



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



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



**MINISTRY OF  
HEALTH**

MANATŪ HAUORA



**NEW ZEALAND  
CUSTOMS SERVICE**  
TE MANA ĀRAI O AOTEAROA



**BORDER EXECUTIVE BOARD**



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



# COVID-19 Response Weekly Report

20 August 2021

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# 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><b>Border Worker Testing Register</b> As of 18 August 2021:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were 251 Persons Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU) covering 13,099 active workers in the BWTR. This has been stable over the past week, with just two more added.</li> <li>• 6,245 of the active workers are listed as working in MIQ facilities and 6,854 at the air or maritime borders.</li> <li>• Of the border workers currently active in the BWTR:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 87 per cent have had two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine</li> <li>- 4 per cent have had one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine</li> <li>- The remaining 9 per cent represent workers in the BWTR who have not been vaccinated yet or have not been matched to their vaccination record due to the absence of NHI-matching in the CIR.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>All border worker monitoring and compliance activity will continue as usual during the heightened alert levels and response period.</p> <p><b>Change to COVID-19 Public Health Response (Required Testing) Order 2020</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A change to the Required Testing Order came into effect on 11.59 pm on 11 August 2021. The border workers who must undergo testing for COVID-19 under Schedule 2 of that Order now have the option of saliva testing as an alternative to swab testing. Border workers who are currently undertaking regular nasal (nasopharyngeal) or throat/front of nostrils (oropharyngeal &amp; bilateral anterior nares) swab tests for surveillance purposes will have the opportunity to undertake regular saliva testing as an alternative.</li> <li>• This change to the Required Testing Order recognises the discomfort that some border workers may have experienced from repeated swab testing. Workers who choose saliva testing must undertake a series of two saliva tests at least two days apart within a seven-day period. This is instead of a single swab every seven or 14 days.</li> <li>• However, a nasopharyngeal or oropharyngeal &amp; bilateral anterior nares swab test will still have to be undertaken, for diagnostic purposes, if a worker is unwell, or to confirm a positive saliva test result.</li> </ul> <p><b>Border Worker Saliva Testing National Rollout</b> Border workers are on the frontline of Aotearoa New Zealand's efforts to keep COVID-19 out of our communities. It's critical to support this workforce as best we can to ensure the best possible outcome for them, their whānau and our communities.</p> <p>Saliva testing gives our border workers an additional option to meet their testing requirement. Saliva testing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is less invasive, more comfortable, and convenient for them; and</li> <li>• Gives them better protection by detecting COVID-19 earlier, especially for those workers already vaccinated and who may not have symptoms; and</li> <li>• Is self-administered and collected from the workplace, making it easier for workers on rotating shifts to undertake testing.</li> </ul> <p>As of 18 August 2021:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20 collection points at 10 sites have been operationalised for saliva testing.</li> <li>• 379 border workers have opted into saliva testing. This number will fluctuate due to the dynamic nature of our border workforce.</li> </ul> <p>Sites that have been set up and have border workers undertaking saliva testing can continue to do so under Alert Level 4.</p> <p>The rollout was paused due to the move to Alert Level 4 in response to the community case of COVID-19 in Auckland. The Ministry continues to engage with border workers and their employers to ensure they are ready when the rollout to operationalise saliva testing recommences.</p> <p><b>Updated Guidance Manual for Border Worker Testing (air border and maritime borders)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A new Guidance Manual combining the previously separate maritime and aviation guidance manuals took effect on 11 August 2021. The manual documents requirements under the Required Testing Order, including those relating to the introduction of saliva testing as a required testing option for relevant border workers.</li> <li>• This manual replaces all previous versions of the different Required Testing Order guidance documents for border workers and is available on the Ministry of Health's website.</li> </ul>

Testing and vaccination of border workforce

PROHIBITED

### Border (Continued)

	Agency	Last Week	This Week	Agency Comment
Two-way Testing and vaccination of border workforce	MBIE	●	●	<p><i>Staff testing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compliance reporting is at 96%, (down 1% from last week), for staff who worked in the week of 9-15 August 2021.</li> <li>4% (222) of workers on site in the week of 9-15 August 2021 are showing in the BWTR as overdue. The Workforce Testing and Vaccination team will be following up with those workers.</li> <li>We have a specific piece of work underway to ensure those listed as 11+ days overdue are either tested or referred to the appropriate agency for management.</li> </ul> <p><i>Vaccinations</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The BWTR shows, of the workforce on site for the week of 9-15 August 2021, 95.7% have had two doses of the vaccine, 2% had one dose and 2.3% have vaccination status 'unknown'.</li> <li>Vaccination follow-ups for those with an 'unknown' status in BWTR in the previous week identified two breaches of the vaccination order.</li> <li>Another possible breach is being investigated.</li> <li>One exception was granted this week.</li> </ul>
	MBIE	●	●	<p><i>Saliva Testing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MIQ workers on a seven-day testing cycle at Jet Park Auckland and workers at Wellington facilities have been invited to opt into the saliva testing regime.</li> <li>Saliva testing is now being progressively rolled out to other MIQ facilities, anticipated through to October.</li> </ul>
	MoH	●	●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>QFT remains suspended with all Australian States and Territories because of the worsening COVID-19 situation there.</li> <li>Australia have confirmed a pause to QFT Travel from New Zealand to Australia from 11:59pm (AEST) 18 August until 11:59pm (AEST) 23 August. This will be reviewed by Australian Officials on 20 August 2021.</li> </ul>
Two-way QFT Niue Australia	MoH	●	●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>s6(b)(i)</li> <li>Work continues regarding Nau Mai Ra and Response.</li> </ul>
	MFAT	●	●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>s6(a)</li> </ul>
Reopening new travel pathways - Pacific Islands	MoH	●	●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In response to the recent COVID-19 cases in Auckland, QFT from New Zealand to the Cook Islands is currently paused from 11:59pm Tuesday 17 August for at least 72 hours.</li> <li>The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade has drafted, with input from multiple agencies, a briefing to advise on the most efficient and proportionate approach for the return of travellers currently in the Cook Islands. Travel will be allowed on scheduled commercial green flights into Auckland. From there, travellers will be allowed to return home throughout New Zealand, including transferring to a domestic air connection, if required. This excludes those travellers in the Cook Islands who have been at a location of interest or otherwise been tested. These travellers are to remain in the Cook Islands until a negative result is received, and if they were at a location of interest, until 14 days has elapsed since they were last at any location of interest.</li> </ul>

### Border (Continued)

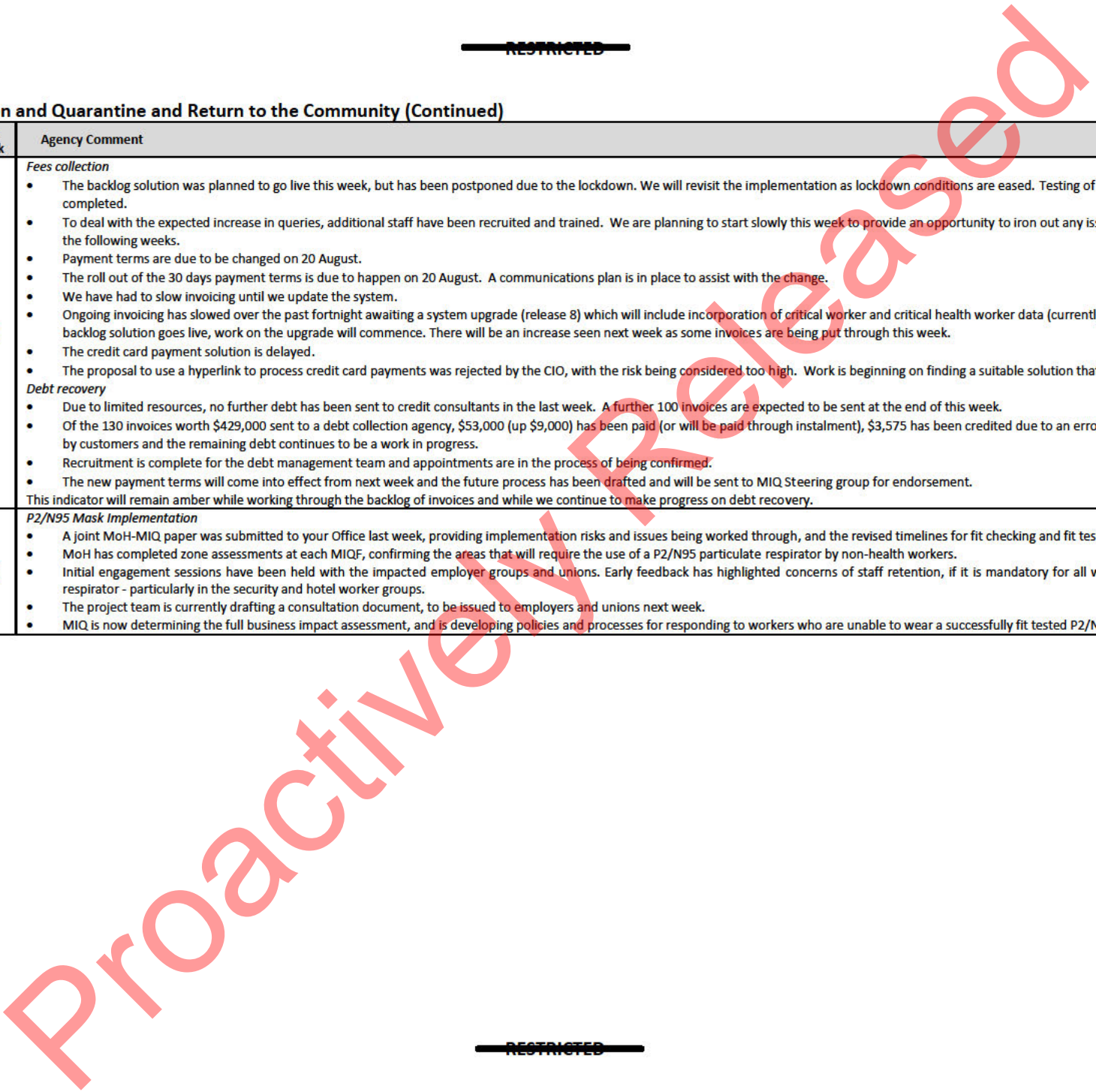
Agency	Last Week	This Week	Agency Comment
Country Risk Assessments			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tonga's Cabinet has signed off on the Arrangement text, s6(b)(i)</li> <li>s6(a)</li> </ul> <p>Officials have suggested in the paper for Cabinet on 23 August that you consider asking Cabinet to agree that fully vaccinated travellers from New Zealand be allowed to spend only 7 days in MIQ when arriving in Samoa. Arrivals from all other places would still require a minimum of 14 days MIQ. Cabinet is also asked to consider our approach to the issue of American Samoa, from which some travellers may currently enter Samoa quarantine-free.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As per Cabinet's direction of 9 August, officials are engaging with Tokelau to put in place arrangements to extend one-way QFT to Tokelau (via Samoa). Health officials assess the health risk from this as low.</li> </ul>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quarantine-free travel from all Australian states and territories was suspended from 11.59pm 23 July 2021 due to the worsening situation in Australia and will be reviewed in September.</li> <li>Indonesia and Fiji are now reclassified as Very High Risk (VHR) countries. As at 11.59pm on 15 August 2021, travel to New Zealand from Fiji will be restricted to New Zealand citizens, their partners and children, and parents of dependent children who are New Zealand citizens.</li> <li>On 9 August 2021, Cabinet approved the 'Reconnecting New Zealanders' paper. In response to this, the QFT Programme team is bringing together the various workstreams to provide an overarching view of this work programme.</li> </ul>

### Managed Isolation and Quarantine and Return to the Community

Agency	Last Week	This Week	Agency Comment
Place and conditions of stay			<p><i>Ventilation systems</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilities continue to balance the urgency of completing ventilation remediation work with the current high demand from returnees for rooms.</li> <li>We continue to work with the remaining eight facilities to obtain their ventilation remediation proposals, noting that a number of these facilities have already commenced remediation work.</li> <li>Remediation work for Grand Mercure (Wellington) is still on track to be complete by late August / early September.</li> <li>Jet Park Auckland has completed their remediation work and re-testing. The re-test results have been analysed by our independent HVAC engineer, and it is confirmed that the ventilation systems at the facilities are now at MIQ preferred conditions. The re-test results will now be shared with members of the Ventilation Remediation Advisory Group to confirm that the works can be closed off.</li> </ul>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As at 19 August, preliminary WGS results shows that a recent returnee from Sydney, Australia is linked to the current outbreak. The returnee arrived in New Zealand on 7 August and was initially completing isolation in Crowne Plaza. They were then transferred to Jet Park following a positive result. This case was hospitalised on 16 August and are currently in a general ward at Middlemore Hospital.</li> <li>An in-facility transmission investigation has commenced which is looking into the returnee case and a travel bubble of three cases in a room isolated near them.</li> <li>From 19 August, Holiday Inn Managed Isolation and Quarantine Facility (MIQ) is solely being used for contacts of cases and symptomatic returnees. This is to allow Jet Park to be used for only confirmed cases.</li> </ul>
			<p><i>Renewing contracts</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The extended terms and conditions have been agreed with 28 facilities.</li> <li>We now have signed the legal contract for 16 facilities, and a further five are currently out for signing. Seven are with MBIE for signing.</li> <li>This indicator will remain amber while we finalise the extended terms and conditions with hotels.</li> <li>With the suspension of QFT with Australia, we are retaining the Ramada on standby for an additional 4-6 weeks should there be a requirement to accept deportees whilst the suspension is on, or if it is extended.</li> </ul>

**Managed Isolation and Quarantine and Return to the Community (Continued)**

Post-managed isolation processes	Agency	Last Week	This Week	Agency Comment
	MBIE	●	●	<p><i>Fees collection</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The backlog solution was planned to go live this week, but has been postponed due to the lockdown. We will revisit the implementation as lockdown conditions are eased. Testing of the new solution has now been completed.</li> <li>To deal with the expected increase in queries, additional staff have been recruited and trained. We are planning to start slowly this week to provide an opportunity to iron out any issues identified, before ramping up in the following weeks.</li> <li>Payment terms are due to be changed on 20 August.</li> <li>The roll out of the 30 days payment terms is due to happen on 20 August. A communications plan is in place to assist with the change.</li> <li>We have had to slow invoicing until we update the system.</li> <li>Ongoing invoicing has slowed over the past fortnight awaiting a system upgrade (release 8) which will include incorporation of critical worker and critical health worker data (currently identified manually). Once the backlog solution goes live, work on the upgrade will commence. There will be an increase seen next week as some invoices are being put through this week.</li> <li>The credit card payment solution is delayed.</li> <li>The proposal to use a hyperlink to process credit card payments was rejected by the CIO, with the risk being considered too high. Work is beginning on finding a suitable solution that will enable credit card receipting.</li> </ul> <p><i>Debt recovery</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Due to limited resources, no further debt has been sent to credit consultants in the last week. A further 100 invoices are expected to be sent at the end of this week.</li> <li>Of the 130 invoices worth \$429,000 sent to a debt collection agency, \$53,000 (up \$9,000) has been paid (or will be paid through instalment), \$3,575 has been credited due to an error, \$41,000 is currently being disputed by customers and the remaining debt continues to be a work in progress.</li> <li>Recruitment is complete for the debt management team and appointments are in the process of being confirmed.</li> <li>The new payment terms will come into effect from next week and the future process has been drafted and will be sent to MIQ Steering group for endorsement.</li> </ul> <p>This indicator will remain amber while working through the backlog of invoices and while we continue to make progress on debt recovery.</p>
	MBIE	●	●	<p><i>P2/N95 Mask Implementation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A joint MoH-MIQ paper was submitted to your Office last week, providing implementation risks and issues being worked through, and the revised timelines for fit checking and fit testing.</li> <li>MoH has completed zone assessments at each MIQF, confirming the areas that will require the use of a P2/N95 particulate respirator by non-health workers.</li> <li>Initial engagement sessions have been held with the impacted employer groups and unions. Early feedback has highlighted concerns of staff retention, if it is mandatory for all workers to wear a P2/N95 particulate respirator - particularly in the security and hotel worker groups.</li> <li>The project team is currently drafting a consultation document, to be issued to employers and unions next week.</li> <li>MIQ is now determining the full business impact assessment, and is developing policies and processes for responding to workers who are unable to wear a successfully fit tested P2/N95 particulate respirator</li> </ul>



**Community Protection**

Agency	Last Week	This Week	
MoH	<span style="color: green;">●</span>	<span style="color: red;">●</span>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On 17 August, the Ministry of Health was notified by the Auckland Regional Public Health Service (ARPHS) of a COVID-19 case in the community (Case A).</li> <li>• Whole genome sequencing (WGS) shows Case A has the Delta variant and is a genomic match to the current New South Wales cluster.</li> <li>• Case A is deemed to have been infectious from Thursday 12 August 2021 and was in the community until Monday 16 August. While infectious, Case A attended work on Thursday 12 August 2021. On Friday 13 August they travelled, with their spouse, to the Coromandel. While in the Coromandel they stayed at an Air B&amp;B and had exposures, including restaurants and a pub, mostly in the town of Coromandel.</li> <li>• As at 9:00am 19 August there are 21 community cases. 12 cases are epidemiologically linked to the current outbreak, 8 have undergoing case interviews to investigate a link and 1 case is unlinked.</li> <li>• There are two cases linked to the outbreak who are currently in hospital.</li> <li>• The National Investigation and Tracing Centre (NITC) and ARPHS have been working at pace to complete contact tracing. As at 8:00am 19 August, 362 contacts have been identified.</li> <li>• Of the 35 Close Plus contacts:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 33 (94%) have been contacted and advised to isolate and be tested</li> <li>○ 18 have returned a test result</li> <li>○ 7 have tested positive</li> <li>○ 11 have tested negative</li> <li>○ 16 result not yet overdue</li> <li>○ 1 pending</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Of the 327 Close contacts:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 263 (80%) have been contacted and advised to isolate and be tested</li> <li>○ 70 have returned a test result</li> <li>○ 1 has tested positive</li> <li>○ 69 have tested negative</li> <li>○ 214 result not yet overdue</li> <li>○ 43 pending</li> </ul> </li> <li>• As at 9:00am 19 August, there are a total of 69 locations of interest published on the Ministry of Health website. Of these, 14 are in Coromandel and 55 are in Auckland.</li> <li>• The Ministry have been working closely with NRHCC (Northern Region Health Coordination Centre) and Waikato (DHB) District Health Board to ensure they are supported in their response to the change to Alert Level 4.</li> <li>• Six additional pop-up testing centres were stood up immediately following the announcement to move to Alert Level 4 and hours of the Auckland Community Testing Centres (CTCs) were extended to 8pm. The hours of CTCs nationwide were extended as well. Sufficient supplies of PPE are available for use in all CTCs.</li> </ul>
MBIE		<span style="color: yellow;">●</span>	<p><i>Possible link between MIQ and community cases</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are supporting ARPHS' investigation into the possible linkage between a positive border case in MIQ and the community cases. This includes the provision of CCTV footage, key card records and staff testing/vaccination information.</li> </ul>

Case investigation, surveillance and testing

Proactively Released

### Vaccination

Implementation and operation	Agency	Last Week	→ This Week	Agency Comment on Status of Focus Area
	MoH	●	●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We continue to remain above our vaccination targets, with the most recent data showing that we are delivering at 102% against DHB plans as at 15 August 2021.</li> <li>As at 17 August 2021, 11,099 vaccinators have completed COVID-19 vaccinator training and 5,978 vaccinators have actively vaccinated in the programme.</li> <li>As of 17 August 2021, Book My Vaccine holds 1,124,190 future bookings at 380 sites.</li> <li>The expected Pfizer delivery of 444,600 doses arrived on 15 August 2021.</li> <li>There has been a change in the interval between doses from three weeks to six weeks. All existing bookings will remain with a three-week interval, but new bookings will have a six-week interval. Those who wish to receive both doses as soon as possible can opt for a three-week interval.</li> <li>Those aged over 40 are eligible to book their vaccines from this Wednesday 18 August 2021. Those aged over 30 will then become eligible 25 August 2021 and everyone aged 16 and over will become eligible on 1 September 2021.</li> <li>Family groups are now able to bring their dependents aged 12-15 years to be vaccinated when their eligible family members receive their vaccine.</li> <li>From 1 September 12-15 year-olds will be able to access the vaccine independently as part of the sequencing framework.</li> </ul>

### Resurgence Planning and Response

Resurgence planning including review of the response	Agency	Last Week	→ This Week	Agency Comment on Status of Focus Area
	DPMC	●	●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The current response is likely to cause a delay to the next version of the National Response Plan (NRP) Q4, and provides an opportunity to ensure the plan is aligned for a Delta variant and rapid lessons identified incorporated into the plan.</li> <li>Response planning is producing frequent action plans for the wider AOG system to capture operational activities and taskings underway.</li> </ul>
	MoH	●	●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An initial public health risk assessment completed at 3:30pm 17 August deemed the public health risk for New Zealand to be high.</li> <li>At 6:00pm 17 August, the Prime Minister announced that all of New Zealand will move to Alert Level 4 from 11:59pm 17 August. This will be in place for at least 7 days for Auckland and Coromandel region and for at least 3 days for the rest of New Zealand.</li> <li>An additional public health risk assessment will be completed on 19 August to review the Alert Level status for New Zealand.</li> </ul>
Readiness planning	DPMC	●	●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>s6(a)</li> <li>The Delta Readiness workshop held 10 Aug led to very timely work conducted by DPMC Planning on a national action plan.</li> </ul>
Domestic/ QFT response	MFAT	●	●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus in Cook Islands has shifted to the testing of recent arrivals following NZ's shift to AL4. s6(a)</li> </ul>
	DPMC	●	●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Domestic Outbreak in Auckland has resulted in placing all of NZ in AL4 for a minimum of 3 days.</li> <li>In addition to system response as per the Q4 NRP, there is work underway to operationalise options for a domestic boundary allow for two different AL within the same island.</li> </ul>
	MBIE	●	●	<p><i>QFT Travel Pause</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following your agreement to the plan for September and October, in regards to Australia and NSW, we have begun working with airlines to arrange red flights back from Australia from 1 September.</li> <li>Additional vouchers have been released for the remainder of August and early September for general allocation.</li> </ul>



## 2. COVID-19 Insights

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

#### 2.1.1 Rapid Antigen Testing

##### *Introduction*

Polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing remains the gold standard of COVID-19 testing in most instances due to its reliability and accuracy, (it is 95% accurate in detecting the virus and 96% accurate for samples with no virus<sup>1</sup>). There are, however, many examples from around the world of circumstances where “rapid” testing is being utilised. Rapid testing has been used as a means of identifying cases and limiting the scale of COVID-19 outbreaks; and to provide proof of no infection for access to workplaces, education, amenities, and for travel. Rapid testing is also being used by individuals to check their own infection status. The following insight details some examples of the use of rapid testing overseas. It is intended to be brief, and more information can be provided if required.

##### *Rapid Antigen Testing*

Rapid antigen testing (RAT) is a common method of rapid COVID-19 testing. RAT analyses a saliva or nasal swab sample. Results are produced in around 15-20 minutes. RAT does not require laboratory equipment, and as such can be carried out at the point of care (where the test is taken, rather than in a laboratory). The benefits, however, are counterbalanced by a reduction in accuracy when compared to lab-based PCR testing. RAT will identify on average 70% of those people with COVID-19 who are symptomatic.<sup>2</sup> As RAT works best at high viral loads, it is at its most effective when testing COVID-19 patients at their most contagious.<sup>3</sup>

Despite the limitations in accuracy, RAT has been utilised in a number of situations where rapidity in gaining results is more important than accuracy, as detailed below.

##### *Limiting the Scale of COVID-19 Outbreaks*

RAT has been used to quickly identify as many cases as possible during a significant outbreaks. In Slovakia, a country similar in population to New Zealand, RAT was used to detect cases during a major wave of the virus. An initial pilot in four of Slovakia’s affected counties, followed by two rounds of nationwide mass testing, took place in October and November 2020. In total there were over 5 million tests, administered by a combination of the military, volunteers and health workers, with 66% of the population tested in round 1 and 61% of the population tested in round 2. The testing found over 50,000 COVID-19 positive cases. Prevalence of COVID-19 fell by 58% within a week of the testing campaign, with modelling indicating that this rate of decline could not have been caused solely by control measures and therefore must be partially the result of testing and subsequent isolation.<sup>4</sup>

In New South Wales, authorities are introducing RAT in care facilities, including for both workers and visitors, to find cases before a major outbreak occurs. On 16 August testing was rolled out at the Uniting Bankstown Aged Care Facility, which will be extended to any other facilities that express an interest.<sup>5</sup> Federal Health Minister Greg Hunt said that the fast turn-around of tests was particularly useful in the fight against the Delta outbreak in New South Wales, given the increased transmissibility of the variant.<sup>6</sup>

Widespread use of RAT had previously been restricted in Australia due to its lower reliability compared to PCR testing.<sup>7</sup> The use of RAT has not been universally accepted in Australia with Chief Health Officer for the State of Victoria, Brett Sutton, saying it would not provide much additional value.<sup>8</sup>

One draw-back of using any kind of mass testing is the potential for false positives. This is particularly an issue in populations where the prevalence of a disease is low. In these low prevalence populations, there is a higher proportion of false positives amongst all positive test results.<sup>9</sup> This is however mitigated in tests that have a high specificity, such as RAT which has a specificity of 99.9%.<sup>10</sup> Specificity in the context of medical testing

measures the proportion of people who test negative among all those who actually do not have that disease, compared to those who return a false positive.

#### *To Provide Access Workplaces, Education Facilities, Amenities and for Travel*

There are number of other examples worldwide where RAT has been used to monitor the health situation of workers or event attendees. In Singapore, it was announced on 8 August that it would become mandatory for construction workers to take a RAT before attending a building site.<sup>11</sup> In Japan, the Tokyo Medical Association is carrying out a trial of RAT which would allow people to enter amenities such as bars and hotels, and could be rolled out across the city.<sup>12</sup> In the United States, RAT programs have been utilised in places such as schools, prisons, airports, and universities. The University of Arizona, for example, began a program in 2020 of testing students once a month, with some students who live in dormitories with outbreaks, tested weekly.<sup>13</sup>

The use of RAT is being supported by the New South Wales government in selected workplaces.<sup>14</sup> There are also plans to use RAT for year 12 students, to ensure they could return to schools mid-August, before their end of year exams.<sup>15</sup> However, these plans have been put on hold due to the 7 day lock down imposed in the region.<sup>16</sup>

In Israel, health authorities have set up 120 RAT centres across the country amid a rise in infections, with the ultimate aim of preventing another lockdown.<sup>17</sup> The results can be used by unvaccinated citizens to obtain a “Green Pass” in order to access certain amenities.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, in France, members of the public can only enter restaurants, cafes, bars and some modes of transportation, if they hold a “Pass Sanitaire” (health pass). Passes can be acquired by those who have not been vaccinated by presenting a negative result gained through RAT<sup>19</sup>

RAT is also accepted in a number of countries as part of border restrictions. For example, France, Greece, Iceland, Italy, and the United Kingdom<sup>20</sup> will all accept a negative antigen test as part of pre-departure testing assuming other circumstances are met. However, other destinations such as Canada, specify that antigen tests are not acceptable.<sup>21</sup>

There are also examples of the use of RAT on arrival at borders. In Greece, a system of random screening of travellers is in place, regardless of vaccination status, includes an antigen test. Travellers who return a positive test are taken to quarantine hotels for 10 days and undergo further health checks.<sup>22</sup>

#### *At Home Testing by Individuals to Check Their Own Infection Status*

RAT can be used at home in a number of countries, allowing individuals to check their own infection status. For example, in the United States there are nine different tests approved by the Food and Drug Administration, which people can purchase and use at home.<sup>23</sup> In Israel, the government rolled out a pilot for pharmacies to sell at home antigen tests, with the hope that members of the public will take the test before attending gatherings or before meeting vulnerable people.<sup>24</sup> In the United Kingdom, antigen tests can be ordered online through a government website, however those with symptoms or who receive a positive antigen test are recommended to get a PCR test which is more accurate. Those who can get tested either through work or school in the United Kingdom are recommended to do so.<sup>25</sup> Conversely, it remains illegal to supply or advertise COVID-19 tests for at home use in Australia under therapeutic goods legislation.<sup>26</sup>

#### **PCR Testing**

PCR testing requires a nasal swab from the back of the nose which is then analysed using laboratory equipment, which in many instances also means that samples are taken to a centralised laboratory for analysis, slowing the process down. Currently most PCR testing returns a result in a number of hours, much slower than the standard antigen test, and it also has a higher associated cost.<sup>27</sup>

There are a number of projects at varying stages of development aimed at speeding up the PCR testing process, by making the equipment smaller and more portable.<sup>28 29 30 31</sup> An example of a commercially available rapid PCR testing system is the Vivalytic Rapid Testing system, produced by the German multinational engineering and technology company Bosch. The test set up consists of a compact analysis unit and test cartridges the size of a smartphone. Testing produces results in 39 minutes.<sup>32</sup> Vaccinated travellers who are now allowed to enter Canada from the United States are still required to hold a negative PCR test, taken with 72 hours of arrival,

whilst RAT is not accepted.<sup>33</sup> Travellers are now however being offered rapid PCR testing at pharmacies in the United States, which provides results in approximately 30 minutes.<sup>34</sup>

#### *Other Testing Techniques*

There are a number of other COVID-19 testing techniques with varying degrees of rapidity and sensitivity. This includes antibody testing, pooled or batch testing, and holographic microscopy, which are briefly explained below.

Antibody testing, is used to detect antibodies in the blood, for example from a finger prick test, and can be carried out at the point of care, and produce a result in a number of minutes. It is not a testing method that can be used to identify infectious or infected individuals because it can only detect previous infection (it measures antibodies) and does not provide proof of an active infection.<sup>35</sup>

Pooled or batch testing can be used to speed up the overall pace of PCR by testing a number of samples combined into one test run. Testing of up to 64 people at once is possible through this technique.<sup>36</sup> If the batch shows a positive, then further testing is required to identify the positive sample.

The technique of holographic microscopy is currently under development in the United States, which involves processing a holographic image of a saliva or blood sample and can provide a result within 30 minutes.<sup>37</sup>

## 2.2 Insight of Note Written by the Ministry of Health

### 2.2.1 COVID-19 International Perspectives: 17 August 2021

The World Health Organisation warns that the world is still in the acute phase of the pandemic, with more COVID-19 cases reported in the first five months of 2021 than in the whole of 2020.<sup>38</sup> Inadequate testing and low vaccination rates worldwide are exacerbating disease transmission and overwhelming local health systems, while leaving the whole world vulnerable to new variants.<sup>1</sup>

Although countries with high vaccination rates, such as the UK, US and Canada, are seeing marked reductions in the proportion of cases becoming severely unwell with COVID-19, worldwide daily new COVID-19 cases have increased for the eighth week in a row.<sup>39</sup> This week alone, over 4.5 million new cases and over 60,000 new deaths were reported.<sup>2</sup> 206 million COVID-19 cases have been reported since the pandemic started, which constitutes more than 2.6% of the global population.<sup>2</sup> The Delta variant, including AY.3, continue to increase in prevalence worldwide.<sup>40</sup>

The following summary includes situation updates from Fiji, Singapore and Iran. In the past fortnight, Fiji had 125 acute cases per 1,000 arrivals. As at 11:59pm 15 August, Fiji was designated as very high-risk and travel from the country will be restricted to New Zealand citizens, their partners and children, and parents of dependent children who are New Zealand Citizens. Singapore is currently planning a phased reopening of the border which is contextually relevant given it is a main transit hub for arrival into New Zealand. Iran has also been included as New Zealand has a moderate number of travellers arriving from the country, and the COVID-19 situation is deteriorating.

*Unless stated, all figures are the most recent as at the time of reporting.*

#### *Fiji*

- New reported daily COVID-19 cases in Fiji have been declining for the past week, however the true trajectory of new cases is unclear. The 7-day rolling average number of cases is 445, down from 815 in the previous week.<sup>2</sup>
- There are 23,831 reported active cases. While most active cases were reported in the Central Division, the other major outbreak in the Western Division continues to grow. Both divisions make up the main island of Viti Levu.<sup>41</sup>
- Reported deaths have declined, the 7-day average of new deaths is down from the peak in late July. To date, total deaths in this outbreak are at 366.<sup>1</sup>

- There are currently 264 COVID-19 patients in hospital and intensive care units in the Central and Western Divisions are at full capacity.<sup>4</sup>
- 91% of the eligible population have received at least one vaccine dose and 36% are fully vaccinated.<sup>42</sup>

Fiji's Permanent Health Secretary stated that the drop in reported cases should not be misinterpreted as a reduction in actual cases, as they are no longer using daily case numbers to track the outbreak.<sup>43</sup> Changes to Fiji's testing strategy were announced on 21 July 2021. Testing priority is given to those at greater risk of severe COVID-19.<sup>6</sup> As such, the true prevalence of COVID-19 in Fiji is likely to be higher.<sup>6</sup> Testing has more than halved in the past 3 weeks whilst test positivity is increasing; the 7-day average of daily tests is 1.7 tests per 1,000 population and test positivity is 36.4%.<sup>44</sup> However, test positivity rates are highly variable across the country.

The Fijian government is considering lifting the national curfew and removing the Lami-Nausori containment zone, given there are increasing numbers of cases on both sides of the border.<sup>45</sup> Lowered restrictions will depend of the extent of community transmission and vaccination.<sup>8</sup>

#### *Singapore*

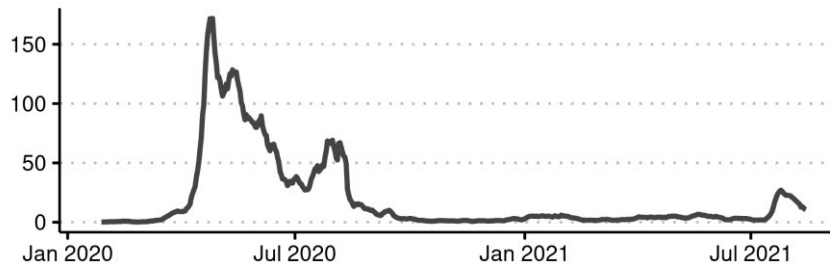
- New daily cases in Singapore are declining after a peak of 195 reported cases in one day in late July, to a 7-day rolling average of 58.<sup>2</sup>
- Deaths remain low, Singapore has only reported 42 deaths since the start of the pandemic.<sup>2</sup>
- Testing rates in Singapore are declining but remain high; the seven-day average number of tests was 10 tests per 1,000 population and test positivity was 0.2%.<sup>2</sup>
- High levels of community testing and swift contact tracing remains ongoing in Singapore to limit clusters.<sup>46</sup> Rapid antigen tests are being encouraged and distributed by the Ministry of Health and trials are ongoing in the community for COVID-19 breath testing.<sup>47</sup>
- 71% of the population are now fully vaccinated and an additional 6% have received their first dose.<sup>2</sup>

Singapore's Health Minister has announced a cautious four-part plan for easing of COVID-19 restrictions, with a differentiated approach for vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals, looking to a future where COVID-19 is endemic.<sup>9</sup> From 9 August 2021, the 'Preparation Phase' began, meaning those who are vaccinated may now attend large events and dine-in in small groups at restaurants, as well as easing work from home requirements.<sup>9</sup> More cases will also begin to be admitted to community care facilities rather than hospitals.<sup>9</sup> At the border, vaccinated individuals from lower risk countries will be able to quarantine at their place of residence rather than managed isolation.<sup>9</sup>

When 80% of the population are fully vaccinated, likely in early September, 'Transition Stage A' will begin. This will further increase privileges for vaccinated individuals and border controls will be less strict.<sup>9</sup> Domestic surveillance will be increased, including an expansion of wastewater testing. 'Transition Stage B' will see further community and border reopening, though rules will likely remain more stringent for unvaccinated individuals.<sup>9</sup> The final 'COVID-Resilient Nation' stage will be the new normal for Singapore.<sup>9</sup> However, the country should prepare for higher levels of severe illness and death from COVID-19.<sup>9</sup> As such, maintaining health system capacity will be a priority.<sup>9</sup>

## COVID-19 cases in Singapore

### Daily new cases per million population



Source: Our World in Data, values are weekly rolling means

#### Iran

- New daily COVID-19 cases reported in Iran have continued to rise in the past week; the 7-day rolling average number of cases is 38,156.<sup>2</sup> This is Iran's fifth wave of COVID-19 cases, though this is the largest and the first linked to the Delta variant.<sup>2</sup>
- The 7-day rolling average of tests per 1,000 people is 1.11 and the test positivity rate is 40.20%, indicating infections are likely far higher.<sup>2</sup> Critical medical therapies such as intravenous fluids, oxygen tanks and antiviral medications are in short supply at hospitals and pharmacies.<sup>48</sup>
- 12% of the population have received one vaccine and an additional 3.8% are fully vaccinated.<sup>2</sup> Vaccination centres regularly see long queues that at times stretch for kilometres with waiting times taking hours.<sup>2</sup>

Iran announced a six-day country-wide lockdown beginning 16 August 2021.<sup>49</sup> In addition to stay-at-home orders, the government have imposed a one-week intra-city travel ban and a two-week driving ban from 15 August, except for essential vehicles.<sup>12</sup> However, authorities will allow Shi'ite Muslim mourning ceremonies, now underway for the holy month of Muharram, to continue.<sup>12</sup>

Vaccines have so far been received from China, Russia, India, Cuba, Japan and COVAX.<sup>12</sup> More than one million doses of *COVIran Barekat*, Iran's first locally developed vaccine, have been administered, but large-scale production has hit several delays.<sup>12</sup>

### 3. Ministry of Health



#### 3.1 Items to Note/Updates

##### 3.1.1 COVID-19 Vaccine and Immunisation Programme

As of 23.59, 17 August 2021, 2,610,013 vaccinations have been delivered, with 954,415 people fully vaccinated. Of those fully vaccinated, nine percent are Māori, six percent are Pasifika, and 15 percent are Asian.

As of 17 August 2021, 143,783 Māori have received their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, which represents nine percent of the total population.

398 vaccination sites were active as at 17 August 2021.

The production plan for the next seven days, is 306,740 doses across New Zealand. It is important to note that this figure is based on DHB plans and does not take into account the lower vaccination numbers that may take place due to the need for physical distancing at vaccination sites during alert level 4.

##### **Workforce**

As of 17 August 2021, 11,099 vaccinators have completed COVID-19 vaccinator training and 5,978 vaccinators have actively vaccinated in the programme so far.

##### **Alert Level 4**

The COVID-19 vaccination campaign was temporarily suspended following the move to Alert Level 4 at 23.59 on 17 August 2021. DHB contingency plans have now been activated and the vaccination programme resumed from 08.00 on 19 August 2021.

Vaccination sites will be operating under Alert Level 4 conditions. This means in some cases they will have fewer people coming through to enable physical distancing.

People with appointments booked have been advised to attend their appointments unless they are contacted by their DHB.

##### **Group 4 rollout**

The interval between doses has been extended from three weeks to six weeks. This will enable more people to receive the initial protection afforded by the first dose of the Pfizer vaccine sooner.

All existing bookings will remain with a three-week interval, but new bookings will have a six-week interval. Those who wish to receive both doses as soon as possible will have the option for a three-week interval.

To accommodate the change in interval between doses, those aged over 40 became eligible to book their vaccines from 18 August 2021. Those aged over 30 will become eligible on 25 August 2021. From 1 September 2021 everyone eligible to receive a vaccine will be able to book an appointment.

##### **Vaccination for 12 to 15 year-olds**

Family groups are now able to bring their dependents aged 12 to 15 years to be vaccinated when their eligible family members receive their vaccine.

From 1 September 2021, 12 to 15 year-olds will be able to access the vaccine independently as part of the sequencing framework.

## **Book My Vaccine**

As of 17 August 2021, Book My Vaccine holds 1,124,190 future bookings at 380 sites.

## **Supply**

The expected Pfizer delivery of 444,600 doses arrived on 15 August 2021. s9(2)(b)(i)

## **Equity**

Vaccination of Disability Support Services (DSS) clients is underway across New Zealand. DHBs have developed plans for notifying and inviting DSS clients to receive their vaccination, with the majority working towards offering a first dose to clients by 31 August 2021.

DHBs have commenced planning in partnership with disability organisations for disability-specific vaccination events. These will be for DSS and non-DSS supported disabled people and their whānau.

The uptake of the vaccine for those aged over 55 in most ethnicities is broadly comparable or higher than the uptake rates of New Zealanders of European heritage.

## **Workplace vaccinations**

Both workplace vaccination pilots are now underway at Mainfreight and Fonterra. The Warehouse commenced vaccinations on 16 August 2021.

The Ministry of Health continues to review the expressions of interest by additional workplaces and has held preliminary discussions with Foodstuffs North Island and Foodstuffs South Island.

## **General practice and pharmacy rollout**

Feedback from both general practice and community pharmacy continues to be positive and more primary care providers are joining the programme every week. More than 20 percent of general practices are now administering COVID-19 vaccinations.

## **Mass vaccination events**

Following the success of the first mass vaccination event, DHBs are considering how these events could supplement their current sites for higher uptake.

## **Rollout of the vaccine to Polynesia**

The Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau are forecast to conclude their general population vaccine rollout programmes by the week commencing 23 August 2021, which includes the completion of Palmerston Island. We are expecting the Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau to have fully vaccinated over 90 percent of their eligible population.

We continue to work closely with the Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau as they plan to vaccinate the 12 to 15-year-old cohort. All three have indicated they are awaiting New Zealand decision-making for this cohort to inform their own.

Samoa, Tonga and Fiji are interested in using Pfizer for the 12 to 17 years age group. Approval to donate will be sought from Cabinet in August 2021.

New Zealand continues to progress the COVAX pathway for donation of up to 376,000 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine to Pacific countries, including Fiji. s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

We anticipate that these vaccines doses will be dispatched from AstraZeneca in early September 2021. Any surplus from this amount plus the remainder of the shipment (approximately 500,000 doses) will be un-earmarked for other COVAX Advance Market Commitment countries.

### 3.2 Technical Advisory Group: Update

The COVID-19 Technical Advisory Group (TAG) did not meet in the week commencing 9 August 2021. The next COVID-19 TAG meeting is scheduled for 20 August 2021, and an update will be provided in a future Weekly Report.

The COVID-19 Vaccine Technical Advisory Group (CVTAG) did not meet in the week commencing 9 August 2021. The next CVTAG meeting was scheduled for 17 August 2021, and an update will be provided in a future Weekly Report.

### 3.3 Upcoming Communications Issues and Activities

*As at 18 August 2021*

Date	Activity	Lead agency	Comms material	Ministerial Involvement
17 Aug 21	Engagement with border workers and their employers to operationalise saliva testing continues. In addition to the six ports already operationalised, ports in Christchurch, Wellington and Timaru will roll out saliva testing this week.	Ministry of Health	Communications, stakeholder engagement	No
w/c 23 Aug 21	Review of June Sydney to Wellington traveller case.	Ministry of Health	Communications materials, questions and answers	Yes
18 June ongoing	Delta Community cases in Auckland. Locations of interest, Section 70s.	Ministry of Health	Locations of interest, communications material, questions and answers	Yes

### 3.4 Upcoming Publications

Title	Date	Context	ELT contact
Publication: COVID-19 Outbreak Response Toolkit for Aged Residential Care (ARC)	End of August 2021	This Toolkit supports ARC providers to prepare, respond to, and review an outbreak of COVID-19 in their facility.	Clare Perry, Deputy Director-General, Health System Improvement and Innovation, s9(2)(a)



## 4. Managed Isolation and Quarantine Weekly Report

### 4.1 Top Item to Note

#### 4.1.1 Investigation into MIQ link with the community cases

On 18 August, we were notified of a possible link between a positive case in MIQ and the recent occurrence of community cases.

ARPHS is investigating this link and how any possible transmission may have occurred. We are actively supporting this investigation through the provision of key information.

A summary of the preliminary information we have gathered has been provided to your office. We will keep your office informed as we know more.

#### 4.1.2 QFT Travel Pause and NSW Outbreak

Following your approval of AUS-003, border agencies have been working to arrange the resumption of red flights from Australia in September.

Qantas have confirmed that they will not be running red flights from Australia in September s9(2)(b)(i) This means that Air NZ will be the only airline running red flights. Initial discussions have been around flights on 1 September (focused on people with an urgent need to travel) and 5, 12 and 19 September with departure ports to be confirmed.

Given the events of this week, we have been working with your office on how and when this is to be communicated, with the priority being to respond to people in Australia who are lodging applications for emergency allocations. We will update you further on this at the Agency meeting on 23 August.

#### 4.1.3 Proactive Release of Report into Rapid Review of Border Worker Testing / Vaccinations

Over the next two weeks, the Border Executive Board Secretariat is in the process of proactively releasing the final report from phase one of the Rapid Review of border worker testing and vaccinations. Supporting material is being developed in anticipation of that release.

### 4.2 Operational Update

#### 4.2.1 Capacity Update

As of 10am 18 August 2021, there is currently no availability on MIAS. As of 18 August 2021, a total of 30,778 rooms have been released for the period of June through to the end of November 2021. 108,949 returnees have secured a date to return home during the period of March through to the end of November 2021.

Returnees from over 180 countries have successfully secured a voucher to travel during this period. Over the past week, the booking portal has averaged almost 10,000 users per day, with over 1 million page views per day. Last week, we re-released approximately 400 rooms for August that were unused from tranche three of New South Wales managed returns (9-21 August 2021).

We have observed that users tend to secure any date as they become available, and then decide later if they can make the date work, resulting in many rooms being regularly re-released back into circulation.

#### 4.2.2 Vaccination of Frontline Staff Update

For workers on site for the week 9-15 August 2021, BWTR shows 95.7% had two doses of the vaccine, 2% had one dose and the remaining 2.3% (130 workers) had vaccine status 'unknown'.

Of the 130 workers with an 'unknown' vaccination status, 83 still require an NHI match. The Workforce Testing team is investigating the remaining 47 workers to confirm vaccination status.

Vaccination follow-ups for those with an 'unknown' status in BWTR in the previous week, identified two breaches of the vaccination order. One worker was allowed on site at the Grand Millennium in Auckland

on 11 August when they had had just one dose of the vaccine (they should have had a second dose). They have been advised they cannot come back on site until they have had their second dose of the vaccine. A second unvaccinated person was allowed on site at the Sudima Rotorua on the 4 August. Site management will retrain the staff involved on standard operating procedures.

Another possible breach is being investigated, it appears a worker that was one day overdue for their second dose of vaccine went to three sites on 13 August. They should have had their second dose by 12 August. We are still investigating but the worker has been advised they cannot go onsite until they have had their second dose of the vaccine.

There was one exception granted last week. This was for a plumber to enter the Grand Mercure MIF in Wellington to fix an issue with the hotel's pipes. Water was unavailable for 40 returnees and contingency plans were in place to move these returnees to the Bay Plaza MIF. The plumber was able to fix the issue. The plumber has been informed of their obligations around testing with follow up through the usual assurance activities if this does not occur.

Of the 64 workers who were NHI-matched but showing vaccination status 'unknown' in the 2-8 August 2021 Weekly Report:

- 46 have been confirmed as compliant with the vaccine order (42 have had 2 doses, 4 have had 1 dose and within 35 days of becoming an affected person);
- 12 are compliant but have been passed to MOH for investigation as potential NHI issues;
- 1 worker was vaccinated in the US, evidence is on the BWTR;
- 4 workers have been contacted and we are awaiting a response (3 of these are NZDF workers so are most likely vaccinated it's just not pulling through to BWTR);
- 1 worker was in breach of the Order as noted above.

#### 4.2.3 Staff Testing Update – Compliance Statistics for 9-15 August 2021

Reporting from BWTR shows that 5,566 people undertook work in our facilities last week and the table below shows how many of those workers were compliant with the Testing Order, overdue for a test or still need to be NHI-matched.

Workers on site 2 –8 August 2021	Total	Percentage of total NHI-matched workers on site
Compliant NHI-matched workers	5,261	96%
Overdue NHI-matched workers	222	4%
Need NHI-match	83	
Workers on site	5,566	

Of the 222 overdue, 110 of those are less than 4 days overdue, 85 are 4-10 days overdue and 27 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.

Of the 83 that still need an NHI-match, 36 were created in BWTR in the last 7 days.

19 workers were previously reported as '11+ days overdue' in the report for the week 2-8 August 2021. We have confirmed 12 of them have been swabbed, another is compliant but have been referred to MoH due to a possible NHI-matching issue, three have been instructed to be swabbed, two have been contacted and we are awaiting a response, and one has been escalated to MOH due to ongoing compliance issues.

We continue to follow up with workers who are 11+ days overdue, particularly those previously employed workers who have not been on site recently. 83 workers with on-going non-compliance have been referred to MoH for action (20 referred this week).

#### 4.2.4 Saliva Testing Update

MIQ workers on a seven-day testing cycle at Jet Park Auckland and workers at Wellington facilities have been invited to opt-into the saliva testing regime.

As at 13 August 2021, 19 MIQ workers have requested to be opted-in across the three sites. Saliva testing is now being progressively rolled out to other MIQ facilities, with a phased approach throughout August to October.

The phased roll out schedule takes into account the additional demand facilities are under due to NSW returnees, while being able to apply lessons from the initial roll outs, and enable uptake of the regime by MIQ workers.

#### 4.2.5 Ventilation Update

Facilities continue to balance the urgency of completing ventilation remediation work with the current high demand for rooms by returnees. In the last week, due to the high room demand, two facilities have moved out forecasted completion dates for their ventilation remediation work. This work is still in progress for both facilities, and is taking longer as there are less empty rooms week-by-week, which allows for remediation work and final retesting to be completed. We continue to work with the remaining eight facilities to obtain their ventilation remediation proposals, noting that a number of these facilities have already commenced remediation work.

Remediation work for Grand Mercure (Wellington) is still on track to be complete in late August/early September. Jet Park Auckland has completed their remediation work and re-testing. The re-test results have been analysed by our independent HVAC engineer, and it is confirmed that the ventilation systems at the facilities are now at MIQ preferred conditions. The re-test results will now be shared with members of the Ventilation Remediation Advisory Group to confirm that the works can be closed off. Our independent HVAC engineer has reviewed and provided feedback on 21 of the remediation proposals received to date.

The engineer is also analysing re-test results received from facilities following the completion of remediation of entire wings or facilities (i.e. final test results), to assess whether MIQ preferred conditions have been achieved. The review of the re-test results for two further facilities was completed last week, and an additional three are in progress. A further remediation proposal was reviewed by MIQ's Ventilation Remediation Advisory Group (VRAG) last week, bringing the total number reviewed to date to 19.

Two further proposals will be reviewed by VRAG this week. The whole of portfolio schedule view for the ventilation remedial work was reviewed by VRAG last week, and will be presented to the MIQ Ventilation Steering Group this week.

MoH have secured the additional funding for the deployment of 260 air filtration units into lifts and corridors for the remaining eight facilities. A planning session with MoH is scheduled for this week, to agree responsibilities for the deployment of the remaining units.

#### 4.2.6 Ombudsman Update

We received four Ombudsman notifications this week. We are currently responding to:

- A request for MBIE to reconsider its response to another final opinion response. You also received this letter.
- A request for MBIE to comment on mariners' participation with MIAS – seeking an update on previous information that was provided.
- A fee waiver information request.
- A request for information about Emergency Allocation criteria.

The Chief Executive of MBIE met with the Ombudsman on 28 July 2021, and there is a follow-up meeting with MBIE officials on 23 August 2021. You are scheduled to meet with the Ombudsman on 1 September 2021. An Aide Memoire is being prepared to support your engagement. Carolyn Tremain has offered to attend this meeting with you, if required.

OPCAT - we received the final report for The Ramada (currently decommissioned) on 4 August 2021, and we provided a response on 18 August 2021. The OPCAT Thematic Report was published on 17 August 2021 at 2pm. We proactively provided the OPCAT team with our updated SOPs this week.

### 4.3 Large Group Arrivals Update

#### 4.3.1 Summary of approved group arrivals as at 18 August 2021 (to December 2021)

Group	Date of Arrival	Allocation Approved	Final number of rooms allocated	Comments
RSE	7 Aug 2021 (Flight 3)	150	116 (148 pax)	The third cohort of 148 RSE workers arrived on 7 August 2021. 150 RSE workers are confirmed for flight four.
	24 Aug 2021 (Flight 4)	150	116 (150 pax)	Working through the implications of decision to potentially continue RSEs through September plus one cohort in November. Space is being held for these flights.
Construction Accord	Aug 2021	60	15 (19 pax)	Construction Accord did not take up the allocation in June or July.
	Sep 2021	60	48 (57 pax)	
	Early Nov	60	TBC	September allocation includes 8 family groups (from couples up to family of 5), translating into approximately 48 rooms.
	Early Dec	60	TBC	
Netball – English Roses	27 Aug 2021	30	25 (TBC)	IPC have approved the off-site SMIF (Sports managed isolation facility) for off-site training. The exemption to train is expected to be signed this week. Five players from Australia are scheduled to travel to New Zealand with the team. Flights are yet to be confirmed but likely that they will travel to Singapore to meet the ex UK contingent. Netball New Zealand and Netball England are working through the immigration requirements for these travellers - delays in applying for visas poses a risk.
Refugees – Intake 2	30 Jul 2021	21	11 (21 pax)	s9(2)(a)
	5 Aug 2021	37	20 (37 pax)	
	7 Aug 2021	8	4 (8 pax)	
	10 Aug 2021	15	10 (15 pax)	
	13 Aug 2021	1	1 (1 pax)	
	23 Aug 2021	2	2 (2 pax)	
	27 Aug 2021	17	9 (17 pax)	
Refugees – Intake 3	6-19 Sep 2021	116	TBC	
Refugees – Intake 4	16-31 Oct 2021	111	TBC	
Refugees – Intake 5	20 Dec 2021 – 2 Jan 2022	108	TBC	
Returning Olympic Athletes (3 cohorts)	2 Aug 2021	200	163 (168 pax)	The third and final cohort arrived on 10 August. The first cohort of 168 left MIQ on 16 August 2021. There have been a number of compliance issues that have been dealt with directly by the RIQ with NZOC and SportNZ.
	8 Aug 2021	200	113 (114 pax)	
	10 Aug 2021	200	145 (148 pax)	
Paralympic athletes	Sep 2021	100	5	There are 73 returnees who have booked their spaces via the online public system in addition to the five using the group allocation. Returnees include athletes, management and support staff. Detailed planning is underway to ensure those with increased needs are well cared for in MIQ, including those who have booked MIAS vouchers.
Fishers	Sep 2021	191	TBC	Planning is underway for 450 fishers arriving Sept to Nov under the border exception, along with up to 105 fishers under a Critical Worker Visa.
	Oct 2021	191	TBC	
	Early Nov	68	TBC	Of the 450, 388 pax into Christchurch (5 cohorts), plus approx. 62 Ukraine fishers into Auckland (2 cohorts). s9(2)(b)(ii)
NZTE	Early Nov	25	TBC	Trial monthly allocation for exporter, administered by NZTE.
	Early Dec	25	TBC	
EXPO	Oct	72	TBC	
	Late Nov	80	TBC	
All Blacks	Late Nov	65	TBC	Standard returnees – not requiring training exemption.
Black Ferns	Late Nov	65	TBC	
BlackCaps	Late Nov	20	TBC	

Group	Date of Arrival	Allocation Approved	Final number of rooms allocated	Comments
NZDF	Early Dec	76	TBC	
Cricket BlackCaps & Bangladesh	Early Dec	68	TBC	Will be seeking a training exemption.
Antarctic Programme	17 Sep	200	200	These arrivals are for the combined US Antarctic Programme (USAP) as well as the Italian, French, German and Korean programme.
	18 Sep	39	39	
	21 Sep	1	1	
	27 Sep	145	145	
	28 Sep	145	145	
	4 Oct	46	46	
	6 Oct	17	17	
	9 Oct	10	10	
	10 Oct	10	10	
	11 Oct	202	202	
	18 Oct	42	42	
	25 Oct	20	20	
	29 Oct	3	3	
	Early Nov	39	TBC	
Late Nov	189	TBC		
Late Dec	65	TBC		

#### 4.3.2 Time Sensitive Travel

We are accepting applications for the November/December Time Sensitive Travel window from midnight Monday 16 August to midnight 14 September 2021.

#### 4.4 Upcoming Communications Issues and Activities

##### 4.4.1 As at 18 August 2021

Date	Activity	Lead Agency	Comms Material	Ministerial Involvement Y/N
July – October	US Antarctic Programme – 800+	MIQ	Reactive communications	N
19 August	Invoices sent to previous returnees for possible payments – back to 2020	MIQ	Reactive communications	
23 August (week of)	Groups information released on MIQ website - TBC	MIQ	Update on website	N
20 August	Shorter payment of MIQ invoices begins – moved from 90 to 30 days	MIQ	Info released on MIQ website 10 August	N
August TBC	Rapid Review of Border Worker Testing – Phase One (report for BEB)	BEB	Proactive communications	N
August TBC	Update on Red Flights	MoH/Ministers	Proactive communications	Y
3 September	Maori King opens ISO Accor paintings exhibition in Hamilton	MIQ	Proactive communications	
September (TBC)	Release of DPMC weekly Minister reports for Feb, March and April	DPMC	Responds to several OIAs	N

#### 4.5 Fees

##### 4.5.1 Invoicing

The table below shows the number of invoices issued up to 15 August 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 overdue	Invoices issued (\$)	Paid (\$)	Issued not due (\$)	Issued overdue (\$)	90+ days overdue	90+ days overdue (\$)
Groups*/ Temp Visa	3083	991	2087	5	\$34,962,824	\$21,125,698	\$13,293,040	\$544,086	0	\$0
Maritime	405	266	114	25	\$2,006,110	\$1,248,035	\$684,239	\$73,836	14	\$30,657
Aircrew	204	145	0	59	\$1,088,205	\$818,039	\$0	\$270,166	10	\$71,133
Other	20,940	11,437	6224	3280	\$71,449,689	\$42,041,952	\$18,945,733	\$10,462,003	1368	\$4,471,236
Total	24,632	12,739	8425	3369	\$109,506,827	\$65,233,724	\$32,923,012	\$11,350,091	1,392	\$4,573,026

\*"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. they use the 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.

#### 4.5.2 Weekly Average Invoicing and Debt Recovery %

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

Recent Weeks	Average invoicing per week (\$)
Past week	1,494,766
2-4 weeks	1,865,861
5-8 weeks	4,457,835
9+ weeks	1,682,051

#### 4.5.3 Waivers

The table below breaks down the waiver application information between 11 August 2020 and 15 August 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 received	In progress	Total completed	Total financial hardship applications	Total special circumstances applications	Approved waiver applications		Declined waiver applications	
					Financial Hardship	Special Circumstances	Financial Hardship	Special Circumstances
9064	2642	6422	817	5605	87	4807	730	798

### 4.6 Emergency Allocation Applications

4,477 applications have been processed since 30 October 2020. 345 applications were received in the week ending 15 August 2021 and 168 applications were processed.

From the applications processed in the week ending 15 August 2021, 45% of the applications were approved.

Emergency Allocation Applications	Weekly Totals	Year to Date Totals
	9 August 2021 – 15 August 2021	30 October 2020 to 15 August 2021
Approved	76	2406
Declined	92	2071
Applications processed	168	4477

\* 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		112
Rooms allocated in MIAS		97
Cancelled by the applicant		0
Awaiting flight details or MIAS registrations from the applicants to complete the room allocation process		15

### 4.7 Resolutions Update

Data from the Complaints and Feedback Customer Management System for the week 10 August to 16 August 2021 is as follows:

Week 10 August to 16 August	Received	Active Cases	Resolved
Complaints	219	38	212
Improvements	1	0	1
Compliments	2	0	2
Queries	13	1	12
Ombudsman	5	9	2
Parliamentary/OIA	0	0	0
Other	1	1	0
Total	241	49	229

The average number of complaints received each week since the start of MIQ is 126. For the last four weeks the average is 258 per week.

This week we have received 241 new cases and have resolved 229 cases.

We continue to respond to a high number of complaints which required more than one response to support them with their current situation. These complaints are difficult to manage as we are unable to provide the resolution that they are seeking – a voucher for their planned travel to New Zealand. We are also seeing a return of abusive communications and difficult complaints from returnees at Managed Isolation facilities.

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## 5. Border Executive Board Report



### 5.1 Key Issues Being Considered

#### 5.1.1 Border Executive Board Meeting

The main item at the Border Executive Board's meeting on 12 August 2021 was the "health at the border" systems improvement workstream. Whilst this has an overlap with COVID-19, its primary focus is on a future border with a strengthened and enduring health presence. Border health security should address all hazards (biological – including exotic pests and communicable diseases, chemical, and radiological) and both entry and exit measures.

The Border Executive Board approved the high-level work programme which is based on four themes:

- Maintaining a health presence at the border
- Having the ability to escalate health measures and presence
- Integrating health information for arriving vessels with other agencies
- Integrating health intelligence and risk assessment.

It also approved the three priority actions:

- Health is permanently represented at the 24/7 Integrated Targeting Operations Centre (ITOC)
- Develop options for the range and delivery of health functions at the border
- Review and update the Ministry of Health publication Responding to Public Health Threats of International Concern

#### 5.1.1 Very high-risk countries

Of focus this week has been the designation of Fiji and Indonesia as very high risk countries (with additional travel restrictions applying from 11.59pm on 15 August 2021). Border Executive Board agencies have also contributed to the DPMC-led advice on whether India, Pakistan, Brazil and Papua New Guinea could be reclassified as high risk (rather than very high risk).

#### 5.1.2 Negotiations and preparations for one-way quarantine free travel with Vanuatu, Samoa and Tonga

Border Executive Board agencies have continued to prepare for possible one-way QFT with Vanuatu, Samoa and Tonga. A draft cabinet paper has been provided to your office for your consideration.

#### 5.1.3 Travel health declaration system

Work continued this week on preparing the business case to support a funding request through the CRRF, including a Treasury-led business case clinic on Monday. The business case itself is expected to be considered by Cabinet in September (with your Office still expected to receive a copy of the draft paper on Friday 20 August 2021).

#### 5.1.4 Future Borders Sprint process

The industry/government Future Borders project commenced on 16 August 2021.

Industry partners include Auckland International Airport Limited, Christchurch International Airport Limited, Wellington International Airport Limited, Air New Zealand Limited, Emirates, Singapore Airlines Limited and the Board of Airline Representatives of New Zealand.

This eight-week project – being run as a collaborative Agile sprint - is designed to provide options and information about how to implement the traveller journey and aviation system in the context of COVID-19, especially in relation to the future "Step 3" medium-risk traveller pathway.



It is possible that the move to Alert Level 4 may impact the project if participants, whether airport, airline or government, are redeployed for a significant period to support operational response activity.

5.1.2 Border worker vaccinations

The vaccination programme has been paused nationwide due to New Zealand entering Alert Level 4. The programme will provide support decisions taken by the national Vaccination Programme over coming days, and provide information as it comes available to the Border sector.

Agencies continue to support existing and new PCBUs to assess their workforce against the scope of the amended Order. Direct outreach and engagement sessions are planned with contracting companies within both maritime and aviation sectors.

Face-to-face meetings with port employers and unions are continuing, including visits this week to Eastland Port (Gisborne), Port Taranaki and Port Tauranga.

No supply chain exemption applications have been received to date

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## 6. New Zealand Customs Service Weekly Report



### 6.1 Items to Note/Updates

#### 6.1.1 Maritime

##### Container Vessel Mattina (South Port, Bluff)

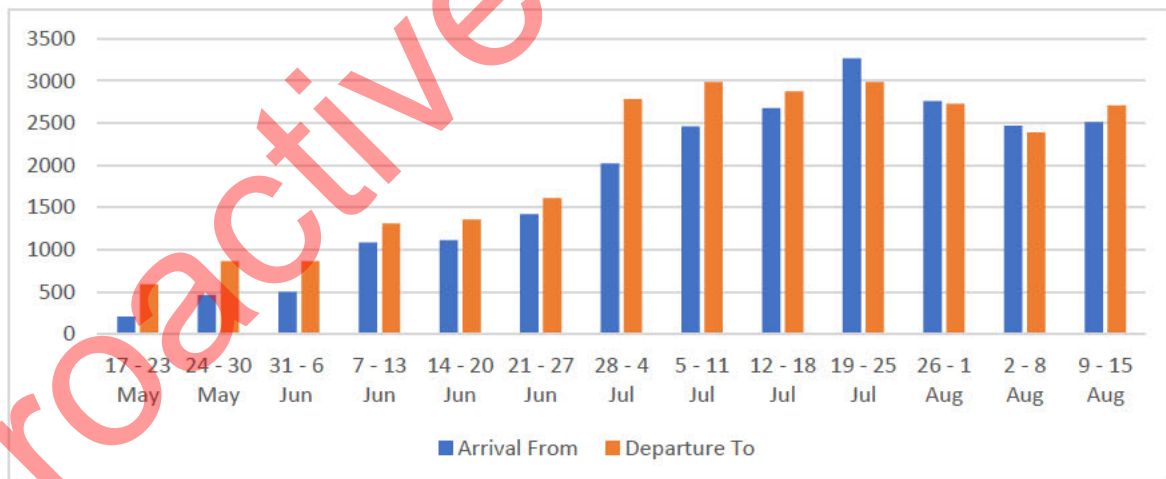
- Remains at its original berth in Bluff
- Crew were retested on 17 August 2021
- Test results all negative and Health pratique issued at 10.00am on 18 August 2021 by Medical Officer of Health, Public Health South
- Cargo scheduled for unloading at Bluff will now begin, with the vessel then moving to Napier and Tauranga to do the same – before departing New Zealand

#### 6.1.2 Pre-Departure Testing

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#### 6.1.3 Passenger Numbers Cook Islands



## 7. COVID-19 Chief Executives Board

### 7.1 Items to Note/Updates

The COVID-19 Chief Executives' Board (CCB) met on 17 August 2021. The CCB heard from the Chairs of the DPMC-managed Advisory Boards and the Business Leaders' Forum on updates about their workstreams. The CCB discussed the system-level focuses raised through the System Assurance Framework. The members were also provided with updates on the Delta variant readiness planning workshop held on 10 August, 2021, the COVID-19 immunisation programme progress, the progress against the COVID-19 review recommendations and they were updated on officials' work to develop a strategic investment horizon across the COVID-19 system.

The next meeting for the CCB is currently scheduled for 31 August 2021.

## 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 did not meet this week and they are next scheduled to meet on 24 August. Sir Brian Roche and Rob Fyfe met with Peter Reidy, Chief Executive of the Fletcher Construction Company, and Greg Lowe, CEO of Beca on 19 August to discuss MIQ facilities and future innovations in that space.

## 9. Strategic COVID-19 Public Health Advisory Group

### 9.1 Items to Note/Updates

The Strategic COVID-19 Public Health Advisory Group did not meet this week. The next meeting for the Group is currently scheduled for 25 August 2021.

## 10. Business Leaders Forum

### 10.1 Items to Note/Updates

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

## 11. Community Panel

### 11.1 Items to Note/Updates

The date for the second Community Panel meeting is currently scheduled for 1 September, 2021. This will likely move to a virtual format due to the current response and the focus for this meeting is likely to be on vaccine equity.

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