



## COVID-19 INDEPENDENT CONTINUOUS REVIEW, IMPROVEMENT AND ADVICE GROUP: MEETING AGENDA

<b>Date &amp; time</b>	Tuesday 25 January, 3.30-5.00pm
<b>Location</b>	<a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82610684360?pwd=SWFnS3NlVjAxRC9Yc0R5NGpkdWl3OT09">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82610684360?pwd=SWFnS3NlVjAxRC9Yc0R5NGpkdWl3OT09</a> Meeting ID: 826 1068 4360 Passcode: 721004
<b>Attendees</b>	Sir Brian Roche (Chair), Debbie Ryan, Dale Bramley, Philip Hill, Rob Fyfe, Amber Bill (DPMC), Martin Rogers (DPMC), Louise Cox (DPMC), Rob Huddart (DPMC, Item 1), Ruth Fairhall (DPMC, Item 2), Beth Hampton (DPMC, Item 2), Ivan Lukatina (DPMC, Item 2), Kay Baxter (DPMC, Item 2)

	Agenda item	Duration	Lead
1.	Reconnecting New Zealanders Programme	30 min	Rob H
2.	Omicron - Presentation and discussion: DPMC Policy	30 min	DPMC Policy
3.	Focus of the Group and preparation for meeting with the Minister	20 min	Brian
4.	Disclosures of interest and confirmation of minutes	5 min	Brian
5.	Any other business	5 min	All



# COVID-19 Independent Continuous Review, Improvement and Advice Group Minutes

<b>Date</b>	Tuesday 25 January 2022	
<b>Time</b>	3:30-5:00pm	
<b>Venue</b>	Zoom	
<b>Attendees</b>	Sir Brian Roche (Chair) Debbie Ryan Dale Bramley Philip Hill Rob Fyfe Amber Bill (DPMC)	Louise Cox (DPMC) Martin Rodgers (DPMC) Rob Huddart (DPMC, Item 1) Ivan Lukatina (DPMC, Item 2) Kay Baxter (DPMC, Item 2) Ruth Fairhall (DPMC, Item 2)
<b>Minute taker</b>	Louise Cox	

## Item 1: Reconnecting New Zealanders programme update

1. Rob Huddart, Reconnecting New Zealanders Portfolio Director provided the regular update on the *Reconnecting New Zealanders* programme.
2. Rob H refreshed the Group on the pre-Christmas announcements on the three steps to reopening. He informed the Group of a Cabinet paper being prepared with advice on reopening timeframes and indicated when announcements of decisions may be made.
3. There was discussion on the design of self-isolation including protocols and testing regime. Rob offered to track down a paper to share with the Group from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment on options for self-isolation and monitoring and compliance.
4. The use of Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) and other testing options for pre-departure and on arrival testing at the border was discussed. Also discussed was the need for flexibility of border settings to quickly adapt to changes as well as thinking around implications for two-way travel with Pacific countries.
5. Rob H offered to have a further conversation with the Group following the Cabinet decision and public announcement, which Sir Brian agreed would be useful.

## **Item 2: Omicron: presentation and discussion**

---

6. Ruth Fairhall, Ivan Lukatina, and Kay Baxter from DPMC's Policy Team attended to present and discuss proposed changes to the COVID-19 Protection Framework (CPF) in response to the Omicron variant.
7. There was discussion on the different projections from modelling from different sources. Sir Brian raised that it would make sense to get some alignment between the modelling if possible.
8. The Policy Team invited feedback from the Group. Observations from the Group and discussions focussed on:
  - the shift to greater responsibility of the individual (and whether individuals have access to the information and materials they need)
  - the role and preparedness of Primary Care and community-based providers, and systems for identifying severe cases of COVID-19 in the home
  - equity issues particularly for Māori and timings of booster eligibility (including the timing between second and booster doses)
  - the importance of slowing down the spread of cases through strong interventions that reduce exposure risk
  - the utility of RATs in business settings.
9. Philip talked to a slide showing the timeline and peaks of Omicron cases in various United Kingdom cities.
10. Sir Brian concluded by saying that the Group is happy to continue to be involved in this space.

## **Item 3: Focus of the Group and preparation for the meeting with the Minister for COVID-19 Response**

---

11. The Group discussed how they have operated and what has been successful and not so successful. Rob raised that direct advice to Ministers has been the most effective. The DPMC Secretariat highlighted key elements of the conversation from the first two agenda items and suggested the Group could put these forward to the Minister as recommended areas to seek assurance.
12. Philip suggested the Group could move to weekly meetings for the next two months in reflection of the pace of Omicron, with advice provided to the Minister for COVID-19 Response following each of the meetings. Sir Brian supported the idea and requested that the key points from this meeting be developed into a prototype advice note. He highlighted that there is a challenge to remain current in the fast-moving pace of the outbreak.

#### **Item 4: Disclosures of interest and confirmation of minutes**

---

13. There were no disclosures of interest and the minutes were confirmed without amendments.

#### **Item 5: Other business**

---

14. The Group discussed their views on Omicron as a phase of the pandemic and whether it could be considered a turning point or not.

15. Philip expressed the view that Omicron doesn't necessarily mark a turning point and what will happen in the future is unclear (whether we will go back to a situation of relative normality or whether a new virulent variant appears). He noted that if morbidity and hospitalisation numbers are unacceptable once COVID-19 is in an endemic state then we will have to do things differently.

16. Dale echoed Philip and added that the World Health Organisation messaging is that there could be a lull after Omicron but that it is not necessarily the end game. He noted positive things that have come out of the pandemic, that have changed the dynamic and can be taken forward as lessons for the future, include:

- the roll-out of the vaccinations at pace
- the unlocking of capacity that has been tied up (e.g. community providers and pharmacies delivering vaccinations).

17. Dale raised that the lists of people waiting for other care is a big issue and that the accumulation from a lack of delivery will have a compounding effect on the other side of the upcoming peak in cases of Omicron, adding that there will be an inevitable equity skew.

18. Debbie expressed there is a lot of hope to be found in the success of the response and the surfacing of equity issues but noted that there will need to be courage in the path forward. She raised issues with reversals in positive gains in certain areas of public health, citing the example of the reversal of breast cancer screening gains over the last two years for Pacific women (breast cancer is the number one killer of Pacific women). She raised that the 'team' mentality that arose from COVID-19 (and the drive for individuals to protect others) may erode and shift to a mentality that a particular issue only affects some individuals. This may affect collective impetus to tackle certain health issues.