--------|---|---|--|
| MoH |  |  | <p>Saliva testing at boundary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As at 1 December 2021: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 34,084 individuals and 1,944 businesses had registered with Asia Pacific Healthcare Group (APHG), the saliva testing provider engaged by the Ministry of Health for saliva testing to meet testing requirements to cross Alert Level boundaries. A total of 186,795 saliva tests for permitted workers crossing the boundary have been completed by APHG. <p>Boundary testing compliance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As at 26 November 2021, at the land border, a total of 1,643,528 vehicles have been stopped at the checkpoints on Auckland's northern and southern boundaries, with a total of 15,674 vehicles turned around (1 percent of total vehicles). On 28 November 2021, at the air border, 343 passengers attempted to travel out of Auckland. Of these, 4 were refused travel for having no evidence of a test. |
| MBIE |  |  | <p>Staff Testing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance reporting is at 89%, (up 1% from last week), for staff who worked in the week of 22-28 November 2021. 11% of staff on site in the week of 22-28 November 2021 are showing in the BWTR as overdue (537 workers). MBIE will continue to follow up with workers overdue for tests to ensure they understand the new requirements. As at 29 November, 3,770 MIQ workers have opted-in to saliva testing (up from 235 from this time last week). <p>Vaccinations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The BWTR shows, of the workforce on site for the week of 22-28 November, 98.4% have had two doses of the vaccine, 0.2% had one dose and 1.4% have vaccination status 'unknown'. Vaccination assurance follow-ups for those with an 'unknown' status in BWTR reported last week did not identify any breaches of the Vaccination Order. However, two vaccine breaches have been identified over the last week. Further information on this incident is contained in the body of the report. Vaccination boosters were available from 29 November for anyone who had their primary course of the vaccination at least 6 months ago. We are encouraging workers through our regular comms channels to get their booster shot if eligible. We are also communicating to PCBU's (i.e. through our hotel newsletter) about encouraging their workers to receive the booster. As of today, there are 559 MIQF border workers who have had a booster dose. There were no vaccine exemptions granted last week. This indicator is at amber as testing compliance is down due to recent Required Testing Order changes (as previously reported). While we continue to educate workers on the new requirements we will keep this amber. This indicator will move to green when compliance returns to expected levels. |
| MoH |  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eligibility settings have been proposed for low-risk jurisdictions and individual travellers entering via the Reconnecting New Zealand low-risk pathway. The settings have streamlined those required for QFT entry. A welcome change will remove the burdensome verification by governments that a traveller was in country for the preceding 14 days, in favour of traveller self-declaration. The low-risk pathway is proposed to be extended to a number of other Pacific countries in January 2022, most of which do not have direct travel routes to New Zealand and will therefore be required to transit a low-risk country. Travellers required to go landside during transit through a medium-risk country must enter via the medium risk pathway and will isolate and fulfil testing protocols on arrival in New Zealand. Improvements to Nau Mai Rā have been proposed for its continued use prior to the establishment of the Traveller Health Declaration System. |

Reopening new travel pathways - Pacific Islands
 Testing and vaccination of border workforce



Border (Continued)

| Country Risk Assessments | Agency | Last Week | → This Week | Agency Comment |
|--------------------------|--------|-----------|-------------|--|
| | | MFAT | ● | ● |
| | MoH | ● | ● | <p>Response to Omicron Variant of Concern</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a precautionary measure to reduce the chance of Omicron entering New Zealand, nine southern African countries (South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Lesotho, Eswatini, Seychelles, Malawi and Mozambique) have been added into the very high-risk countries list. From 11.59pm on 28 November 2021, New Zealand citizens who arrive from these countries will be required to stay in managed isolation for a full 14-day period. |

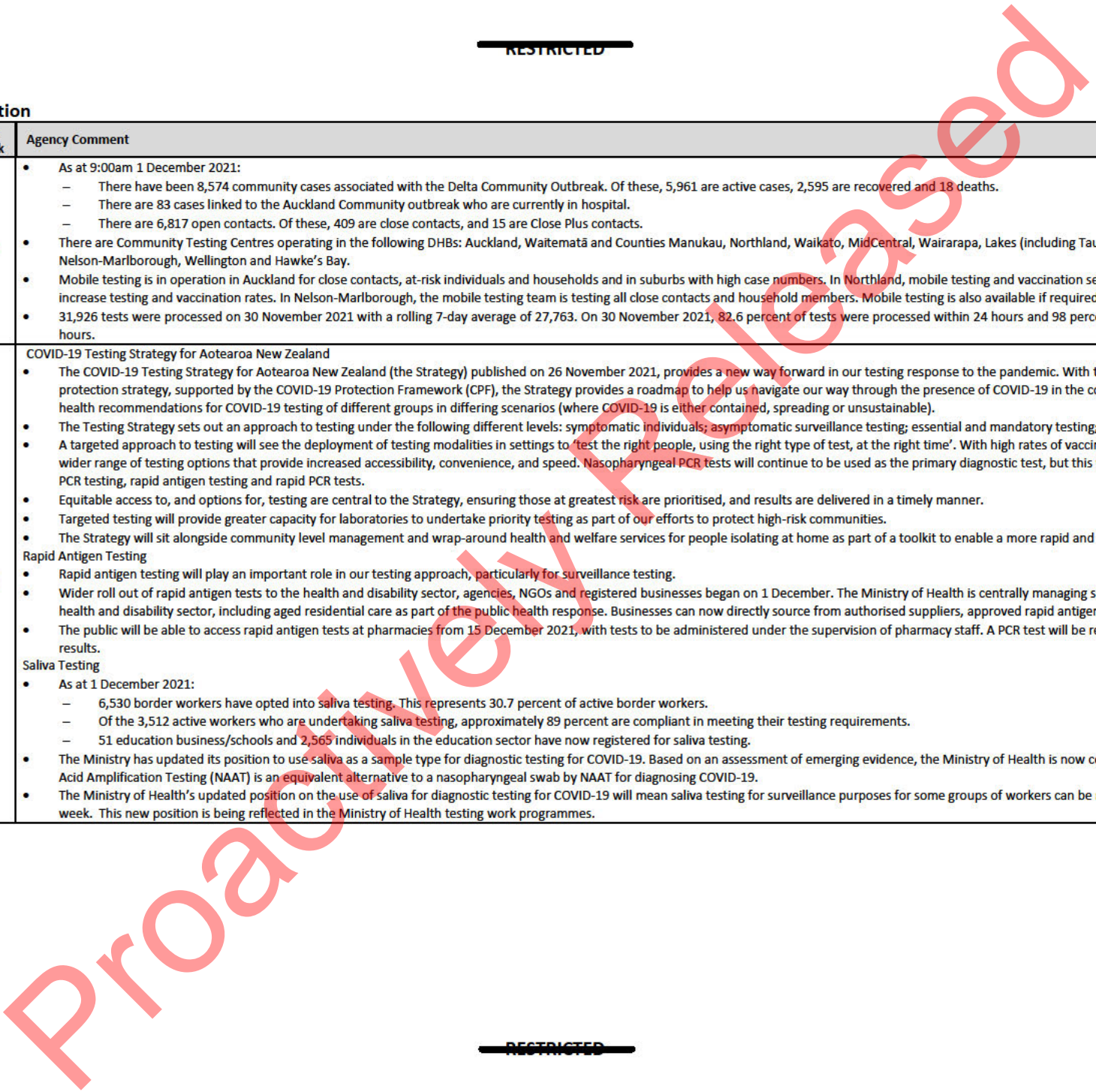
Managed Isolation and Quarantine and Return to the Community

| Post-managed Isolation processes | Place and conditions of stay | Agency | Last Week | → This Week | Agency Comment |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|--------|-----------|-------------|---|
| | | | MBIE | ● | ● |
| | | MBIE | ● | ● | <p>Self-Isolation Pilot</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 65 participants have successfully arrived to date. There are currently 11 participants self-isolating in Auckland and 10 in Christchurch. 42 participants have exited their self-isolation as at 2 December, following negative test results. The evaluation report for the first part of the pilot has been sent to your Office on 26 November and covers the application process. |
| | | MBIE | ● | ● | <p>Health workforce supporting MIQ</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The MIQF health workforce continues to be stretched, particularly in Auckland. The transition to the 7 day stay model is increasing the workload for health staff, given the increased throughput of returnees. These risks are increased when supporting a higher proportion of community cases/contacts than previously. Given the current triaging model sees only the highest needs/risk community cases/contacts entering MIQFs (instead of self-isolating), these challenges are likely to be compounded if a greater number of community cases/contacts are isolated within MIQFs. Nationwide, the DHBs report there is no staffing contingency moving into the summer months. This is due to: staff burnout and resignations, the community outbreak, a national shortage of Registered Nurses in particular, the wider health system demands and uncertainty in employment options relating to the future of MIQ. The national lab system is currently under significant strain supporting the community COVID-19 response. Delays in PCR test turnarounds – particularly in Auckland – are increasing. This is likely to be exacerbated when the Auckland boundary comes down and an expected increase in cases outside the Auckland region. |
| | | MBIE | ● | ● | <p>P2/N95 Mask Implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fit testing commenced on 11 November and more than 700 fit tests have now been completed with quarantine and dual facilities being the priority. A new approach to onsite testing commenced this week. We are working to ensure that we have 40 people per site booked for testing each day, to ensure that we test as many people as possible prior to the holidays. Workers are being asked to self-book for testing. We will monitor over the next week to ensure that the self-responsibility model is resulting in good testing throughput for the upcoming week. We will be providing communication and guidance to PCBUs next week about the approach to BAU fit testing, which will require employers to be responsible for ongoing testing of their workers. MBIE will support by providing trainers to train testers, access to Porta Count Machines, supplementary testing where required, support and guidance. The indicator will likely shift to green once we have successfully completed this engagement with PCBUs about BAU testing, and we have evidence employers are undertaking ongoing testing with their staff. |

Community Protection

| Agency | Last Week | This Week | Agency Comment |
|--------|-----------|-----------|---|
| MoH | ● | ● | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As at 9:00am 1 December 2021: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – There have been 8,574 community cases associated with the Delta Community Outbreak. Of these, 5,961 are active cases, 2,595 are recovered and 18 deaths. – There are 83 cases linked to the Auckland Community outbreak who are currently in hospital. – There are 6,817 open contacts. Of these, 409 are close contacts, and 15 are Close Plus contacts. • There are Community Testing Centres operating in the following DHBs: Auckland, Waitematā and Counties Manukau, Northland, Waikato, MidCentral, Wairarapa, Lakes (including Taupo and Rotorua), Bay of Plenty, Nelson-Marlborough, Wellington and Hawke’s Bay. • Mobile testing is in operation in Auckland for close contacts, at-risk individuals and households and in suburbs with high case numbers. In Northland, mobile testing and vaccination services have been deployed to increase testing and vaccination rates. In Nelson-Marlborough, the mobile testing team is testing all close contacts and household members. Mobile testing is also available if required in Waikato. • 31,926 tests were processed on 30 November 2021 with a rolling 7-day average of 27,763. On 30 November 2021, 82.6 percent of tests were processed within 24 hours and 98 percent of tests were processed within 30 hours. |
| MoH | ● | ● | <p>COVID-19 Testing Strategy for Aotearoa New Zealand</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The COVID-19 Testing Strategy for Aotearoa New Zealand (the Strategy) published on 26 November 2021, provides a new way forward in our testing response to the pandemic. With the move to a minimisation and protection strategy, supported by the COVID-19 Protection Framework (CPF), the Strategy provides a roadmap to help us navigate our way through the presence of COVID-19 in the community. It is based on public health recommendations for COVID-19 testing of different groups in differing scenarios (where COVID-19 is either contained, spreading or unsustainable). • The Testing Strategy sets out an approach to testing under the following different levels: symptomatic individuals; asymptomatic surveillance testing; essential and mandatory testing; and patients and hospital visitors. • A targeted approach to testing will see the deployment of testing modalities in settings to ‘test the right people, using the right type of test, at the right time’. With high rates of vaccinations, we can now introduce a wider range of testing options that provide increased accessibility, convenience, and speed. Nasopharyngeal PCR tests will continue to be used as the primary diagnostic test, but this will be supplemented by saliva-based PCR testing, rapid antigen testing and rapid PCR tests. • Equitable access to, and options for, testing are central to the Strategy, ensuring those at greatest risk are prioritised, and results are delivered in a timely manner. • Targeted testing will provide greater capacity for laboratories to undertake priority testing as part of our efforts to protect high-risk communities. • The Strategy will sit alongside community level management and wrap-around health and welfare services for people isolating at home as part of a toolkit to enable a more rapid and local response. <p>Rapid Antigen Testing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid antigen testing will play an important role in our testing approach, particularly for surveillance testing. • Wider roll out of rapid antigen tests to the health and disability sector, agencies, NGOs and registered businesses began on 1 December. The Ministry of Health is centrally managing supplies of rapid antigen tests to the health and disability sector, including aged residential care as part of the public health response. Businesses can now directly source from authorised suppliers, approved rapid antigen tests for use within their workforce. • The public will be able to access rapid antigen tests at pharmacies from 15 December 2021, with tests to be administered under the supervision of pharmacy staff. A PCR test will be required to confirm any positive results. <p>Saliva Testing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As at 1 December 2021: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 6,530 border workers have opted into saliva testing. This represents 30.7 percent of active border workers. – Of the 3,512 active workers who are undertaking saliva testing, approximately 89 percent are compliant in meeting their testing requirements. – 51 education business/schools and 2,565 individuals in the education sector have now registered for saliva testing. • The Ministry has updated its position to use saliva as a sample type for diagnostic testing for COVID-19. Based on an assessment of emerging evidence, the Ministry of Health is now confident that saliva tested by Nucleic Acid Amplification Testing (NAAT) is an equivalent alternative to a nasopharyngeal swab by NAAT for diagnosing COVID-19. • The Ministry of Health’s updated position on the use of saliva for diagnostic testing for COVID-19 will mean saliva testing for surveillance purposes for some groups of workers can be reduced from twice weekly to once a week. This new position is being reflected in the Ministry of Health testing work programmes. |

Case investigation, surveillance and testing



Vaccination

| Implementation and operation | Agency | Last Week | → This Week | Agency Comment |
|------------------------------|--------|-----------|-------------|---|
| | MoH | ● | ● | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As of 11 59 pm on 30 November 2021, 7,579,500 vaccinations have been delivered, including 3,618,781 people who are fully vaccinated. 93 percent of the eligible population has now received at least one dose. 86 percent of the eligible population is now fully vaccinated. Rollout of AstraZeneca vaccinations commenced on 26 November 2021. As at 11.59pm on 30 November 2021, 645 doses of AstraZeneca have been administered. Rollout of Booster doses commenced on 26 November 2021. As at 11.59pm on 30 November 2021, 51,127 booster doses have been administered. Fifteen DHBs (Waitematā, Auckland, Counties Manukau, Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Midcentral, Hawke's Bay, Taranaki, Capital and Coast, Hutt Valley, Wairarapa, Nelson Marlborough, Canterbury, South Canterbury, and Southern) have hit or passed 90 percent first doses, and all DHBs have reached at least 85 percent first doses. Auckland and Capital and Coast DHBs have both reached 90 percent fully vaccinated. All DHBs continue to focus on vaccinating hesitant and under-vaccinated populations, using a combination of small, targeted events and initiatives, mobile vaccine clinics, and onboarding additional Primary Care and community pharmacies as vaccination sites. As at 11.59pm on 23 November 2021, 2,797,439 My Vaccine Passes have been issued. Medsafe is reviewing Pfizer's application for vaccines for 5 to 11-year-olds. |

Resurgence Planning and Response

| Resurgence planning including review of the response | Agency | Last Week | → This Week | Agency Comment |
|--|--------|-----------|-------------|---|
| | DPMC | ● | ● | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Release of the COVID-19 National Management Plan Q1 to agencies has occurred this week. Contingency planning for operational issues of the CPF and new variants is underway. Monitoring and system alignment and planning for decision making architecture under the CPF and summer rostering across the system is underway. |
| Readiness planning | MoH | ● | ● | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The inaugural meeting of the Ministry of Health's COVID-19 Protection Framework Assurance Committee was held on 24 November 2021. Chaired by Dr Caroline McElroy, the Committee undertook an initial assessment of current health system capacity and the expected demand on this capacity over the upcoming fortnight. This process was based on a series of rating principles and assessment was delineated by DHB regions. The factors considered when setting the colours in each region include vaccination, the state of the health system, testing, contact tracing and case management capacity, as well as the rate and effect of COVID-19 transmission. We have prepared well for this moment by maintaining a cautious approach focused on protecting people, whānau, communities and jobs. Our next phase is focused on minimising the impact of COVID-19 and protecting people. The Ministry of Health is pivoting its operational and response systems, in preparation for the transition to the Protection Framework. This includes such aspects as the health system assessment process, establishment of an Assurance Group, refined case management and contact tracing practice, incident management structures, expanding testing modalities and others. The COVID-19 Protection Framework is designed to respond to localised outbreaks and manage risk to particular regions, to broadly reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission and hospitalisations. DHBs are working to ensure appropriate systems are in place for the Care in the Community model within their regions. This includes workforce support, facilities, and connecting with hard to reach and vulnerable populations. The Ministry of Health is the lead response agency, working closely with the Ministry of Social Development and iwi and Pacific providers to ensure alignment and readiness of an integrated welfare, public health and clinical response. Each region is establishing a care coordination hub that will include general practice teams, with Primary care, iwi and Pacific providers critical to this regionally delivered, locally led, nationally supported response. An Operational Framework on delivering COVID Care in the Community was published last week by the Ministry of Health providing direction for organisations and providers who are caring for people with COVID-19 in the community. Care should be based on the needs of the person and whānau. This work is led by the Minister of Health, Hon Andrew Little as part of the wider Health System Preparedness Programme. |
| | DPMC | ● | ● | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Readiness activity continued with Regional Leadership Groups and agencies, in preparation for the CPF transition on 02 December. This included a meeting with RLG Chairs, Co-Chairs and Regional Public Service Commissioners, to further clarify roles and responsibilities, with providing regional perspectives and timely advice to the centre on COVID-19 Protection Framework decision making. Further guidance and documentation will be sent to regional stakeholders in coming days, ahead of their first CPF input next week. |

Resurgence Planning and Response (Continued)

QFT response

| Agency | Last Week | This Week | Agency Comment on Status of Focus Area |
|--------|-----------|-----------|--|
| MBIE | ● | ● | <p>MIQ's Response to the Delta Outbreak: Community cases</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We continue to run three quarantine facilities in Auckland and with a high number of community cases self-isolating at home, the pressure on these rooms has eased slightly. Future demand for quarantine rooms is difficult to predict due to uncertainty about the forecasted cases that will require MIQ, the impact of the Omicron variant and those who will be under community care.• The Amohia in Hamilton is a community isolation and quarantine facility. It is being used as a quarantine facility and for a small number of community cases who are unable to isolate at home.• Quarantine facilities in Christchurch have a small number of community cases and further work continues regarding a contingency plan should additional quarantine rooms be needed.• We continue to consider options for increased quarantine capacity in Auckland and across the regions (where we already have facilities) as positive cases appear throughout New Zealand. With the now implemented 7 day stay for border returnees, we expect to have a better understanding shortly of how this will affect our capacity.• We continue to see serious incidents involving community cases and community close contacts; this includes domestic violence within bubbles that require separation, drug-related incidents and bubble breaches. These are placing further pressure on staff in these facilities in both Auckland and Hamilton. |

Proactively Released

2. COVID-19 Insights

2.1 Insight of Note Written by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

2.1.1 Public Responses to Reintroduced COVID-19 Restrictions in European Countries

Introduction

The Insights and Reporting Team in DPMC's COVID-19 Group have analysed some of the COVID-19 restrictions reintroduced recently across Europe and public responses to them. This report covers how COVID-19 vaccination rates have influenced the type of restrictions introduced, and how the public have responded to the restrictions. This report is brief, and further information is available.

Vaccinations and COVID-19 Restrictions

Most countries across Europe have reintroduced COVID-19 restrictions in light of a surge in COVID-19 cases in October and November. The restrictions have varied, largely depending on vaccination rates, with examples given below.

In countries with lower vaccination rates, COVID-19 restrictions appear to have been predominantly focused on restricting the movements of higher-risk unvaccinated people. For example, Germany and Austria have some of the lowest COVID-19 vaccination rates in Western Europe, with only 68 and 66 percent of their respective total populations vaccinated.¹ Both countries have observed a surge in COVID-19 cases, hospitalisations, ICU admissions, and deaths since October.^{2 3} In Germany, the government is planning to reintroduce restrictions aimed at unvaccinated people, limiting their numbers at private gatherings, and requiring proof of vaccination for people to access bars, restaurants, and theatre venues.^{4 5} Large events will also have limited capacity, with only vaccinated people allowed to attend. The government also has a case threshold for closing nightclubs and mandating mask wearing in schools, which they have recently lowered from 443 to 350 cases per 100,000 people (over seven days).^{6 7} In Austria, the government initially introduced a lockdown only for unvaccinated people, only allowing travel for essential purposes, and not allowing unvaccinated people to enter non-essential venues like bars, restaurants, and retail shops. This strategy, however, did not succeed in sufficiently reducing cases quickly enough. Subsequently, the Austrian government extended the lockdown to the entire country, regardless of vaccination status.⁸

Restrictions in countries with higher COVID-19 vaccination rates have also largely relied on managing unvaccinated people, although the restrictions have tended to be less strict. Countries with relatively high COVID-19 vaccination rates across their total populations, such as Portugal (87 percent) and Denmark (76 percent) have experienced an increase in COVID-19 cases, but have generally not had significant increases in hospitalisations, ICU admissions, or deaths.⁹ The governments have generally avoided implementing lengthy lockdowns, and instead predominantly focussed on reintroducing restrictions around mask use and requiring vaccination proof or proof of COVID-19 recovery for entry into public venues.¹⁰

Public Satisfaction of Pandemic Handling Across Certain European Nations Decreasing

Data from some European countries indicates people are becoming more frustrated with their respective government's pandemic response, regardless of vaccination rates and restriction type.¹¹ A *YouGov* survey tracked public satisfaction of government pandemic handling across European countries in November 2021. Public satisfaction largely decreased in Denmark and Italy, despite having relatively high total vaccination rates of 76 and 73 percent, respectively. The decline in satisfaction occurred after both countries re-introduced relatively lenient restrictions including requirements to have a vaccine or recovery certificate for entry into some venues.^{12 13} Similar trends regarding public satisfaction were observed in Germany, which has a lower total population vaccination rate (68 percent) and introduced stricter restrictions on people who were unvaccinated against COVID-19.^{14 15} Public satisfaction also decreased in Greece and Hungary, both of which have relatively low vaccination rates (63 and 60 percent, respectively), and restrictions that range in severity.¹⁶ Greece has recently introduced stricter COVID-19 rules, banning all unvaccinated people from indoor spaces

including restaurants, gyms, and other public venues.¹⁷ Hungary has introduced more lenient measures, which include mandated mask use indoors and restrictions preventing unvaccinated people from attending large gatherings.¹⁸ The *YouGov* survey did not find any countries with significantly improved public satisfaction, with marginal increases found in the United Kingdom and France.¹⁹

As COVID-19 related restrictions increased across Europe, the *YouGov* survey also suggested that a growing proportion of people across most countries feel their government is being too restrictive on their personal freedoms.²⁰ The survey results showed people felt there were greater restrictions on their freedom, than previously, in Poland, Germany, France, Italy, and the United Kingdom.²¹ These countries also have varying rates of vaccination, and have reintroduced varying levels of restrictions in terms of severity. Of note, the survey showed that none of the public felt COVID-19 measures were becoming less restrictive on personal freedoms in their countries.²² This supports anecdotal evidence that regardless of the type of restriction implemented, people across Europe appear to be more fatigued, impatient, and frustrated with COVID-19 restrictions.²³

Reintroducing COVID-19 related measures has led to significant protest activity across countries with varying levels of vaccination rates and restriction severity. In Brussels (Belgium), an estimated 35,000 people (approximately 3 percent of the city population), protested against new COVID-19 related restrictions imposed across the country on 21 November. These included a vaccine pass requirement, vaccine mandates, limits on gatherings and mandated mask use.²⁴ ²⁵ The country has a relatively high rate of total vaccination across the population at approximately 76 percent.²⁶ Across the Netherlands, where approximately 74 percent of the total population is vaccinated, there have been large groups of protesters and rioters opposing recently re-introduced COVID-19 restrictions.²⁷ ²⁸ Protests opposed restrictions on hospitality venues, and on vaccine certificate requirements, lasting over two nights in Rotterdam, Amsterdam, and The Hague.²⁹ ³⁰ Rioters attacked police with stones and fireworks, in one of the worst outbreaks of violence in the Netherlands since COVID-19 restrictions were imposed last year.³¹ On 20 November, an estimated 35,000 people in Vienna (Austria) (approximately 2 percent of the city population) protested the decision to enter a fourth lockdown, and the introduction of mandatory vaccinations for all citizens.³² ³³ ³⁴ Given rising COVID-19 case numbers and a relatively low vaccination rate, the Austrian government moved forward with a national lockdown and vaccine mandate, despite the protest.³⁵

Thank you to the following teams who contributed to this report: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and The Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment

2.2 Insight of Note Written by the Ministry of Health

2.2.1 COVID-19 International Perspectives: 1 December 2021

Global daily new COVID-19 cases have been increasing since mid-October, over 550,000 COVID-19 cases and 6,800 deaths are being reported daily.³⁶ Over 3.89 million cases and 48,000 deaths have been reported worldwide in the last week.³⁷ New reported cases in Africa and Europe are increasing, those in North America are declining, and cases are plateauing in South America, Asia and Oceania.³⁸

260 million cases (~3.3% of the global population) and 5.2 million deaths have been reported in the pandemic to date.³⁹ Limited testing, the increased use of rapid antigen testing and challenges in the attribution of causes of death means that the true number of confirmed cases and deaths is likely to be significantly underestimated.⁴⁰

On 26 November 2021, the World Health Organisation (WHO) designated variant B.1.1.529 a variant of concern, named Omicron, on the advice of the WHO's Technical Advisory Group on Virus Evolution.⁴¹ This decision was made because the Omicron variant has several mutations in the spike protein that could influence how it behaves.⁴²

The Omicron variant was first reported in South Africa on 24 November 2021.⁴³ Since then, the variant has spread to several countries globally, including Australia, United Kingdom, Germany, Hong Kong and Israel.⁴⁴ Although there is limited evidence on the variant currently, several countries globally have implemented stricter border measures to minimise risk.

As a precautionary measure to reduce the chance of Omicron entering New Zealand, nine southern African countries (South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Lesotho, Eswatini, Seychelles, Malawi and Mozambique) have been added into the very high-risk countries list.⁴⁵ From 11:59pm on 28 November, New Zealand citizens who arrive from these countries will be required to stay in managed isolation for a full 14-day period.⁴⁶

21 imported cases have been reported in the last fortnight, most had a point of departure of Singapore (4 cases) and the USA (3 cases).

| Point of departure | Acute | Historical | Total | Arrivals | Acute cases per 1000 arrivals |
|--------------------------|-----------|------------|-----------|--------------|-------------------------------|
| Unknown | 6 | 0 | 6 | | |
| Singapore | 4 | 0 | 4 | 151 | 26.5 |
| United States of America | 3 | 1 | 4 | 573 | 5.2 |
| Romania | 2 | 0 | 2 | 7 | |
| United Kingdom | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1,031 | 1.9 |
| Belgium | 1 | 0 | 1 | 12 | 83.3 |
| Jordan | 1 | 0 | 1 | 3 | |
| Turkey | 1 | 0 | 1 | 15 | 66.7 |
| United Arab Emirates | 1 | 0 | 1 | 154 | 6.5 |
| Russia | 0 | 1 | 1 | 36 | 0.0 |
| Total | 21 | 2 | 23 | 5,340 | |

Source: Ministry of Health

Information on jurisdictions which have reported confirmed and/or probable cases of Omicron

| Country | Confirmed Cases | Probable Cases |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Southern Africa | | |
| Botswana | 19 | - |
| South Africa | 124 | 990+ |
| Eastern Africa | | |
| Réunion (France) | 1 | - |
| Western Europe | | |
| Belgium | 1 | - |
| United Kingdom | 13 | 200 |
| Netherlands | 16 | 47 |
| Germany | 9 | 2 |
| Italy | 4 | - |
| Austria | 1 | 30 |
| Denmark | 2 | 9 |
| Finland | - | 2 |
| Sweden | 1 | - |
| France | - | 8 |
| Switzerland | - | 2 |
| Portugal | 13 | - |
| Spain | 2 | - |
| Eastern Europe | | |
| Czech Republic | 1 | - |
| Middle East | | |
| Israel | 2 | 14 |
| Asia | | |
| Hong Kong | 5 | 2 |
| Japan | 1 | - |
| North and Central America | | |
| Canada | 5 | 2 |
| Oceania / Pacific | | |
| Australia / NSW | 5 | 2 |
| Australia / Northern Territory | 1 | - |

Source <https://bnnews.com/index.php/2021/11/omicron-tracker/>. Cited 01 December 2021.

Map of confirmed and probable Omicron cases



Source: <https://bnonews.com/index.php/2021/11/omicron-tracker/>. Cited 01 December 2021.

Key Orange= Confirmed, Grey= probable, Red= first detected.

- Several Omicron cases emerging globally have also been reported in cases who has recently travelled from African countries who have not yet reported any cases, indicating that Omicron may be present in other Southern African countries that have not yet reported cases.
 - Cases reported in Canada⁴⁷ and Hong Kong⁴⁸ were in travellers from Nigeria.
 - Cases reported in Italy⁴⁹ and Reunion⁵⁰ were in travellers from Mozambique.
 - A case in Belgium had recently returned from Egypt and Turkey⁵¹.
- Evidence of community transmission, i.e., transmission with potentially no direct link to travel, is beginning to emerge. Scotland⁵² and Germany⁵³ are reporting Omicron cases in individuals with no history of recent travel.
- The Netherlands have reported that Omicron variant cases were detected in samples that had been collected on 19 and 23 November.⁵⁴

3. Ministry of Health



3.1 Policy/Programme Updates

3.1.1 Health system preparedness: Auckland DHBs share their COVID-19 experiences

This item updates you on two webinars that were held recently to share Auckland DHBs' staff experiences of preparing for, and managing, COVID-19 in the hospital.

A significant amount of planning is happening across the health system to ensure that the system is ready to manage cases of COVID-19. To supplement this planning, there is an appetite from health professionals around the country to hear from the Auckland staff who have had recent experience through the Delta outbreak.

Two separate webinars were held last week, the first on 23 November 2021 focused on emergency departments (EDs) and their connections to the community, and the second on 24 November 2021 focused on inpatient care and intensive care units. The webinars were held as panel sessions with a variety of roles represented, including nurses, nurse educators, allied health, general managers Māori, and senior doctors from the ED, surgical and respiratory.

The purpose of the sessions was to focus on providing practical advice that people could add to their own planning, enabling others to learn from experience and to add additional support to the planning processes that are underway.

The sessions were intended to build confidence in health professionals as they hear from people who have already learnt from experience, encourage collaboration and knowledge sharing, and to gain efficiency of sharing models and planning resources that are already working rather than all DHBs needing to create materials themselves.

There was excellent attendance with 290 people attending the first session and 270 people attending the second. There was good engagement from the participants with a lot of practical questions asked. There has been a lot of positive feedback from the sessions and a desire for more sessions to be held that are a deeper dive into several of the topics that were touched on.

Next steps

We ran further sessions with our Auckland colleagues in the week commencing 30 November 2021 to provide additional advice and tips to others around the country. We will keep you updated on the outcomes of these sessions in future entries.

3.1.2 Health System Preparedness Programme: Update

This item updates you on the health system preparedness programme (the programme).

Models of care

Following the sector workshop on 18 November 2021, participants received a summary of the outcome of the workshop.

The workshop and extensive feedback received have led to the Managing COVID-19 Care in the Community Operational Guidelines being converted into a framework. The Managing COVID-19 Care Framework (the framework) reflects significant updates and evolution in thinking about the purpose of the document, equity, partnerships, and roles/responsibilities.

The framework has undergone extensive consultation across the health and welfare sector and was published in the week commencing 29 November 2021. The framework will be updated regularly to reflect the programme's growth and development. A workshop was held with the Ministry of Social Development in the week commencing 22 November to inform the next update to the Framework that was delivered in the week of 29 November 2021.

We provided a draft set of metrics to measure specific aspects of the COVID-19 care in the community programme to Hon Andrew Little on 24 November 2021.

We are holding workshops to support DHBs to operationalise the framework into a local model.

DHB resurgence plans and regional plans

We meet several times a week with the four regional leads on the regional resilience programme.

We conducted a desktop review of a sample of six DHB resurgence plans for assurance that the plans are complete, to assess the progress of work underway to address gaps, and to share lessons learned. A report is being prepared for the DHBs in early December 2021. We intend to have a summary report on these six DHBs prepared by 6 December 2021. The DHBs have been requested to provide the Ministry with their holiday plans and activities, and any accompanying mitigation strategies. All but six have provided their plans. The Ministry is continuing to work with the DHBs to support their resurgence plans.

Cabinet paper

A Cabinet paper on COVID-19 care in the community, including funding, is being prepared for consideration by the Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee on 15 December 2021.

Interim Health New Zealand

We presented to the interim Health New Zealand board in the week commencing 29 November 2021 on the purpose and direction of the programme and how it relates to priorities of the health and disability system review programme.

Next steps

Detailed work programmes and timelines are being developed for COVID-19 care in the community and workforce workstreams.

3.1.3 Impact of temporary exemption to COVID-19 Public Health Response (Vaccinations) Order 2021 for New Zealand Health Group

This item updates you on the duration and impact of this exemption and to detail the steps being taken ensure people can access the support they need. The New Zealand Health Group (NZHG) employs a large workforce of care and support workers to deliver Ministry, ACC and disability support services (DSS)-funded home and community support services.

On 29 November 2021, you approved a further extension to NZHG's seven-day exemption that had been granted to NZHG from 22 November 2021 (HR 20212649). The length of the extension was granted to 16 DHB regions for a period between five to 14 days dependent on the level of risk identified.

NZHG provided updated data on 26 November 2021 detailing how many clients would be affected if unvaccinated staff needed to be stood down as of 30 November 2021 and staff rosters could not be filled.

Levels of support needed and number of people affected

| Level of support needed | Number DHB and DSS funded clients |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Red – full package critical care | 782 |
| Amber – hours can be reduced | 437 |
| Green – can stop care for 3 months | 125 |

NZHG suppliers, Geneva and Health Care NZ, have been actively working with their regional needs assessment service co-ordination (NASC) services to transition the most vulnerable clients to providers who have capacity. This process will continue during the extension period.

In some cases, the alternative service provider may be the DHB to ensure service transition is well managed.

Next steps

HCNZ and Geneva will continue to work with NASCs to support transition of priority clients.

During the exemption period PCR testing is being carried out on a weekly basis for unvaccinated staff and must be completed for all staff by 11.59pm 1 December 2021.

HCNZ and Geneva will continue to encourage vaccine-hesitant staff to be vaccinated.

3.1.4 COVID-19 Vaccine and Immunisation Programme

As at 11.59 pm on 30 November 2021, 7,579,500 vaccinations have been delivered, including 3,896,368 first doses and 3,618,781 second doses. 581 of the first doses administered are AstraZeneca vaccines.

13,224 immunocompromised people have received their third primary dose.

51,127 booster doses have been administered.

93 percent of the eligible population has now received at least one dose, and 86 percent of the eligible population are fully vaccinated. Of those fully vaccinated, 10.8 percent are Māori and 6.5 percent are Pasifika.

470,200 Māori have received their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, which represents 12 percent of the total population who have received their first dose as at 30 November 2021.

846 sites were active on 30 November 2021.

On 29 November 2021 the programme reached the milestone of administering 7.5 million doses of vaccine.

Driving uptake

More than 94 percent of the eligible population of Auckland has now received at least one dose of the vaccine, while 93 percent of the eligible population have received their first dose nationwide. 15 DHBs (Waitematā, Auckland, Counties Manukau, Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Midcentral, Hawke's Bay, Taranaki, Capital & Coast, Hutt Valley, Wairarapa, Nelson Marlborough, Canterbury, South Canterbury, and Southern) have hit or passed 90 percent first doses. Two DHBs (Auckland and Capital and Coast) have reached 90 percent second doses.

To achieve a 90 percent vaccination rate across all populations, the Ministry of Health has been working closely with the DHBs who had not yet achieved 85 percent first doses. These efforts have proven effective, with all DHBs now having achieved at least 85 percent first doses.

The Ministry of Health continues to support Northland, Tairāwhiti, Lakes, and Whanganui DHBs with daily meetings to review progress, resolve issues, and present new strategies to support uptake. These DHBs are reporting against a weekly calendar of activity ensuring that capacity is available to deliver across various areas of low uptake.

DHBs continue to operate vaccination drives throughout the regions supported by promotional campaigns, radio and social media promotions as well as social and community initiatives. The five South Island DHBs have launched a joint "90 for the South" campaign focused on getting the South Island to 90 percent second doses.

Over the past three weeks, Whakarongorau has been calling consumers who have yet to book or receive a second dose of vaccine by day 22. Whakarongorau is using the Māori and Pacific call centres for this campaign, which supports consumers by providing information and support for bookings.

Sharing personal information about unvaccinated individuals

The Ministry of Health continues to work with the Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency (WOCA) and Whānau Tahi (the data arm of WOCA) to discuss the sharing of data about Māori individuals. The Ministry of Health is meeting with relevant iwi, and local service delivery providers to identify those rohe where vaccination outreach to Māori is most needed, and to identify the necessary and appropriate scope of data sharing in each case.

This approach has already seen the Ministry of Health share individual Māori health data for Waikato, Tāmaki Makaurau, Taranaki, Tairāwhiti, and Wellington with WOCA, with data-sharing agreements in place.

The Ministry of Health is committed to continuing to work constructively with WOCA and iwi to support the uptake of vaccinations by Māori as a priority.

The Ministry of Health is working with WOCA on appropriate data-sharing arrangements for other regions, subject to further consultation, and has been in hui with iwi, WOCA and DHBs over the past few weeks. We remain committed to finding resolutions that work for as many groups as possible.

AstraZeneca Vaccine

Rollout of the AstraZeneca vaccine has commenced. Bookings for AstraZeneca vaccinations opened on 26 November 2021 with the first doses being administered the same day, three days ahead of schedule.

Approximately 60 to 70 sites provide access to the AstraZeneca vaccine, using both mobile and community vaccine sites. Book My Vaccine guides people to the sites that provide AstraZeneca vaccinations.

AstraZeneca vaccinations are only available to persons aged 18 years and older. Pfizer remains the only vaccine currently approved for those aged 12 to 17-years.

Booster doses

Bookings for booster shots commenced from 26 November 2021 and the first booster doses were administered on the same day. Boosters are available for people who have received their second dose of vaccine at least six months previously. Approximately 450,000 people who will be eligible for booster doses before the end of the year.

Border workers, health and disability workers, persons over 65, and Māori and Pasifika over 50 are considered priority groups for booster doses.

Increasing the vaccination coverage of first and second doses, particularly for Māori and Pasifika, remains the Government's number one priority in our nationwide vaccination rollout.

Five to 11-year-olds

Medsafe received Pfizer's data submission for five to 11-year-olds on 5 November 2021 and is currently evaluating the information about the vaccine to assess its approval for use in New Zealand.

The COVID-19 Vaccine Technical Advisory Group (CVTAG) is engaged in reviewing preliminary advice, subject to approval from Medsafe, in anticipation of Cabinet considering a "decision to use". If a decision is made to offer vaccines to this age group, these will be offered in 2022.

The Ministry of Health is working to define an implementation plan in anticipation of CVTAG's advice on paediatric Pfizer delivery. The Ministry of Health is working with the Immunisation Advisory Centre to develop collateral and training and with Pfizer to confirm the delivery schedule for the supply of the Pfizer paediatric dose.

Equity

All DHBs are focused on vaccinating hesitant and under-vaccinated populations and engagement with Māori health providers, iwi, and primary care providers is ongoing.

Events focused on whānau and community continue to be successful in reaching those who are vaccine hesitant, finding comfort in being vaccinated by local Māori health providers and being vaccinated with whānau. A recent pop-up event in the Bay of Plenty saw 49 Māori vaccinated in three hours, with 61 percent of those vaccinated receiving their first dose. Others who chose not to be vaccinated at the event have chosen to be vaccinated at a pop-up event at the local Marae and to be supported by their local kaumatua who is able to look after their wairua during the vaccination event.

Efforts continue to increase engagement with people with disabilities. A creative agency has been contracted to implement the communications plan that was endorsed by Tātou Whaikaha (Disabled Persons Advisory Group). The agency will support the development of disability specific content focusing on informed decisions and improving trust in services.

Whakarongorau is now better able to support the deaf and hearing-impaired communities through a text option and has a dedicated disability team available to answer questions, provide assistance, and book transport if needed.

DHBs have worked with government and community partners to provide bespoke vaccination services to people living in transitional housing, homeless communities, people being supported by the Mental Health, Addiction and Intellectual Disability Service and dementia services. Many DHBs are currently working with needle exchange services and methadone providers to deliver vaccinations at locations these communities may already be attending. The programme is working to establish a partnership approach between the non-governmental organisation sector, Ministry of Health and DHB mental health and addiction services, and counterparts in DHB vaccination teams.

Mandatory vaccination orders

Health, disability, and education workers must have received their first vaccine dose by 11.59pm on 15 November 2021. Any workers in these sectors who have not received their first vaccine dose are now required to be stood down from their employment.

Centralised exemption processes are in place. The Temporary Medical Exemption Panel and Service Disruption Panels continue to meet regularly and assess applications. The criteria for both forms of exemption are high, and it is expected that the number of exemptions granted will be low.

The Temporary Medical Exemption Panel will also consider applications for medical exemptions to enable people to access My Vaccine Pass.

The Ministry of Health, ACC, and DHBs are working closely with service providers to assess and mitigate the risks of possible disruption to support services.

Workforce

As of 30 November 2021, 10,690 vaccinators have actively vaccinated in the programme so far.

There are now over 1,116 primary care sites onboarded as vaccination sites.

Book My Vaccine

As of 30 November 2021, Book My Vaccine holds 84,859 future bookings. The number of daily bookings for primary doses has continued to decrease as the fully vaccinated population increases and our model has changed, with consumers being actively encouraged to attend walk-in appointments and taking the vaccine to consumers through outreach clinics. There has been an increase in overall bookings, coinciding with the commencement of booster doses.

Technology

As of 11.59pm on 30 November 2021, 2,797,439 My COVID Passes have been issued. The assisted service channels continue to see very high volumes of calls and changes have been made to the call lines to increase capacity both technologically and in the call centres.

Pharmacies that are providing COVID-19 vaccinations can now help people request and print a pass or certificate, providing additional accessibility for people who may be otherwise unable to obtain their vaccine pass.

From 2 December 2021, people who have received an acknowledgement that their overseas vaccinations have been added to the COVID Immunisation Register will be able to generate a vaccine pass if they were vaccinated with one of the eight vaccines accepted for My Vaccine Pass.

NZ Pass Verifier, an application to complement the domestic My Vaccine Pass, was released on 23 November 2021. The app enables a user to scan a domestic pass and will then display a green (pass) or red (not pass) alert. No information is recorded about the scanned pass, the location, or the user.

3.1.5 Technical Advisory Group: Update

COVID-19 TAG

The next COVID-19 Technical Advisory Group (COVID-19 TAG) meeting is scheduled for 10 December 2021 and an update will be provided in a future Weekly Report.

CVTAG

The COVID-19 Vaccine Technical Advisory Group (CVTAG) met on 23 November 2021 and discussed the following items:

- protection framework
- update on rollout
- vaccine certificates
- vaccination in five to-11-year-olds
- chronic fatigue/ME and vaccination
- update from BMI needle length study.

The latest CVTAG meeting took place for 30 November 2021 and an update will be provided in a future Weekly Report.

Therapeutics TAG

The COVID-19 Therapeutics Technical Advisory Group (Therapeutics TAG) met on 26 November 2021 and discussed the following items:

- therapeutics
 - Pharmac update
 - Medsafe update
 - Airfinity/STA update
- equity considerations
- guideline update
 - 22 November 2021 update – included guidance on baricitinib use
- community use of Ronapreve.

The next Therapeutics TAG meeting is scheduled for 10 December 2021 and an update will be provided in a future Weekly Report.

CTTAG

The COVID-19 Testing Technical Advisory Group (CTTAG) met on 25 November 2021 and discussed the following items:

- prioritisation of tests via IT upgrades
- equity (introduction of new point of contact at the Ministry of Health and community engagement)
- operationalising selection criteria
- horizon scanning/innovation intel report.

The next CTTAG meeting is scheduled for 9 December 2021 and an update will be provided in a future Weekly Report.

3.1.6 Communications, Issues and Activities

As of 30 November 2021

| Date | Activity | Lead agency | Comms material | Ministerial Involvement |
|-------------------|---|-------------|---|--------------------------|
| 30 Nov 21 ongoing | Auckland outbreak: daily communications and support for the health sector and public, including cases throughout regions in North island and Canterbury. Locations of interest and updated health advice. | MoH | Communications, key messages, website, stakeholder engagement | Optional |
| 30 Nov 21 | Continue rollout of my Vaccine Pass in time for use under COVID-19 Protection Framework. | MoH/DPMC | Campaign, communications, website | Optional |
| 30 Nov 21 | Health system preparedness: announcement of ICU capacity funding | MoH | Press release, Q&As, talking points | Yes |
| 30 Nov 21 | New Testing Strategy | MoH/DPMC | Communications, website, talking points, stakeholder communications | No |
| 30 Nov 21 | RAT rollout | MoH | Communications, website, talking points, stakeholder communications | No |
| 30 Nov 21 | Cost of testing and testing requirements leaving Auckland | MoH/DPMC | Communications, website, stakeholder communications | Optional |
| TBC | Announcement of new MIQ arrangements, based on updated ODPH advice | MoH | Prime Minister announcement, website materials | Yes, with Prime Minister |
| 2 Dec 21 | Announcement of new COVID-19 infringement regime (fines) | MoH | Ministerial announcement, web materials | Yes (TBC) |
| 2 Dec 21 | Ministry of Health website update: health advice under the new Covid Protection Framework | MoH | Website complete update | No |

3.2 Upcoming Publications

| Title | Date | Context | ELT contact |
|---|------------------|--|--|
| Publication: Getting through Together | December 2021 | The National Ethics Advisory Committee’s publication Getting Through Together considers the ethical issues that may arise during any pandemic. The emphasis is on using shared ethical principles so people can care for themselves, their whānau and their neighbours, and make decisions. This is updated from the 2007 version. | Clare Perry, Deputy Director-General, Health System Improvement and Innovation, s9(2)(a) |
| Publication: COVID-19 Māori Protection Plan | 20 December 2021 | This plan provides an updated framework that is informed by Te Tiriti o Waitangi to protect, prevent, and mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 on whānau, hapū, iwi and hapori Māori. The plan sets out strategic actions to guide health and disability system action for Māori through the next three to 12 months of the COVID-19 response in the context of new variants, the shift to the COVID-19 Protection Framework, and the long tail of the impact of COVID-19 on the health and wellbeing of Māori. The plan has been informed by insights and feedback from a broad range of stakeholders since the start of the COVID-19 response in March 2020. | John Whaanga, Deputy Director-General, Māori Health, s9(2)(a) |

Proactively released

4. Managed Isolation and Quarantine Weekly Report

4.1 Top Items to Note

4.1.1 MIQ's Response to the Delta Outbreak

The number of community cases coming into Auckland's quarantine facilities has reduced slightly from last week as most cases are self-isolating, supported by care in the community. In Hamilton, a small number of community cases continue to enter the Amohia, while a number of cases continue to self-isolate at home in the region. Positive cases have continued to appear across the North Island, Christchurch and in Nelson and these cases are supported by care in the community where quarantine facilities are unavailable. A small number of community cases have entered The Commodore in Christchurch.

With the number of positive cases appearing across the North Island, Christchurch and Nelson this week and the referrals from AHRPS, MIQ continues to investigate options across the regions (where we have facilities) for additional quarantine capacity to support community cases if required. All options will need to consider the impact of policy decisions for the Omicron Variant of Concern (Omicron VOC) as well as the impact on availability for border returnees.

4.1.2 Moving to a 14 Day Stay for High Risk Returnees

As part of the response to the emerging risk of the Omicron VOC, MIQ has implemented a number of new measures to manage the increased public health risk presented by travellers from a number of southern African countries where Omicron has been detected.

From 11.59pm Sunday 28 November, all travellers arriving from the nine southern African countries designated Very High Risk, or who are currently in MIQ having arrived from those countries, will now be required to remain in MIQ for a full 14 day period, rather than the 7-day MIQ followed by 3-day self-isolation currently required of most travellers. These travellers will also be asked to complete two further COVID-19 tests, on days 9 and 12 of their stay. On 1 December, we provided further advice [Briefing 2122-2013] to you on a regulatory change to include the extended 14 day stay into the order to give it a clear legal basis for people entering MIQ after 11.59pm, Wednesday 1 December.

Where these travellers would otherwise be liable for MIQ fees, they will continue to pay the standard MIQ fee, which is calculated on the basis of a 7-day stay.

This change applies both to travellers due to arrive from these countries and also travellers currently in MIQ who have travelled from these countries. Officials estimate that around 40 travellers who have arrived from these countries within the last week will be effected by these changes, with a further 74 people expected to arrive in the first two weeks of December.

To provide greater operational flexibility to respond to the evolving understanding of the Omicron VOC, MIQ reduced the number of rooms made available on MIAS on Tuesday 30 November, releasing 2,090 rooms (around 1,100 fewer than planned). These rooms can be released at a later date should that prove possible.

This longer stay will necessitate, in some instances, the breaking of cohorting in order to keep our existing commitments to incoming border arrivals e.g. a new cohort coming into a facility while there are still Omicron returnees completing their 14 day stay. Along with strict IPC measures, other precautions are also been taken as possible, for example keeping rooms empty around the extended stay traveller/s and/or placing them in a separate wing of a facility.

We understand that the Ministry of Health will be conducting another public health assessment on Monday, 6 December where they will reconsider the length of the extended stay based on the latest international evidence.

4.1.3 Impacts on Facilities: Move From 14 to 7 Day Stay

The move from 14 to seven days has gone relatively smoothly for MIQ operations. However, there have been some material impacts to our returnees and operations.

The first main impact is around the access to fresh air in our facilities. Access to fresh air varies across all our facilities. Availability to fresh air is impacted by the physical make-up of our facilities and what space is available in comparison to the number of returnees in each facility. This is especially prevalent in the Auckland CBD facilities. The recent move to seven days has further limited returnees' access to fresh air in some facilities.

Due to more testing, arrivals and departures within seven days - the amount of fresh air times allocated have been reduced. Facilities close the fresh air times during testing, arrivals and some departures, this is largely due to IPC requirements which limit the movement of returnees around the facility during these times. We have identified some facilities which are particularly impacted to see if any other arrangements can be worked through to ensure all returnees have access to fresh air time every day. We are cognisant of the importance of access to fresh air for our returnees and try to make it as available as often as possible without impacting the safety of them or our staff.

4.1.4 Response to Omicron: Incident Management Team (IMT) Stood Up

In response to the emerging issue around the Omicron VOC, we have established a MIQ IMT to respond as required to this changing situation. This includes staff from across MIQ and our health partners.

The IMT manages any changes to the operation of MIQ as a result of extended stay for returnees from the Very High-Risk Countries, how we manage the current impacted returnees and what further changes may be required.

4.1.5 Update on the Bulk Security Officer Recruitment and Impact of the Proposed NZDF Withdrawal in 2022

As outlined previously in the Weekly Report, we are undertaking a bulk recruitment pilot to test the process to recruit hundreds of MIQ security officers to replace NZDF throughout 2022.

The bulk recruitment pilot aims to recruit 90 MIQ security officers by Christmas (48 in Auckland; 21 across Hamilton and Rotorua; and 21 in Christchurch). Indications from the recruitment are that we will be able to bring on 15 in Christchurch, 22 across Hamilton and Rotorua, and 32 in Auckland (69 in total).

We will not meet the expected recruitment numbers for this pilot. We are particularly challenged in the Auckland market. With closed borders and unemployment at 3.4%, the competition in the labour market is high (a number of candidates are also being counter offered). Our partner security providers (AVSEC and First Security Group) have also outlined issues with recruitment for similar roles. In addition, as the security staff in MIQ were not eligible for an extension to their visas through the recent immigration changes, it is likely that there will be issues retaining parts of the current workforce throughout 2022. This is due to this workforce possibly having their visas run out or looking for other work which will enable them to remain in New Zealand.

We are working through possible solutions to these issues, including ways to address the retention of this workforce. We will keep you updated on this pilot and the impacts on the NZDF withdrawal as we learn more.

4.2 Policy Update

4.2.1 New Rules for COVID-19 Public Health Response Act (No 2) 2021

The COVID-19 Public Health Response Act (No 2) 2021 introduced a power for the Chief Executive responsible for Managed Isolation and Quarantine to make rules for the purposes of ensuring the effective and orderly operation of Managed Isolation and Quarantine Facilities. This includes (without limitation) rules:

- prohibiting or restricting (with or without conditions) items (including alcohol, goods, and other things) that can be brought into, sent out of, or removed from an MIQF;

- restricting or prohibiting (with or without conditions) specified behaviour of persons within, or going to or from, an MIQF;
- specifying that a breach of a rule is a particular class of infringement offence (with the corresponding penalties) for the purposes of regulations made under section 33(1)(b) of the Act.

We intend to introduce four rules, which are currently being drafted. These will all be classified as “low risk” under the graduated penalty framework [HR20212156], and will have corresponding fees for individuals of \$500 and maximum fines of \$1,500:

| Rule content | Rationale |
|--|--|
| A person must not bring into their room items that pose a health and safety risk (e.g. personally provided electrical cooking appliances) | This is to improve health and safety and reduce public health risks, for example setting off the fire alarm and risking transmission as people are evacuated. |
| A person must not bring into their room quantities of alcohol in excess of the stated limits per day: › six 330ml cans of beer (6-9 standard drinks), or › one bottle of wine (7-8 standard drinks), or › four pack, up to 330ml each, of RTDs (7-8 standard drinks) › deliveries of spirits will not be accepted. | This rule is to reduce the risk of disorderly behaviour that is caused by drinking, and in turn reduces compliance with public health requirements generally and increases risk of transmission. It has caused unruly behaviour towards staff. |
| A person must not smoke in places that are not otherwise designated as places where smoking is permissible | Smoking in rooms is a fire hazard with an increased public health risk if there is need to evacuate the building. It also causes damage to the rooms and increases costs and cleaning time. |
| A person must not use sporting or exercise equipment outside one’s room unless otherwise approved. | This is to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID through excessive sweating or heavy breathing due to increased heart rate through exercise. |

4.3 Operational Update

4.3.1 Operationalising the 7 Day Stay

We have seen around 200 returnees stay past their seven days. This is largely due to those who exit MIQ after 6PM and cannot secure a flight until the next morning. We have approved these returnees staying the extra night to align with departure flights as it has not had a negative impact on the operation or availability of rooms for the next incoming cohort.

4.3.2 Capacity and Room Release Update – As at 30 November

As of 1 December, a total of 64,450 rooms since early March have been released for the period of June through to the end of March 2022.

From early March to present, 165,211 returnees have secured a date to return home during the period of March through to the end of March 2022.

The next Lobby room release is planned for 10.00 Tuesday 7 December.

4.3.3 Self-Isolation Pilot (for approved applicants arriving in NZ between 30 October – 8 December 2021)

The pilot continues without incident; 65 participants have successfully arrived to date, with 21 currently self-isolating – 11 in Auckland, 10 in Christchurch. Last week was the busiest of the Pilot in terms of departures: 42 participants have exited self-isolation to date, after being transported to a CTC for final Day 8 nasopharyngeal tests, and receiving negative results for them to be able to depart on Day 10. Last week 10 participants exited in Auckland, 9 in Christchurch. There were no incidents or events last week.

The issue with the daily health surveys not being sent has now been resolved by Ministry of Health, resulting in more surveys being completed by the midday deadline.

The first report back on the Pilot evaluation was sent to your office on Friday 26 November. It provides rapid insights into the requirements for managing applications for the pilot, including the verification of the data supplied by applicants. A second report on the border and arrivals processes will be delivered next week.

4.3.4 MIAS Lobby Releases: 25 and 30 November

We have had two lobby room releases recently, one on Thursday, 25 November, and one on Tuesday 30 November.

Both Lobby releases were different to previous room releases with much smaller numbers of people partaking. This can be attributed to the announcements of the changing MIQ requirements next year.

Thursday 25 November Lobby Room Release:

Only 6,307 users joined the queue in total, which represented 9,341 passengers intending to arrive in NZ between November and February. The previous week 16,278 users joined the queue, representing 24,675 passengers.

For the first time, everybody got to the front of the queue and a chance to book.

There were 3,411 rooms made available and 3,320 were booked.

The decision was made to end the room release as the remaining rooms were not being booked.

Of the 6,307 users who got to the front of the queue, only 3,060 of them booked a room. Those who did not book a room are made up of:

- 1,555 users who did not try to log in, mostly when December and January sold out.
- 1,505 users who logged in but did not book a room.

Tuesday 30 November Lobby Room Release:

This was a fast room release with all rooms booked and the queue closed within 75 minutes.

There were 2,090 rooms made available across December to March.

5,315 users joined the queue in total, representing 8,037 passengers intending to travel at this time.

For a second time we cycled through a very large amount of users in order to have all the rooms picked up. Of the 5,315 users who were granted access to MIAS, only 2,068 booked a room. 3,247 people chose not to book a room. This was the first time more people chose not to book a room, than those who made a booking.

Australia was, as always, the most popular departure country (527 passengers), and this week it was very closely followed by India with just 3 fewer passengers (524 passengers). From the 'very high-risk' countries, 55 passengers indicated South Africa as their country of departure, and 2 indicated they would be coming from Zimbabwe.

December, January and February concluded at approximately the same time, with March taking longer. More rooms were made available in March but they also sold out at a much slower rate than the other months.

Upcoming lobby dates for the holiday period:

Please note, due to changing circumstances, these dates and/or times may change:

| Date | Time |
|---|-------|
| 7 December | 10.00 |
| 16 December | 11.00 |
| 21 December | 12.00 |
| <i>No release for the week starting 27 December (Christmas break)</i> | |
| 6 January | 13.00 |
| 12 January | 11.00 |
| 18 January | 14.00 |
| 25 January | 9.00 |

4.3.5 MIQ's Role in Afghanistan Evacuation

A total of 785 evacuees from Afghanistan have arrived in New Zealand. The table below shows the MIQ status of the Afghanistan evacuation programme as at 10am Wednesday 1 December:

| | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| TOTAL Returnees in MI currently | 141 |
| TOTAL Departed Returnees | 644 (excludes births after arrival) |
| TOTAL Further Expected Arrivals (prior to Christmas) | 191 (estimated) |

In the next 14 days, up to 191 Afghanistan evacuees (requiring 87 MIQ rooms) are forecast to arrive in New Zealand. In conjunction with MFAT, it is not intended to receive any group arrivals from 12 December until 10 January, to allow the MIQ and RMS systems and staff some respite. Nonetheless, arrangements have been made for any emergency cases over this 'stand down' period to be managed through the emergency allocation system. s6(a)

INZ reports that 764 Critical Purpose Visitor visa holders remain offshore as of today.

There are approximately 460 Afghanistan evacuees in the Nesuto post-MIF transition accommodation under the care of Refugee and Migrant Services.

The recent judicial finding regarding unprocessed visas for Afghan nationals means that there is potential for a further 1,000 applicants (representing some 5,000 people) to seek travel to New Zealand. While it is possible advocates may push for some of the litigant applicants (18 family groups comprising approx. 70 people) to be allowed entry to New Zealand before the end of the year, the remainder (if approved) are not likely to arrive in NZ until next year. It is not yet clear whether or not these applicants will meet the cabinet criteria for eligibility to be processed under the emergency evacuation allocation.

4.3.6 Ventilation

| Total number of facilities: 33 | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| Remediation work completed | Facilities yet to complete remediation | % of rooms complete within the portfolio of facilities fully signed off |
| 28 (16 of which are fully signed off) | 5 | 49% (3088 rooms) |

The Novotel Christchurch Airport fire damper work required for code of compliance continues and remains on-track to be completed around 16 December as planned (35 rooms are unavailable while this work is still underway). At its completion, only 26 of the 35 offline rooms' will come back into circulation for isolation use. Nine rooms have been removed to provide safe separation between staff sleeping and returnee isolation areas.

Prior to Christmas there will be extraction fans installed in 17 rooms at Sudima Rotorua that do not currently have any mechanical ventilation. The rooms are not available for use until this work has been completed.

We are tracking to complete remediation work for all but two facilities this year. The final two facilities are expected to be completed by the end of January 2022.

4.3.7 Air Filtration Units (AFU)

There are around 990 AFU's in stock (to be shared between MBIE and MOH) and the lead-time to get units to the facilities is around 2-3 days (depending on location)

With the recent approval given for 'Q' designation of the Sudima Rotorua, in preparation for this AFU's will be deployed to install in quarantine rooms.

Additional AFU's for the Grand Mercure Wellington are also being explored should there be a need to convert isolation rooms to quarantine.

4.3.8 Vaccination of Frontline Staff

For workers on site for the week 22-28 November 2021, BWTR shows that 98.4% had two doses of the vaccine, 0.2% had one dose and the remaining 1.4% (69 workers) had vaccine status 'unknown'.

Of the 69 workers with an ‘unknown’ vaccination status, 25 still require an NHI match. The Workforce Testing Team is investigating the remaining 44 workers, to confirm vaccination status.

Vaccination assurance follow-ups for those with an ‘unknown’ status in BWTR did not identify any breaches of the Vaccination Order. However, two breaches were identified in the last week. The first breach is a security guard at an Auckland Managed Isolation Facility who had only had one dose of Pfizer vaccine and appeared to be overdue for the second. Upon contacting the PCBU for follow up, the individual was removed offsite and instructed to get a second vaccine immediately. They were onsite 21, 22, 23 and 24 November in breach of the Order. The MIF is reviewing handover and briefings with ASG and security team leads to ensure awareness around the importance of entry point checks. The second breach was a hotel worker at a Wellington Managed Isolation Facility who entered from the back entrance with an overseas vaccine that was not approved in the Vaccination Order. Subsequently the individual has been informed of the vaccination requirements. The MIF is ensuring that all staff enter via the front entrance to ensure correct entry point checks.

Of the 30 workers who were NHI-matched but showing vaccination status ‘unknown’ in the 15-21 November 2021 weekly report:

- 26 have been confirmed as being compliant with the Vaccination Order;
- 2 appear to be vaccinated and have been passed to the Ministry of Health as potential NHI issues;
- 1 has been vaccinated overseas (just waiting for BWTR to be updated); and
- 1 have a Ministerial exemption (vaccinated overseas).

Vaccination boosters were available from 29 November for anyone who had their primary course of the vaccination at least 6 months ago. We are encouraging workers through our regular communications channels to get their booster shot if eligible, and have included links to the BookMyVaccine website. We are also communicating to PCBU’s (i.e. through our hotel newsletter) on supporting their workers to receive the booster. As of today, there are 559 MIQF border workers who have had a booster dose.

4.3.9 Staff Testing

Reporting from BWTR shows that 4,874 people undertook work in our facilities last week, and the table below shows how many of those workers were compliant with the Testing Order, were overdue for a test or still needed to be NHI-matched.

Compliance increased by 1% to 89%.

| Workers on site 22-28 Nov 2021 | Workers on nasal testing regime | Workers on saliva testing regime | Total | Percentage of total NHI-matched workers on site |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------|---|
| Compliant NHI-matched workers | 2059 | 2253 | 4312 | 89% |
| Overdue NHI-matched workers | 314 | 223 | 537 | 11% |
| Need NHI-match | 25 | 0 | 25 | |
| Workers on site | 2,398 | 2,476 | 4,874 | |

Of the 537 overdue, 343 of those are less than 4 days overdue, 159 are 4-10 days overdue and 35 are 11+ days overdue. The Workforce Testing and Vaccination team will be following up with these workers to make sure they get tested as required.

We will continue to follow up with workers overdue for tests to make sure they understand the new requirements.

Of the 25 that still need a NHI-match, 19 were created in BWTR in the last 7 days.

52 workers were previously reported as ‘11+ days overdue’ in the report for the week 15-21 November 2021. 32 of those workers have a swab confirmed, 11 have been instructed to be swabbed, 6 have been contacted

and we are awaiting a response, 1 is compliant and has been passed to MOH for potential NHI issue, 1 is no longer employed and 1 was incorrect sign in.

The pilot of a new sign-in technology (JNCTN) is now live at four sites (Crowne Plaza Christchurch, The Elms Hotel Christchurch, Rydges Rotorua and Ibis Hamilton). This software may replace Who's on Location (WOL). JNCTN enables MBIE to check a worker's BWTR-verified testing and vaccination compliance status in real time at the gate. So far feedback has been positive.

4.3.10 Saliva Testing

As of 28 November, 3,770 MIQ workers are opted-in to saliva testing across all active MIQF sites (an increase of 235 from last week).

4.4 Current Judicial Review, Ombudsman and OPCAT cases

4.4.1 Current Judicial Reviews

Four of the applicants for judicial review relating to pregnancy, of which we have previously advised, now have vouchers (2 through emergency allocation and 2 through general MIAS). Their judicial review applications are consequently moot. One application remains "live". This case has been given a one-week adjournment.

There are no new updates on the *Grounded Kiwis* and *Osbourne* judicial reviews this week.

4.4.2 Ombudsman

We have received four new notifications from the Ombudsman Office this week. We are currently managing six cases; one on emergency allocations, two on fee waivers; one on exemptions from managed isolation and two on managed isolation facilities. We are seeking Crown Law advice on some opinions to support our responses.

4.4.3 OPCAT

Our response to The Crowne Plaza Christchurch final report is due Friday 10 December. Follow up information has been provided for both Hotel Chateau on the Park and the Distinction Christchurch. A request for information in relation to how MIQ staff communicate with hearing impaired individuals has been received. We have seen a significant increase in information requests by OPCAT both following up from inspections and more broad information requests at a national level.

4.5 Invoicing

The table below shows the number of invoices issued up to **28 November 2021**.

Invoices have various repayment terms depending on whether they are a sports group (10 days), critical worker (30 days) or standard returnee/maritime crew/aircrew (90 days).

| Grouping | Invoices issued (net of credit notes) | Paid | Issued not due | Issued over due | Invoices issued (\$) | Paid (\$) | Issued not due (\$) | Issued overdue (\$) | 90+ days over due | 90+ days overdue (\$) |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|--------|----------------|-----------------|----------------------|---------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Groups /Temp Visa | 6,479 | 3,090 | 1,735 | 1,654 | \$61,677,308 | 44,554,553 | 7,641,435 | 9,481,320 | 3 | \$16,560 |
| Maritime | 560 | 404 | 87 | 69 | \$2,872,792 | \$2,224,240 | \$307,228 | \$341,324 | 23 | \$74,279 |
| Aircrew | 230 | 217 | 5 | 8 | \$2,182,956 | \$1,838,601 | \$242,918 | \$101,437 | 8 | \$101,437 |
| Other | 29,187 | 17,213 | 4,165 | 7,809 | \$99,606,602 | \$62,404,702 | \$11,820,605 | \$25,381,295 | 2,755 | \$8,764,930 |
| Total | 36,456 | 20,924 | 5,992 | 9,540 | \$166,339,657 | \$111,022,096 | \$20,012,186 | \$35,305,375 | 2,789 | \$8,957,206 |

*Groups has only previously included sports groups, critical workers and critical Health Workers. However, going forward this now includes temporary visa holders as this aligns more to the categorisation of Critical workers i.e. same fee charging structure.

Note: the '90+ days Overdue' column represents the number of invoices from the 'Issued overdue' column that have been outstanding for 90+ days.

4.5.1 Fees collection

Invoicing is now up to those returnees leaving MIQ on 1 November. A solution is being tested this week for the automated invoice process for returnees staying 7 days. We are awaiting an approval on the treatment of Afghanistan returnees, due 14 December. Border averters who returned to Wellington, Christchurch and Auckland have now been invoiced. We have started invoicing arrivals via small maritime craft and are up to the end of November 2020. The process to email returnees from August 2020 has begun with emails sent to returnees up to 30 November 2020. This has led to 958 invoices sent so far valued at \$3.2m.

4.5.2 Debt Recovery

Of the now 1,526 invoices worth \$4.909m sent to a debt collection agency:

- \$803k (up \$148k, 16%) has been paid (or will be paid through instalment)
- \$567k is currently awaiting information from customers or has been credited due to an error
- a further \$1,560k (this includes the Gone no address/overseas category) requires more detailed tracing
- \$287k currently have waiver applications under assessment
- the remaining \$1,692k debt continues to be a work in progress.

2,805 invoices worth \$10.104m have now been passed to MBIE's partner firm for active management. For the week ended 29 November 2021, \$1,097k has now been paid (up \$272k from last week). An additional \$671k of debt is under instalment and is expected to convert to payments received over the coming weeks.

Of the invoices sent, 477 customers worth \$1.623m have now submitted waiver applications and while applications are being processed, they add to the outstanding debt.

4.5.3 Weekly Average Invoicing and Debt Recovery at 76%

The table below reflects the weekly average of invoicing, from 11 August 2020.

As noted in the Estimates of Appropriations 2021/22 - Vote Building and Construction, one of the performance measures in relation to the Managed Isolation and Quarantine multi-category appropriation is debt recovery as a percentage of debt recovered against invoices raised. Debt recovery is calculated as the percentage of repayments (\$) against invoices issued (\$) excluding those invoices not due.

The debt recovery percentage, factoring in all repayments to date against just overdue invoices is tracking under the FY22 target at 76%. Both MBIE's partner firm and Debt Collector are seeing success in recovering debt which will continue to flow into the results. The backlog of outstanding waiver applications when either approved or declined will improve the debt recovery ratio.

| Recent Weeks | Average invoicing per week (\$) |
|--------------|---------------------------------|
| Past week | 3,756,473 |
| 2-4 weeks | 3,979,822 |
| 5-8 weeks | 4,583,552 |
| 9+ weeks | 2,026,623 |

4.5.4 Waivers

The table below breaks down the waiver application information between 11 August 2020 and 28 November 2021. The numbers below relate to all waiver applications; waivers can be applied for before, during and after an individual has stayed in managed isolation.

| Waiver Applications | In Progress | Total Completed | Completed Financial Hardship Applications | Completed Special Circumstances Applications | Approved Waiver Applications | | Declined Waiver Applications | |
|---------------------|-------------|-----------------|---|--|------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| | | | | | Financial Hardship | Special Circumstances | Financial Hardship | Special Circumstances |
| 11762 | 5003 | 6759 | 861 | 5898 | 88 | 5042 | 773 | 856 |

4.6 Upcoming Communications and Activities

4.6.1 As of 1 December 2021:

| Date | Activity | Lead agency | Comms material | Ministerial Involvement Y/N |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------|---|-----------------------------|
| Week starting 7 December | Absconders report | MIQ | PR from MIQ | N |
| Tuesday 7 December | Voucher Lobby – opens 9 starts at 10 | MIQ | Proactive MIQ | N |
| Wednesday 8 December | New weekly data snapshot | MIQ | Snapshot will be posted online in the afternoon | N |

4.6.2 Changes to the Daily Snapshot

With the transition from 14-day stays to 7-day stays, MIQ has revamped the key information around capacity and arrivals it makes available on its website. We had previously reported that this item would go live on 1 December, but this has been pushed out to 7 December to allow time for additional changes.

4.7 Large Group Arrivals Update

Summary of approved group arrivals as at 30 November 2021 (to February 2022):

| Group | Date of Arrival | Allocation Approved | Final number of rooms allocated | Comments |
|----------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Construction Sector Accord | Nov 2021 | 60 | 27 (36 pax) | Arrivals are spread across the month. There have been five no-shows so far for November. |
| | Dec 2021 | 60 | 16 (26 pax) | |
| Refugee Quota | 25 Nov | 4 | 2 | Numbers per arrival window will increase in 2022 with an aim to reach the quota for the FY 21/22. There are 85 refugees yet to arrive for the calendar year. |
| | 27 Nov | 1 | 1 | |
| | 30 Nov | 8 | 4 | |
| | 2 Dec | 29 | 15 | |
| | 6 Dec | 13 | 7 | |
| | 7 Dec | 6 | 3 | |
| | TBC | 24 | 12 | |
| | 31 Jan – 13 Feb | 130 | 70 tbc | |
| 14 – 27 Mar | 120 | 60 tbc | | |
| 25 Apr – 8 May | 130 | 70 tbc | | |
| Afghanistan Evacuees | 22 Nov | - | 8 (24 pax) | Large numbers are expected from 29 November – 12 December as planned arrivals will cease over the festive period due to limited resources available (unless they are emergencies). Planned arrivals will begin again from 10 January. Two unaccompanied minors are pencilled in to arrive on 1 December. Working through the implications of short stay MIQ on this complex group. |
| | 23 Nov | - | 8 (20 pax) | |
| | 25 Nov | - | 15 (37 pax) | |
| | 26 Nov | - | 4 (8 pax) | |
| | 27 Nov | - | 12 (26 pax) | |
| | 28 Nov | - | 1 (4 pax) | |
| | 30 Nov | - | 21 (48 pax) | |
| | 1 Dec | - | 1 (2 pax) | |
| | 2 Dec | - | 2 (6 pax) | |
| | 4 Dec | - | 30 (80 pax) | |
| 6 - 12 Dec | - | 24 (33 pax) tbc | | |
| Jan 2022 | - | 262 (362 pax) tbc | | |
| Mariners | 21 Nov 2021 | 1 | 1 (1 pax) | No significant issues. All current and future arrivals will do +3 self-isolation under own arrangements. |
| | 23 Nov 2021 | 4 | 4 (4 pax) | |
| | 7 Dec 2021 | 11 | 11 (11 pax) | |
| Exporters | Nov | 25 | 23 (23 pax) | A number of December vouchers have been issued – it is expected that NZTE will use the full allocation. Arrivals are spread across the month. |
| | Dec | 25 | 20(22 pax)+ | |
| EXPO | 22 Nov | 80 | 66 (77 pax) | |
| | 27 Jan | 16 | 16 tbc | |
| | 29 Jan | 44 | 44 tbc | |
| | 3 Feb | 45 | 45 tbc | |
| | 5 Feb | 75 | 75 tbc | |
| 26 Feb | 44 | 44 tbc | | |

| Group | Date of Arrival | Allocation Approved | Final number of rooms allocated | Comments |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| Rugby: All Blacks | Late Nov | 65 | 60 (62 pax) | Standard returnees – not requiring training exemption. In addition to team members, two spaces of this allocation are being used by a partner and a son of team members (as room shares). |
| Rugby: Black Ferns | Late Nov | 65 | 56 (59 pax) | Standard returnees – not requiring training exemption. In addition to team members, one space of this allocation is being used by a team member's spouse (room share). |
| Cricket: BlackCaps | 9 Dec 2021 | 33 | 30 (32 pax) | This cohort of BlackCaps are seeking a training exemption. Some of this allocation will be used for inbound media critical to the delivery of the Summer Series of Cricket, and a player's wife and child (who will share the player's room). These individuals will not have any exemptions or special arrangements. Working through implications of a shortened MIQ stay on inbound teams and the opportunity to train. The BlackCaps will depart on day 7 in line with the new short stay model. |
| NZDF | 3 Dec | 76 | 76 tbc | |
| | 20 Jan | 60 | 60 tbc | |
| | 23 Feb | 80 | 80 tbc | |
| Cricket: Bangladesh | 10 Dec | 35 | 35 tbc | Bangladesh is seeking a training exemption. MBIE are working with MoH and NZC to develop plans for the team to safely self-isolate while continuing to train. |
| Antarctic Programme | 12 Nov | 7 | 6 (6 pax) | These arrivals are for the combined US Antarctic Programme (USAP) as well as the Italian, French, German and Korean programme. |
| | 15 Nov | 138 | 133 (134 pax) | |
| | 19 Nov | 42 | 34 (34 pax) | |
| | 20 Nov | 19 | 19 (19 pax) | |
| | 20 Dec | 65 | 65 tbc | |
| | 10 Jan | 170 | 170 tbc | |
| | 19 Jan | 36 | 36 tbc | |
| | Feb (date tbc) | 25 | 25 tbc | |
| Cricket: South Africa | 4 Feb | 35 | 35 tbc | Engagement with NZC has begun. The team are seeking an exemption to train. Working through implications of a shortened MIQ stay on inbound teams and the opportunity to train. |
| | | | | |
| Ministerial Travel | Nov | 20 | 4 (4 pax) | In November Ministerial travel will be split between group allocation, Time Sensitive Travel (approx. 10 pax) and self-isolation. Minister Mahuta will arrive in November (28 th), Minister O'Connor arrives on the 6 December. Both Minister's delegations are split between Nov/Dec. |
| | Dec | 20 | 4 (4 pax) | |
| | Jan | 20 | tbc | |
| | Feb | 20 | tbc | |
| Critical health workers | 22-30 Nov | 80 | 34 (54 pax) | A number of December & January vouchers have been allocated – further vouchers will be allocated for these time periods. Arrivals are spread across the month. |
| | 1 – 14 Dec | 150 | 54 (74 pax) | |
| | 15 – 31 Dec | 150 | 29 (38p pax)+ | |
| | 1 – 14 Jan | 150 | 34 (48 pax)+ | |
| | 15 – 31 Jan | 150 | 25 (44 pax)+ | |
| | 1 – 14 Feb | 150 | tbc | |
| Cricket: Women's Cricket World Cup | | | | |
| Officials | Jan/Feb | 26 | tbc | |
| India | 25 Jan | 31 | tbc | All teams will be seeking a training exemption. Planning has commenced and arrival dates tbc. The qualifying tournament on 5 Dec 2021 will determine the origin of the 3 'qualifier' teams. |
| South Africa | Feb | 31 | tbc | |
| Qualifier team 1 | 26 Jan | 31 | tbc | |
| Qualifier team 2 | Feb | 31 | tbc | Working through implications of a shortened MIQ stay on inbound teams and the opportunity to train. Note that Border Ministers will be asked to increase to the group allocation to accommodate the Australian and English teams going into managed isolation due to the QFT with Australia still being suspended, along with other critical CWC attendees (approx. 405 pax including match officials). |
| Qualifier team 3 | Feb | 31 | tbc | |
| Cricket: Netherlands Men | 7 Mar | 35 | Tbc | Engagement with NZC has begun. The team are seeking an exemption to train. Working through implications of a shortened MIQ stay on inbound teams and the opportunity to train. |

Time Sensitive Travel (TST)

The Time Sensitive Travel window for arrivals in January and February 2022 closed on 14 November 2021. 423 applications were received from a number of sectors and are currently being assessed. This translates currently into approximately 323 rooms as 34 applicants are critical health workers and have been referred to the Ministry of Health to apply under the group allocation, 42 are family members travelling with an applicant and, to date, 48 applications have been withdrawn.

4.8 Emergency Allocation Applications

7,813 applications have been processed since 30 October 2020. 294 applications were received in the week ending 28 November 2021 and 170 applications were processed. Of the 170 applications processed in the week ending 28 November 2021, 85% were approved.

| Emergency Allocation Applications | Weekly Totals | Year to Date Totals |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| | 22 November to 28 November | 30 October 2020 to 28 November 2021 |
| Approved | 144 | 4,569 |
| Declined | 26 | 3,244 |
| Applications processed | 170 | 7,813 |

*These figures only include completed applications, with all supporting evidence, which were received within the required timeframes, which have been decided by a decision marker.

| | |
|---|-----|
| Total Rooms Approved Under Emergency Allocation from 8 November to 14 November | 150 |
| Rooms allocated in MIAS | 122 |
| Awaiting flight details or MIAS registrations from the applicants to complete the room allocation process | 28 |



5. Border Executive Board Report

5.1 Key Issues Being Considered

5.1.1 Border Executive Board

The Border Executive Board met on 1 December 2021.

The Board discussed the draft advice prepared for Reconnecting New Zealanders' Ministers regarding implementing day 0/day 1 arrival testing. The Board noted the Ministry of Health intends to provide advice to Ministers on the use of PCR tests for day 0/day 1 arrival testing.

The Board received an update on the Integrated Targeting and Border Operations project. The project is progressing with developing a new collaborative operating model for the Integrated Targeting and Operations Centre (ITOC), based in the Auckland Customhouse. The new approach proposes the establishment of a multi-agency steering group to ensure shared view and direction.

The Board endorsed the Border Workforce Senior Officials Group changing its name and transferring oversight to the Ministry of Health. This group which had previously focussed on the Border Worker Testing Register will become the Testing Senior Officials Group in recognition of its remit having become wider than just the border. The revised group will continue to capture the details of new border employees, boosters and testing, and will evolve to ensure future vaccination requirements are met. The Board will continue to receive weekly monitoring and compliance reports on the border workforce.

The Board accepted the Border Worker Testing and Vaccination Maritime and Aviation – Phase Two Review completed by Venter Consulting Ltd. The review did not raise any new matters. Of the recommendations, seven of the nine have already been closed. This reflects that the reviewer shared insights in real-time so they could be actioned to meet the current needs of vaccination and testing. Insights have already been shared with other sectors involved in mandatory vaccination. The report will be prepared for pro-active release.

Members shared the activity in their own agency relating to COVID-19 vaccination status of staff in workplaces. Agencies are already or soon to be consulting with their staff on proposed policies. The direction, based on the completed risk assessments, is leading to staff needing to be vaccinated to enter a BEB agency workplace.

The next meeting is 8 December 2021.

5.1.2 Maritime Border

The New Zealand Customs Service (Customs) is chairing a cross-agency Senior Officials Group to provide direction to work related to the maritime border. The group is developing a work programme that will include reopening the maritime border, taking account of recent Cabinet decisions for Reconnecting New Zealanders.

The work programme will aim to set out specific requirements for a re-opening pathway for cargo ships, fishing boats, small craft, and passenger carrying vessels (including cruise ships). This work will include any additional requirements or policy changes for vessels that are able to operate under current border restrictions, and develop options for safely re-opening for other vessels pathways. Agencies have started engaging with industry representatives and have signalled to the cruise lines that agencies intend to start discussions with them in the New Year on a pathway for re-opening for the 2022/2023 season. Agencies have clearly indicated to the cruise lines that they will need to work closely with agencies to ensure their processes address public health concerns.

You will receive a briefing in the New Year that will set out the key items in the work programme and indicative timing for delivery. It will also factor in public health advice to reflect the response to the Omicron variant.

6. New Zealand Customs Service Weekly Report

6.1 Items to Note/Updates

6.1.1 Vaccination Requirements for Non-New Zealand Citizens Arriving by Air

For the period 22 November 2021 to 28 November 2021, two infringements were issued as follows:

- On 27 November 2021, the vaccination documentation for two passengers arriving from Samoa showed that their 2nd vaccinations were administered less than 14 day before their departure to New Zealand.

| | Date | 22 Nov | 23 Nov | 24 Nov | 25 Nov | 26 Nov | 27 Nov | 28 Nov | Week Total | % |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|------------|-------|
| | Non-NZ citizens | 202 | 315 | 135 | 201 | 153 | 212 | 140 | 1358 | |
| Primary Actions (Passport Control) | Vaccination status verified | 143 | 123 | 119 | 147 | 131 | 160 | 108 | 931 | 68.5% |
| | Exceptions | 53 | 192 | 16 | 51 | 22 | 48 | 29 | 411 | 30.2% |
| | Exemptions | 4 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 7 | 1.7% |
| | Referred to Secondary Area | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 9 | 0.5% |
| Secondary Area Actions | Compliant | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 7 | 77.7% |
| | Non-compliant | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 22.3% |

6.1.2 Pre-Departure Testing

For the period 22 November 2021 to 28 November 2021, there were no infringements or warnings issued.

| | Date | 22 Nov | 23 Nov | 24 Nov | 25 Nov | 26 Nov | 27 Nov | 28 Nov | Week Total | % |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|------------|-------|
| | Passengers subject to PDT | 466 | 474 | 343 | 411 | 428 | 417 | 432 | 2971 | |
| Primary Actions (Passport Control) | Test Certificate Verified | 452 | 458 | 331 | 402 | 407 | 399 | 421 | 2870 | 96.6% |
| | Exemption | 12 | 16 | 12 | 9 | 18 | 18 | 9 | 94 | 3.1% |
| | Referred to Secondary Area | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 7 | 0.3% |
| Secondary Area Actions | Compliant | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 7 | 100% |
| | Warned | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Infringement | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Prosecution | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

7. COVID-19 Chief Executives Board

7.1 Items to Note/Updates

The COVID-19 Chief Executives' Board (CCB) has instituted additional 30-minute meetings every second Tuesday to alternate with its full fortnightly meetings. These will consist of verbal updates, with the first one taking place this week on 30 December.

The next full meeting of the CCB is on 7 December, 2021. It will consider current priority system issues, readiness for the COVID-19 Protection Framework, risks and issues around COVID-19 Workforce Capacity and an update on Reconnecting New Zealanders.

8. COVID-19 Independent Continuous Review, Improvement and Advice Group

8.1 Items to Note/Updates

The COVID-19 Independent Continuous Review, Improvement and Advice Group met on 30 November, 2021. It received a briefing on the Care in the Community programme from the Ministry of Social Development as well as updates from Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission and on the Reconnecting New Zealanders programme.

9. Strategic COVID-19 Public Health Advisory Group

9.1 Items to Note/Updates

The COVID-19 Strategic Public Health Advisory Group met this week on 1 December, 2021 and discussed the future-focussed advice on what scenarios maybe encountered over the next year in our ongoing COVID-19 response. This Group is meeting next on 15 December, 2021 to finalise their advice and plan to provide a report to Minister Verrall later that week.

The Group's recent advice, Strategy for a Highly Vaccinated New Zealand, is being proactively released on 15 December, 2021.

10. Business Leaders Forum

10.1 Items to Note/Updates

The Business Leaders' Forum did not meet this week. The next meeting for the Forum is yet to be confirmed.

11. Community Panel

11.1 Items to Note/Updates

The Community Panel met on 1 December, 2021 and received updates on the COVID-19 Protection Framework implementation, the My Vaccine Pass and Reconnecting New Zealanders. It also received presentations on the travel health declaration process from Customs and the Ministry of Health's COVID-19 response from its Chief Advisor Equity. The date for the Panel's first meeting in 2022 is yet to be confirmed.

12. Government Modelling Group

12.1 Items to Note/Updates

Officials have received sensitivity analysis on the 2022 scenario modelling. This shows that outcomes are very sensitive to assumptions about the trans missing reducing effectiveness of CPF colours and the maintenance of effective case management and contact tracing practices at higher caseloads.

Projections for the current outbreak, conditioned on recent case data, continue to suggest cases will gradually decline over the next month, but these projections make no assumptions about the potential for increased transmission as changes are made in and around Auckland over the coming weeks. Recent estimates for R_{eff} are very close to 1.

Proactively Released

13. Upcoming Cabinet Papers

s9(2)(f)(iv)



Proactively Released

14. Appendix – Audit

| | Audit summary | IPC Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), operations frameworks and guidance documents |
|---|---|--|
| Managed Isolation and Quarantine Facilities (MIQFs) | Ongoing review of actions taken by facilities to address audit five findings and recommendations. Draft of proactive release audit five being submitted to Ministry of Health Communications team for review and development of frequently asked questions. Schedule developed for audit six round commencing on 6 December 2021. IPC audit tool being updated to incorporate newly released IPC SOP 2.1 requirements. | The MIQF IPC SOP was updated and released this week, as was the MIQF Operations Framework. The key changes to the SOP relate to clarifying that if there are no returnees present on a floor of a facility, cleaning staff do not need to wear a P2/N95 particulate respirator while cleaning the rooms on that floor (they are still required to wear a medical mask). Wearing P2/N95 particulate respirators is very challenging while cleaning or undertaking physical activity, and provided there are no returnees on the floor, the risk of airborne transmission to the cleaners is very low. |
| Airports | Christchurch international airport IPC review confirmed for 1 December 2021. | The Ministry of Health IPC team is currently reviewing and updating changes to the airport IPC guidance documents. |
| Maritime/Ports | Meeting held with Ministry of Health Border Ops COVID-19, Maritime New Zealand, and Worksafe New Zealand representatives about findings from previous IPC reviews and future scope of auditing activities at ports. Maritime New Zealand agrees to disseminate review recommendations to the ports. | Maritime New Zealand has made some changes to the guidance document for pilots undertaking necessary tasks on an affected ship. The IPC team have reviewed and recommended some changes, which are currently being reviewed by the Clinical Oversight Governance Group for final approval before this is returned to Maritime New Zealand to be published. The Ministry of Health IPC team is also reviewing the guidance document for New Zealand Persons Conducting a Business or Undertaking and their workers aboard ships to align personal protective equipment recommendations with the latest evidence for the Delta variant. |

¹ Our World in Data. COVID-19. Coronavirus (COVID-19) Vaccinations - Statistics and Research - Our World in Data – Accessed 1 December 2021

² IMPF Dashboard. Current vaccination status. <https://impfdashboard.de/en/#:~:text=In%20Germany%2C%20COVID%2D19%20vaccines,people%20are%20already%20fully%20vaccinated> – Accessed 1 December 2021

³ Our World in Data. COVID-19. Coronavirus (COVID-19) Vaccinations - Statistics and Research - Our World in Data – Accessed 1 December 2021

⁴ Politico. Germany to tighten coronavirus restrictions. <https://www.politico.eu/article/germany-to-tighten-coronavirus-restrictions/> - Accessed 2 December 2021

⁵ Deutschland.de. The Federal Government informs about the corona crisis. Corona: Germany Measures of the Federal Government (deutschland.de) – Accessed 1 December 2021

⁶ Politico. Germany to tighten coronavirus restrictions. <https://www.politico.eu/article/germany-to-tighten-coronavirus-restrictions/> - Accessed 2 December 2021

⁷ Deutschland.de. The Federal Government informs about the corona crisis. Corona: Germany Measures of the Federal Government (deutschland.de) – Accessed 1 December 2021

⁸ Bloomberg. Austria Enters Full National Lockdown, Orders Mandatory Covid Vaccines. Austria Enters Full National Lockdown, Orders Mandatory Covid Vaccine - Bloomberg – Accessed 1 December 2021

⁹ Our World in Data. COVID-19. Coronavirus (COVID-19) Vaccinations - Statistics and Research - Our World in Data – Accessed 1 December 2021

¹⁰ Euro News. COVID in Europe: How each country is reacting to a new surge in cases. COVID in Europe: How each country is reacting to a new surge in cases | Euronews – Accessed 1 December 2021.

¹¹ The Guardian. Majority of public in Europe Support Covid Vaccine Passports – survey. Majority of public in Europe support Covid vaccine passports – survey | Coronavirus | The Guardian – Accessed 1 December 2021

¹² Our World in Data. COVID-19. Coronavirus (COVID-19) Vaccinations - Statistics and Research - Our World in Data – Accessed 1 December 2021

¹³ Euro News. COVID in Europe: How each country is reacting to a new surge in cases. COVID in Europe: How each country is reacting to a new surge in cases | Euronews – Accessed 1 December 2021.

¹⁴ Our World in Data. COVID-19. Coronavirus (COVID-19) Vaccinations - Statistics and Research - Our World in Data – Accessed 1 December 2021

¹⁵ Deutschland.de. The Federal Government informs about the corona crisis. Corona: Germany Measures of the Federal Government (deutschland.de) – Accessed 1 December 2021

¹⁶ Our World in Data. COVID-19. Coronavirus (COVID-19) Vaccinations - Statistics and Research - Our World in Data – Accessed 1 December 2021

¹⁷ Al Jazeera. Greece the latest EU country to slap COVID curbs on unvaccinated. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/11/18/greece-to-slap-further-restrictions-on-unvaccinated> - Accessed 2 December 2021

¹⁸ EURACTIV. Slovaks lockdown unvaccinated as Hungary's Orban opts for masks. https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/short_news/slovaks-lockdown-unvaccinated-as-hungarys-orban-opts-for-masks/ - 2 December 2021

¹⁹ Euro News. COVID in Europe: How each country is reacting to a new surge in cases. COVID in Europe: How each country is reacting to a new surge in cases | Euronews – Accessed 1 December 2021.

²⁰ The Guardian. Majority of public in Europe Support Covid Vaccine Passports – survey. Majority of public in Europe support Covid vaccine passports – survey | Coronavirus | The Guardian – Accessed 1 December 2021

²¹ The Guardian. Majority of public in Europe Support Covid Vaccine Passports – survey. Majority of public in Europe support Covid vaccine passports – survey | Coronavirus | The Guardian – Accessed 1 December 2021

²² The Guardian. Majority of public in Europe Support Covid Vaccine Passports – survey. Majority of public in Europe support Covid vaccine passports – survey | Coronavirus | The Guardian – Accessed 1 December 2021

²³ Washington Post. 'We let our guard down' Frustrated Europe heads in to second pandemic winter. Coronavirus surge in Europe prompts lockdowns, restrictions and frustrations - The Washington Post – Accessed 1 December 2021.

²⁴ Politico. Protest against COVID-19 measures turns violent in Brussels

- ²⁵ BBC News. COVID: Huge protests across Europe over new restrictions. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-59363256> - Accessed 1 December 2021
- ²⁶ Our World in Data. COVID-19. Coronavirus (COVID-19) Vaccinations - Statistics and Research - Our World in Data – Accessed 1 December 2021
- ²⁷ BBC News. COVID: Huge protests across Europe over new restrictions. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-59363256> - Accessed 1 December 2021
- ²⁸ Our World in Data. COVID-19. Coronavirus (COVID-19) Vaccinations - Statistics and Research - Our World in Data – Accessed 1 December 2021
- ²⁹ BBC News. COVID: Huge protests across Europe over new restrictions. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-59363256> - Accessed 1 December 2021
- ³⁰ Al Jazeera. COVID protests in Netherlands turn violent for a second night. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/11/21/covid-protests-in-netherlands-turn-violent-for-second-night> - Accessed 1 December 2021
- ³¹ Al Jazeera. COVID protests in Netherlands turn violent for a second night. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/11/21/covid-protests-in-netherlands-turn-violent-for-second-night> - Accessed 1 December 2021
- ³² Reuters. Austria powers down public life as fourth COVID-19 lockdown begins. <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/austria-powers-down-public-life-fourth-covid-19-lockdown-begins-2021-11-21/> - Accessed 1 December 2021
- ³³ The Guardian. Tens of thousands protest in Vienna against Austria's COVID restrictions. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/nov/20/austria-covid-restrictions-vienna-protests> - 1 December 2021.
- ³⁴ City of Vienna. Population Level Statistics. Population Statistics - Official Statistics of the City of Vienna (wien.gv.at) – 2 December 2021
- ³⁵ Our World in Data. COVID-19. Coronavirus (COVID-19) Vaccinations - Statistics and Research - Our World in Data – Accessed 1 December 2021
- ³⁶ Our World in Data. Coronavirus [Internet]: Our World in Data; 2021 [cited 30 Nov 2021]. Available from: <https://ourworldindata.org/coronavirus>.
- ³⁷ Our World in Data. Coronavirus [Internet]: Our World in Data; 2021 [cited 30 Nov 2021]. Available from: <https://ourworldindata.org/coronavirus>.
- ³⁸ Our World in Data. Coronavirus [Internet]: Our World in Data; 2021 [cited 30 Nov 2021]. Available from: <https://ourworldindata.org/coronavirus>.
- ³⁹ Our World in Data. Coronavirus [Internet]: Our World in Data; 2021 [cited 30 Nov 2021]. Available from: <https://ourworldindata.org/coronavirus>.
- ⁴⁰ Our World in Data. Coronavirus [Internet]: Our World in Data; 2021 [cited 30 Nov 2021]. Available from: <https://ourworldindata.org/coronavirus>.
- ⁴¹ Classification of Omicron (B.1.1.529): SARS-CoV-2 Variant of Concern [Internet]: World Health Organization; 2021 [cited 30 November 2021]. Available from: [https://www.who.int/news/item/26-11-2021-classification-of-omicron-\(b.1.1.529\)-sars-cov-2-variant-of-concern](https://www.who.int/news/item/26-11-2021-classification-of-omicron-(b.1.1.529)-sars-cov-2-variant-of-concern)
- ⁴² Classification of Omicron (B.1.1.529): SARS-CoV-2 Variant of Concern [Internet]: World Health Organization; 2021 [cited 30 November 2021]. Available from: [https://www.who.int/news/item/26-11-2021-classification-of-omicron-\(b.1.1.529\)-sars-cov-2-variant-of-concern](https://www.who.int/news/item/26-11-2021-classification-of-omicron-(b.1.1.529)-sars-cov-2-variant-of-concern)
- ⁴³ Classification of Omicron (B.1.1.529): SARS-CoV-2 Variant of Concern [Internet]: World Health Organization; 2021 [cited 30 November 2021]. Available from: [https://www.who.int/news/item/26-11-2021-classification-of-omicron-\(b.1.1.529\)-sars-cov-2-variant-of-concern](https://www.who.int/news/item/26-11-2021-classification-of-omicron-(b.1.1.529)-sars-cov-2-variant-of-concern)
- ⁴⁴ Tracking COVID-19 variant Omicron [Internet]: BNO News; 2021[cited 30 November 2021]. Available from: <https://bno.news.com/index.php/2021/11/omicron-tracker/>
- ⁴⁵ Travel restrictions for very high-risk countries [Internet]: Unite Against COVID-19; 2021 [cited 30 November 2021]. Available from: <https://covid19.govt.nz/travel/international-travel-and-transit/travel-restrictions-for-very-high-risk-countries/>
- ⁴⁶ Travel restrictions for very high-risk countries [Internet]: Unite Against COVID-19; 2021 [cited 30 November 2021]. Available from: <https://covid19.govt.nz/travel/international-travel-and-transit/travel-restrictions-for-very-high-risk-countries/>
- ⁴⁷ Two cases of Omicron discovered in Canada from African country not on US banned list [Internet]: Independent; 2021 [cited 01 December 2021]. Available from: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/omicron-covid-variant-canada-nigeria-b1965775.html>
- ⁴⁸ Hong Kong records 3rd case of Omicron variant found in southern Africa [Internet]: Bangkok Post; 2021 [cited 01 December 2021]. Available from: <https://www.bangkokpost.com/world/2223651/hong-kong-records-3rd-case-of-omicron-variant-found-in-southern-africa>
- ⁴⁹ Italy's First Omicron Carrier Probably Arrived Two Weeks Ago [Internet]: Bloomberg; 2021 [cited 01 December 2021]. Available from: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-11-28/italy-s-first-omicron-carrier-probably-arrived-two-weeks-ago>
- ⁵⁰ Omicron variant case found on French territory of Reunion [Internet]: Reuters; 2021 [cited 01 December 2021]. Available from: <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/case-new-omicron-variant-found-french-territory-reunion-media-2021-11-30/>
- ⁵¹ Omicron variant spreads to Europe as UK announces countermeasures [Internet]: The Guardian; 2021 [cited 01 December 2021]. Available from: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/nov/26/omicron-covid-variant-spreads-europe>
- ⁵² Scotland finds 6 cases of Omicron, but no sign its spread is 'sustained' [Internet]: The New York Times; 2021 [cited 01 December 2021]. Available from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/29/world/europe/scotland-finds-6-cases-of-omicron-but-no-sign-its-spread-is-sustained.html>
- ⁵³ WHO urges 'rational' measures against Omicron variant: Live news [Internet]: Aljazeera; 2021 [cited 01 December 2021]. Available from: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/11/30/hong-kong-bans-non-resident-arrivals-over-new-covid-strain-fears>
- ⁵⁴ The omicron variant was in Europe a week before South Africa reported it [Internet]: NPR; 2021 [cited 01 December 2021]. Available from: <https://www.npr.org/2021/11/30/1060025081/omicron-variant-netherlands-europe-south-africa>