



**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

29 April 2022

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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	
Reconnecting New Zealanders	MoH			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From 11.59pm on 1 May 2022, visa-waiver travellers and existing holders of valid visitor visas can enter New Zealand. This is another important milestone of Reconnecting New Zealand with the world, after the recent commencement of reopening to Australians on 12 April 2022. As agreed by Cabinet on 19 April 2022, New Zealand will reopen to all work visa holders on 4 July 2022 in line with Accredited Employer Work Visas, followed by visitor visas and student visas on 31 July 2022. Tranche 1 of the Maritime Border Order (MBO) changes commence at 11 59pm 2 May 2022 and will remove the isolation requirements for arriving vessels. Mariners wishing to take shore leave will be required to do 0/1 and 5/6 testing similar to air arrivals. Port workers will no longer be required to test under the Required Testing Order, in line with public health advice. Vaccination requirements will remain in place for the time being, until a wider decision is made around vaccination requirements for all border workers. Further work regarding the reopening of the Maritime Border is underway, with announcements likely to be made in May 2022.
	BEB			<p><i>Air border implementation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work continues towards the 1 May 2022 further reopening. All border agencies are confident of being ready as at 27 April 2022. MoH continues to work on a range of changes and tidy-ups which are planned for an Omnibus Order in May 2022. This approach is supported by agencies who have sought a roll-up on changes rather than continual individual changes. DPMC is leading work on future border settings, working towards an initial discussion with Ministers on 4 May 2022. The option to be fleshed out is “an open border by default” while still having the ability to slow or limit access if there are variants of concern, introducing measures, and drawing on border measures as tools.
	BEB			<p><i>Maritime border programme</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tranche 1: Changes to the Maritime Border Order will take effect 11.59pm, 2 May 2022 that will remove the mandatory isolation and MIQ requirements on people arriving through the maritime border. There are implications of removing the regular testing requirements for maritime border workers. Vaccination requirements for maritime border workers will be retained along with PPE for certain circumstances. Tranche 2: The maritime pathway will reopen from 31 July 2022. An announcement is proposed for 11 May 2022, pending final health settings.
Testing and vaccination of border workforce	MBIE			<p><i>Staff Testing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ministry of Health have updated their systems so that border workers’ self-declared RAT results are now pulled from “My Covid Record” into the Border Worker Testing Register (BWTR). Compliance reporting is at 65 percent (up four percent from last week) for staff who worked in the week of 18-24 April 2022. Uploading RAT results in My Covid Record is causing challenges for some workers, resulting in low testing compliance. MBIE continue to monitor and liaise with employers to remind their workers to log all RAT results (positive and negative) so MBIE have the best view of workers’ compliance. <p><i>Vaccinations and boosters</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The BWTR shows, of the workforce on site for the week of 18-24 April 2022, 98.5 percent have had two doses of the vaccine, zero percent had one dose and 1.5 percent have vaccination status ‘unknown’. Of the workers on site the week of 18-24 April 2022, five workers (0.6 percent) were showing in the BWTR as overdue for a booster. The workforce testing and vaccination team will investigate those to identify whether they are breaches of the Vaccination Order or a result of something else (e.g. data error etc.). Vaccination assurance follow-ups for those with an ‘unknown’ status in the BWTR on site between 11-17 April 2022 did not identify any breaches of the Vaccination Order. However, follow ups regarding boosters identified three workers who were on site who should have had a booster.

Border

Reopening new travel pathways - Pacific Islands	Agency	Last Week	This Week	Agency Comment
	MFAT	●	●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> s6(b)(i) [redacted] in anticipation of eased border settings, Air New Zealand has advised post they are preparing to schedule three flights a week from July. s6(a) [redacted] The New Zealand High Commission sought clarification this week have been informed there will be a repatriation flight on 11 May and that three further repatriation flights have been tentatively scheduled for June s6(a) [redacted] s6(b)(i) [redacted] Vanuatu has confirmed repatriation flights will resume in May, there will be a three-day isolation period for arrivals from New Zealand and Australia. These flights should meet immediate industry needs for the coming month or two.

Isolation and Quarantine

Self - Isolation	Agency	Last Week	This Week	Agency Comment
	Managed Isolation	MBIE	●	●
	MOH	●	●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 5 May, Ministry of Health officials will undertake an assessment of the isolation periods for cases and household contacts. This review will include modelling of different lengths of isolation periods.

Proactively Released

Community Protection

	Agency	Last Week	→ This Week	
Surveillance and Testing	MOH	●	●	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The Ministry of Health has met the national target of 90 percent of New Zealanders able to access a rapid antigen test (RAT) access point within a 20-minute drive. That 96.5 percent of the overall population is within this catchment area, and 95.4 percent of Māori are within this area, highlights good access across almost all of Aotearoa New Zealand with the current model.Overall demand for RATs is at a steady state, with most RAT distribution channels resupplying.On 26 April 2022, the Ministry received 19,024 RAT results, compared with 20,595 on 19 April 2022.
Contact Tracing	MOH	●	●	<ul style="list-style-type: none">No update.
Technology Updates	MOH	●	●	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The first shipment of Molnupiravir (30,000 courses) has arrived in Aotearoa New Zealand. Stock will be distributed to ProPharma (the pharmaceutical wholesaler) on 27 April 2022, and then for further distribution throughout Aotearoa to regional distribution centres. Pharmacies will be able to order stock ahead of the "go-live" date for first prescriptions on 5 May 2022.
Care in the Community	MOH	●	●	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A district health board (DHB) winter planning checklist has been developed that builds on the planning tool the Ministry of Health developed to support the pre-festive season planning over December 2021 and the COVID-19 scenario planning in February 2022. It has a dual purpose to provide DHBs and regions with a range of questions that may prompt new responses; and to provide the Ministry of Health assurance that DHBs have robust plans in place for the next six months and have built on the opportunities created through regional collaboration and community Care Coordination Hubs.

Proactively Released

System Readiness & Planning

Agency	Last Week	This Week	Agency Comment on Status of Focus Area	
System Readiness Health Supply Chain	MoH			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 22 April 2022, the Ministry of Health had 51.9 million RATs stock on hand. Approximately 0.8 million RATs have been dispatched from the warehouse in the last 7 days. Note that no dispatches occurred over the Easter period. The Ministry of Health continues to build its RATs stocks with additional delivery confirmations daily. As at 22 April 2022, there were 54.7 million RATs on order to 30 June 2022. Overall demand for RATs into the system is at a steady state, with most channels now resupplying based on usage. Demand for RATs under the close contract exemption scheme (CCES) is minimal. On average the Ministry of Health receives six requests daily. It has been noted that more of these requests are now originating in the South Island. There are currently 14 RAT devices approved for sale, supply and use in New Zealand. Further devices are currently being evaluated.
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ministry of Health is preparing a paper for the Director General to confirm healthcare requirements for visitors, including who covers costs for COVID-19 testing and treatment. There will be a workshop this week to finalise details around visitor support when they get COVID-19 in New Zealand. Engagement has started with transport, accommodation, and tourism sectors. Further sector engagement planned following agreed healthcare advice. The unite against COVID website includes public information and links to border agency sites. Weekly NRG meetings continue to maintain oversight and integration across the AoG system.
Planning for Next Phase	DPMC			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Next steps for the planning team will be to update the Toolbox section of the plan and start an Omicron response lesson capture to support plan updates. The aim is to ensure all accountable and responsible agencies have clarity of their roles for all active and latent tools under the COVID-19 Order and have plans ready to reactivate should the system require them in the future. New Variant planning is underway with MoH. An AoG workshop is being planned for the week commencing 9 May. The final Interim New Variant Plan has been shared with NRG and SOG, while fuller planning process will be undertaken for a New Variant Plan based on MoH developed scenarios.
		MOH		

Proactive Release

2. COVID-19 Insights

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

2.1.1 The COVID-19 False Information Landscape - April 2022

Introduction

1. The Insights and Reporting Team in DPMC's COVID-19 Group have worked with the Disinformation Assessment and Response Team (DART) in the National Immunisation Programme at the Ministry of Health to bring together information to provide a brief overview of the false-information¹ landscape in April 2022, and COVID-19 related activism going forward. Further information on these topics is available on request.

Key Observed False-information Narratives Related to COVID-19 in New Zealand in April were:

- That the COVID-19 vaccine is unsafe and is attributable to, among other things, an increase in shingles, various types of cancer, large numbers of heart abnormalities, and autism;
- That the COVID-19 vaccine has undisclosed components, such as snake venom,¹ and micro-tech;² and
- That self-healing, natural, and alternative health practices are the best ways to treat and manage COVID-19 infections.

False-information Narrative 1: COVID-19 Vaccine Side Effects

2. False information narratives about COVID-19 vaccine side effects are ongoing. There is a narrative that an increase in shingles and cancer in New Zealand can be attributed to the COVID-19 vaccine, as well as claims that the New Zealand Government is covering up large numbers of vaccine related adverse events.
3. This narrative has been championed by New Zealand Doctors Speaking Out with Science (NZDSOS) and Guy Hatchard³ and has been further circulated by Counterspin media⁴ and other less prominent groups.
4. Additionally, a report published by Guy Hatchard accused the New Zealand Government of underreporting the number of COVID-19 vaccine related adverse events, claiming that there has been a large number of heart abnormalities as a result of the COVID-19 vaccine, that have been ignored or not reported on.⁵
5. Counterspin media have also made inferences that paediatric vaccines can cause autism.⁶

False-information Narrative 2: Undisclosed COVID-19 Vaccine Components

6. The narrative that the COVID-19 vaccine has undisclosed components, such as micro-tech, and snake venom, was a key narrative in April.
7. This narrative has been circulated by a range of groups, with organisations such as NZDSOS and Counterspin media amplifying this narrative.

False-information Narrative 3: That Natural or Alternative Medicines are the Most Effective Treatments for COVID-19

8. The narrative that the best, or only way, to treat COVID-19 is with natural remedies or alternative medicine has been a consistent narrative through the Omicron outbreak and was one of the key narratives in March and has continued in April.

¹ For the purpose of this report, the term "false-information" refers to, but is not limited to, misinformation, disinformation, and mal-information.

9. This narrative has been espoused by many individuals and groups, including Counterspin media and NZDSOS.

Shift in False-Information Narratives

10. In April, the false-information narratives remained similar to those observed in previous months, with a focus on alternative medicine as the most effective means of treatment of COVID-19, claims of government underreporting of adverse events attributed to the COVID-19 vaccine, as well claims about its safety. New claims about alleged undisclosed contents in the COVID-19 vaccine, such as snake venom, and micro-tech, have been observed this month.
11. The shift in the false information landscape is represented by a drop in the volume of the reported COVID-19 related false-information being published and shared online. Some organisations like NZDSOS remain predominantly focused on COVID-19,⁷ and are spreading COVID-19 false-information from individual actors. While others, such as Voices for Freedom (VFF), appear to have shifted away from COVID-19 centric messages and have mixed their anti-COVID-19 vaccine messages with other messages which include, but are not limited to, anti-government messages, articles about wellness, alternative health, a coming food crisis, and personal finances.

COVID-19 Related False-information and Activism Going Forward

12. Following on from the Parliament grounds occupation, various groups under the pretext of “freedom” or aimed at combatting perceived government overreach have attempted to coordinate similar occupations or protests. So far, events like those organised by Unite NZ have seen considerably smaller numbers present than attended the Parliament grounds occupation. This is likely because the common grievances around vaccine mandates and vaccine pass requirements which had united various groups for past protests is no longer present.
13. While false-information related to COVID-19 still exists, and the general themes of this false-information remain consistent, COVID-19 appears to be less of a prominent issue. Barring a significant change, such as a new larger outbreak, or a new variant emerging, it is likely there will be a further decline in the amount and variation of COVID-19 related false-information.

Ongoing Government Responses to COVID-19 False-information

14. A wide range of agencies are involved in efforts to mitigate the consequences of false information. As with many digital issues, diffusion is part of the challenge in responding effectively. There is currently no strategic function to support operations, policy, and overall strategy for either addressing COVID-19 or wider false information, or for locating this challenge in its context as an emergent issue of digital resilience.
15. DPMC’s National Security Group has recently provided advice to the Prime Minister that contained information about potential policy levers, including through international coordination, to address online false information networks and their impacts on New Zealand. The advice noted that New Zealand’s approach to addressing false information needs to be comprehensive and long-term to build resilience to manage future false information topics. This requires a “whole-of-society” approach that involves, but is not led, by government. Media, academia, civil society, the private sector and diverse communities are all essential in getting ahead of mis/disinformation and countering it effectively.
16. There is ongoing communications and engagement by the government related to responding to COVID-19 false-information, based on four key principles:
 - to support a whole of society approach;
 - increase the public’s resilience to disinformation and online harms;
 - promote credible information through effective communication; and

- prevent the propagation of false and damaging content underpinned by an understanding of the environment.

17. s6(a), s9(2)(f)(iv), s9(2)(g)(i)

[Redacted content]

Thank you to the following teams that assisted with this report: the Disinformation Assessment and Response Team (DART) at the Ministry of Health; New Zealand Police; the Department of Internal Affairs; and the National Security Group, and the Communications and Engagement Team in the COVID-19 Group in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

3. Ministry of Health

3.1 Policy/Programme Updates

3.1.1 Health system preparedness programme: update

COVID-19 Care in the Community

Disability

The Ministry of Health hosted the first hui of the Disability Sector Leadership Group – COVID-19 Preparedness and Response on 14 April 2022. This is a fortnightly forum, to support information sharing and advice on the COVID-19 response to the disability sector. The Group comprises approximately 40 members from across the community and sector and provides an advisory function in developing key recommendations for the Disability Deputy Director-General and associated Ministry of Health advisory groups. Issues raised at the first meeting included:

- the need for accessible communications for disabled people – eg, videos with captions, images with audio descriptions;
- a real-time feedback loop from the community to provide continuous opportunities to improve;
- information on support services available in communities;
- data and information to measure and monitor outcomes;
- direct resourcing for communications with the sector, including providing hardcopies.

Therapeutics access criteria review update

Work on reviewing the access criteria to oral therapeutics medicine continues. Engagement between the Ministry of Health and Pharmac has been ongoing throughout the review process. The proposed criteria changes are expected to be submitted to the Pharmac COVID-19 Treatments Advisory Group for consideration and approval in the week of 25 April 2022.

Rollout of Molnupiravir

The oral antiviral medicine, Molnupiravir, was granted provisional consent by Medsafe on 14 April 2022. A total of 30,000 courses is expected to arrive in New Zealand in the week commencing 25 April 2022. Stock will be distributed to wholesalers for initial distribution to hospitals and participating pharmacies ahead of the public rollout planned for 5 May 2022.

Communications and guidance for prescribers, pharmacists, and patients is being developed, as well as integrating Molnupiravir into the data and digital systems that support the monitoring and distribution of Paxlovid™. Two further shipments of Molnupiravir are expected at 60-day intervals (20,000 and 10,000 courses, respectively) which will make up the total stock for the year of 60,000 courses.

Data and Digital

On 19 April 2022, the Ministry released new link in Healthlink Forms allowing GPs and other care providers access to report unsupervised rapid antigen tests (RATs) on behalf of patients. This feature is currently only available to report unsupervised RATs undertaken and reported on the same day. The ability to submit retrospective reporting is scheduled to be deployed next week.

3.1.2 Releasing a supplementary Monitoring Report for the 2021 COVID-19 Māori Health Protection Plan

This item updates you on the upcoming April 2022 supplementary Monitoring Report of the 2021 COVID-19 Māori Health Protection Plan (the Protection Plan).

The Protection Plan was developed in December 2021 to respond to a range of factors, including the changing landscape as a result of the Delta variant of COVID-19. Since its publication in December 2021, Aotearoa New Zealand's COVID-19 pandemic has evolved from isolated outbreaks of the Delta variant to community-wide transmission of the Omicron variant.

The April 2022 supplementary Monitoring Report provides an overview of the progress being made against the COVID-19 Māori Health Protection Plan's monitoring framework. It provides an outline of core statistics as well as a brief overview of the Omicron strategy. Further, the Monitoring Report reiterates that the Protection Plan continues to respond to Māori health needs within the new Omicron context.

The Ministry are intending to publish the April 2022 Monitoring Report by the end of May 2022. If you would like to review the draft April 2022 Monitoring Report before it is published, please let us know by 5 May 2022.

Next steps

The Māori Health Directorate, in its chief stewardship role within the Ministry of Health, will continue to monitor and update the 2021 COVID-19 Māori Health Protection Plan as required. This includes monthly internal monitoring reports on key insights and data related to the Protection Plan. This will inform the ongoing COVID-19 Māori response for the Ministry of Health and other agencies.

The Ministry will provide you with a draft of the April 2022 Supplementary Monitoring Report on request.

It is likely that the next Monitoring Report for the 2021 COVID-19 Māori Health Protection Plan for this period will be at the end of 2022.

3.1.3 Establishment of the work programme on managing the long-term health effects of COVID-19

As Aotearoa New Zealand continues to respond to Omicron, the Ministry of Health has established a programme of work to improve the health systems ability to provide care for the emerging condition of long COVID.

The work programme has been established based on the following principles:

- our obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi, considering the interests and needs of Māori;
- ensuring equity of access to services and outcomes;
- ensuring services are effective, timely and reflect best-practice as evidence emerges;
- ensuring services are patient centred, including patient self-management and digital enablement to support patients with long COVID;
- long COVID symptoms are investigated, treated, and funded in the same way as other long-term conditions.

Within the work programme, four workstreams are underway to support the development of the long COVID rehabilitation and service delivery guidance within an Aotearoa New Zealand context:

- development of a step-by-step tool kit, including monitoring existing specific services for long COVID. This work will transfer to Health New Zealand (HNZ) in the future;
- establishing an expert advisory group to provide guidance and input into the long COVID rehabilitation guideline, with broad representation from Māori, Pacific peoples, researchers, clinicians, service providers and people with lived experience;
- monitoring emerging evidence to inform clinical pathways to identify and manage long COVID;
- ongoing research to identify gaps that are particular to Aotearoa New Zealand and options for how they might be addressed.

Progress to date includes:

- development of terms of reference and membership for the Expert Advisory Group;

- consulting with professional bodies to support updates to the current COVID-19 rehabilitation guidance, expected to be complete by the end of April 2022;
- confirmed diagnostic codes (Read and Snomed codes) for post COVID (4 to 12 weeks), and long COVID (over 12 weeks), and communicated these codes to the sector;
- ongoing literature analysis of both academic and grey literature on what other health systems are doing to respond to long COVID (to be updated fortnightly alongside emerging information).

Next steps include:

- updating the June 2020 guidance for the rehabilitation of people with or recovering from COVID-19 to be completed by the end of April 2022 by the Ministry and Allied Health Aotearoa New Zealand
- the inaugural meeting of the Expert Advisory Group to be held in mid-May 2022
- ongoing literature reviews and research.

It is envisioned that this work will remain under Ministry oversight for the near future.

3.1.4 Aged Residential Care sector COVID-19 Response: update

This item provides you with information about progress on the COVID-19 response in the aged residential care (ARC) sector. This follows previous advice in the Weekly Report on 7 April 2022.

As at 21 April 2022, total ARC case numbers reported are 570, with 160 facilities (25 percent) impacted.

ARC facilities continue to report positive cases through a range of mechanisms including the 0800 number, sending information to public health units, and GP notification and reporting. Two different pilots are underway with four ARC facilities to introduce a standard reporting process. These include the 'RAT Catcher' which enables an organisation to upload a number of test results into the Éclair system, and the second is a bulk upload option based on a template. The ability to bulk upload test results will be useful in ARC and other sectors in the future to ensure cases continue to be captured.

Due to the Easter and ANZAC weekends, reporting from the DHBs to the Ministry on the status of ARC facilities has reduced. The Ministry continues to engage with the sector to ensure ARC facilities are well supported through a variety of stakeholder meetings which the sector report as being valuable in supporting the COVID-19 response. These meetings with DHB Health of Older Persons Managers, New Zealand Aged Care Association and providers enable issues to be raised directly with the Ministry in order to find a resolution.

Next steps

As the health system focus moves towards supporting winter pressures, the Ministry will provide you with updates as issues related to the aged residential care sector arise.

3.1.5 National Immunisation Programme

COVID-19 Vaccinations

As at 11.59 pm on 26 April 2022, 11,032,652 vaccinations have been delivered, including 4,026,491 first doses, 3,977,592 second doses, 31,751 third primary doses, and 2,623,966 booster doses. In addition:

- 261,966 paediatric first doses have been administered to 5-to-11-year-old children; 54 percent of this population have received their first dose. 111,749 paediatric second doses have been administered, 23 percent of this population;
- 72.9 percent of people aged 18 years and older who are eligible for a booster dose have received it. This is 0.2 percent higher than last week;
- 86 percent of the eligible population five years and older have received at least one dose. 82 percent of this population are fully vaccinated;

- 489 vaccination sites were active on 12 April 2022.

Driving uptake

Nine DHBs have now reached 90 percent fully vaccinated for Māori, with West Coast DHB 55 doses from achieving this milestone. All DHBs have achieved at least 90 percent first doses and nineteen DHBs have achieved at least 90 percent fully vaccinated for their 12 years and over populations. Northland DHB is 3,180 doses from reaching the 90 percent fully vaccinated milestone as at 11.59pm 26 April 2022.

Capacity for COVID-19 vaccination remained available across the motu through ANZAC weekend. The focus for DHBs and providers is priority populations, so resources are being directed to sprint events, mobile and outreach clinics continuing at marae, places of worship, and rural settings.

The Ministry of Health continues to fund and support vaccination initiatives to increase the uptake of boosters across the motu, primarily through supporting Māori health providers and DHBs. These organisations continue to offer a range of vaccination service options for rangatahi Māori that include drive-through vaccinations, pop up vaccination events at a range of locations, and regular static clinics.

Boosters

As at 26 April 2022, 2,623,966 people aged 18 years and older have received a booster dose. This represents 72.9 percent of the 3,599,268 people who are currently eligible for a booster. A total of 11,614 people became eligible to receive a booster dose in the week to 26 April 2022.

Boosters for 16 and 17-year-olds

As at 26 April 2022, 5,927 16 and 17-year-olds have received a booster dose. This represents 8.4 percent of the 70,178 eligible people in this age group.

Fourth doses

The COVID-19 Vaccine Technical Advisory Group (CV-TAG) recommend a second booster, at an interval of six months (or 4 to 6 months to align with flu vaccination) since their previous dose for:

- people aged 65 years and over;
- Māori and Pacific peoples aged 50 years and over;
- residents of aged care and disability care facilities;
- severely immunocompromised people who received a three-dose primary course, and a fourth dose as a booster (noting this would be a fifth dose for these people).

Medsafe has not received an application for the use of a second booster dose from Pfizer, s9(2)(g)(i) Under current regulatory settings, a second booster dose can only be given off-label on prescription. Policy options are being considered to provide a broader approach to the rollout of second boosters to the groups recommended by CV-TAG.

If the eligibility for a second booster is set at six months from the first booster, there are approximately 858,854 people eligible in total, and eligibility will peak mid-July 2022, with 120,000 becoming eligible per week.

The Ministry of Health is developing delivery approaches and working closely with Crown Law to consider all possible avenues for legislative options. The Ministry expects to provide advice for Vaccine Ministers to consider in early May 2022. A further update will be provided in next week's report.

5-to-11-year-olds

54 percent of children aged 5-to-11 years-old have either booked or received their first dose as at 11.59pm on 26 April 2022.

To date, 35 percent of eligible tamariki Māori aged 5-to-11-years have been partially vaccinated, equal to last week. Forty seven percent of Pacific children aged 5-to-11-years have been partially vaccinated, equal to last week.

Across the motu, sprint events and outreach vaccination clinics held on, or near, school grounds continue to remove access barriers and drive uptake of paediatric doses. The number of school-based clinics has reduced for the Easter school holidays but are planned to recommence in term two. DHBs are using the school holiday period as an opportunity to review their tamariki vaccination approaches to date, and to discuss the best approaches with schools.

All DHBs are working closely with Māori Health Providers (MHPs), Iwi collectives and Pacific Island community connectors to develop further strategies for improving participation of schools and whānau to increase the uptake of vaccines among 5-to-11-year-olds.

The programme is working with MHPs and engaging with kura/kohanga within their regions to co-design a 5-to-11-year-old vaccination plan for their rohe.

It is anticipated that vaccination numbers for tamariki will increase now that pharmacists can deliver paediatric COVID-19 vaccination doses in the community.

Equity

Vaccination rates have slowed down for all ethnic groups. Booster uptake for Māori is 57 percent, and booster uptake for Pacific people is 59 percent, compared to 72.9 percent for the total eligible population.

Māori and Pacific People

MHPs across the country have used the Easter / ANZAC period as an opportunity to reset and refresh, taking the time to review the vaccination campaigns so far. A significant shift is underway in Northland, with the DHB working to support the expansion of vaccination efforts in the region to include influenza and MMR vaccinations.

Ongoing engagement continues with smaller regions that are experiencing low vaccine uptake rates among Pacific People, including Marlborough, South Canterbury, and the Bay of Plenty regions. Without a Pacific provider in the Marlborough area, a local MHP has been helping with the Pacific vaccination uptake, including strong support for the Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme vaccinations.

Disability and mental health

Vaccination rates for disabled people supported by Disability Support Services (DSS) and ACC continue to track well, with vaccination rates similar to the vaccination rates of the general population.

Final panel assessments for the COVID-19 Vaccine and Immunisation Peer Support fund have now concluded. The fund is intended to assist Peer and Lived Experience-led mental health and alcohol and other drugs peer support organisations to build capacity and capability to support their clients through the COVID-19 vaccination journey. The panel have selected 20 applicants to move to the next stage of the funding process. Due diligence and reference checks are underway.

My Vaccine Pass

s9(2)(h)

The technical solution is being developed in parallel with the work on clarifying the policy to ensure timelines can be delivered to. Any passes that expire in May 2022 can be extended until 1 June 2022; this will enable all passes to be updated at the same time.

2022 Influenza vaccine rollout

476,323 influenza vaccinations have been administered as at 11.59pm on 25 April 2022.

The Book My Vaccine homepage has been updated to include a section directing people to where they can receive influenza vaccinations.

Discussions continue with DHBs to expand funding options to Māori providers to encourage increased coverage for Flu and MMR vaccinations.

3.1.6 Technical Advisory Group: update

COVID-19 TAG

The COVID-19 Technical Advisory Group (COVID-19 TAG) did not meet this week, with the next meeting scheduled for 20 May 2022.

CV TAG

The COVID-19 Vaccine Technical Advisory Group (CV TAG) did not meet this week, with the next meeting scheduled for 26 April 2022.

Therapeutics TAG

The COVID-19 Therapeutics Technical Advisory Group (Therapeutics TAG) met on 22 April 2022 and discussed the following items.

- Therapeutics;
 - Pharmac update
 - Medsafe update
 - STA update
- Equity considerations;
- Primary Care update: COVID-19 Care in the Community;
- Immunosuppressed;
 - Ronapreve/sotrovimab
 - Perspectives on serology use
- STA Information Request;
 - Change in efficacy from time of vaccination
 - Relevant systematic review
- Clinical Management of COVID-19 in hospitalised adults (including in pregnancy) guideline updates.

The next Therapeutics TAG meeting is scheduled for 6 May 2022.

CT TAG

The COVID-19 Testing Technical Advisory Group (CT TAG) did not meet this week, with the next meeting not yet scheduled.

3.1.7 Communications issues and activities

As at 19 April 2022:

Date	Activity	Lead agency	Comms material	Ministerial Involvement
27 April 2022	Face mask exemption process	MoH DPMC	Key messages, FAQs and press release	Yes
28 April 2022	Maritime border changes	MoH MBIE	Press release and Q&A Website to update closer to changes coming into effect	Yes
5 May 2022	Publicity regarding World Hand Hygiene Day	MoH/ Health Quality and Safety Commission	Social, website, press release	TBC
Ongoing	New variants – planning for new variants and looking at new XE variant	MoH	Q&A – on how the Ministry is preparing and view on current new variant	TBC
Ongoing	Update on border restrictions for unvaccinated permanent residents. Likely to see a huge number of requests for exemptions in the next few weeks unless vaccine mandate is removed for permanent residents.	MoH	Policy review Q&A	TBC
Ongoing	Omicron community outbreak: daily communications and support for the health sector and public, incl. cases in a number of regions across the country. Updated health advice, rollout of RATs as main diagnostic tool.	MoH DPMC	Talking points, key messages, communications, website, stakeholder communications	Optional
Ongoing	Testing – who to test / where to test / record results on My Covid Record / Traveller requirements messaging.	MoH DPMC MBIE	Key messages, website, stakeholder communications	No

4. Managed Isolation and Quarantine Weekly Report

4.1 Items to Note/Updates

4.1.1 Transition and Decommissioning

There are 19 facilities on track to be decommissioned and handed back this Friday, 29 April 2022, with 10 in Auckland, four in the Central region and five in Christchurch. Other aspects of decommissioning are either completed or on track to be completed in time.

Facility (by region)	Tranche	Current occupancy	Current phase	Staff on site within last 7 days	Decommissioned (Hand-back date)	Facility RAG status
Auckland						
Crowne Plaza	One	Empty	Decommissioning		29/4/22	
Four Points	One	Empty	Decommissioned		14/4/22	
Grand Mercure	One	Empty	Decommissioning		29/4/22	
Grand Millenium	One	Empty	Decommissioned		14/4/22	
Novotel/Ibis Ellerslie	One	Empty	Decommissioning		29/4/22	
Sebel	One	Empty	Decommissioning		29/4/22	
SO/	One	Empty	Decommissioning		29/4/22	
Stamford	One	Empty	Decommissioning		29/4/22	
Pullman	One	Empty	Decommissioning		29/4/22	
Sudima Airport	One	Empty	Decommissioning		29/4/22	
Rydges	One	Empty	Decommissioned		14/4/22	
Naumi (Afghan/refugees)	Two	Empty	Decommissioning		1/6/22	
M Social s9(2)(b)(ii)	Two	Empty	Decommissioning		29/4/22	
Novotel Airport (mariners)	Two	Empty	Decommissioning		13/5/22	
Ramada (deportees)	Two	Empty	Decommissioning		29/4/22	
Jet Park	Core facility	Occupied (8pax)	N/A core facility	202	N/A	N/A
Holiday Inn	Core facility	Occupied (33 pax)	N/A core facility	183	N/A	N/A
Waipuna Auckland	Core facility	Occupied (52 pax)	N/A core facility	164	N/A	N/A
Hamilton						
Distinction	One	Empty	Decommissioning		29/4/22	
Ibis Tainui	One	Empty	Decommissioning		29/4/22	
Amohia (Jet Park)	Three	Unoccupied	Active	83	30/6/22	
Rotorua						
Sudima	Three	Empty	De-designated	70	30/6/22	
Rydges	One	Empty	Decommissioning		29/4/22	
Ibis	One	Empty	Decommissioning		29/4/22	
Wellington						
Grand Mercure	Three	Empty	De-designated	75	30/6/22	
Christchurch						
Chateau on the Park	One	Empty	Decommissioned		14/4/22	
Crowne Plaza	One	Empty	Decommissioning		29/4/22	
Distinction	One	Empty	Decommissioning		29/4/22	
Sudima Airport	One	Empty	Decommissioning		29/4/22	
Novotel Airport	One	Empty	Decommissioning		29/4/22	
The Elms	Two	Empty	Decommissioning		29/4/22	
Commodore	Core facility	Occupied (6 pax)	N/A core facility	116	N/A	N/A
Totals:		101 pax		893 staff (down 226 from last week)		

4.1.2 Workforce

A rapid reduction in the MIQ workforce has taken place over the past two months. A significant workforce change process is now underway for remaining MBIE-employed staff to fulfil good faith and legislated employment obligations.

As at 31 March 2022 there were 235 FTE employed by MBIE in the MIQ National Office, this had reduced to 185 by 19 April, and is expected to reduce to 162 by 1 May 2022. This includes confirmed resignations where staff are working out their notice period.

An aide memoire (2122-4105) was sent to your Office on 22 April 2022, with a further update on the MIQ National Office workforce transition.

4.2 Operational Update

4.2.1 Omicron Outbreak – Ongoing Support

MIQ has five facilities across New Zealand designated as Managed Isolation and Quarantine facilities. These facilities provide support to community cases (including close contacts) who are unable to safely isolate at home, as well as refugees, evacuees, mariners and some air crew.

4.2.2 Current Occupancy

As at 28 April 2022 there were 110 people in Managed Isolation and Quarantine.

Total PAX in MIQ:	Community cases:	Mariners/Air Crew:	Evacuees/Refugees:
110	41	8	61

4.2.3 Community Cases in MIQF

The below graph displays the number of quarantine rooms used for community cases across the MIQ network, broken down by city. Data is currently collected for this reporting on weekdays only.



Overall quarantine usage remains low and with a slight downward trend – likely reflecting the overall movement in national case numbers.

4.2.4 Vaccination of Frontline Staff (including booster information)

For workers on site for the week 18-24 April 2022, the BWTR shows that 98.5 percent had two doses of the vaccine, zero percent had one dose and the remaining 1.5 percent (13 workers) had the vaccine status 'unknown'.

Of the 13 workers with an 'unknown' vaccination status, six still requires an NHI match. The Workforce Testing Team is investigating the remaining seven workers, to confirm vaccination status.

Vaccination assurance follow-ups for those with 'unknown' status in the BWTR on site between 11-17 April 2022 did not identify any breaches of the Vaccination Order. Of the seven workers between 11-17 April 2022 who were NHI-matched but showing vaccination status 'unknown', all workers have been confirmed as being compliant with the Vaccination Order.

For workers on site for the week 18-24 April 2022 with regards to booster shots:

Workers on site 18-24 April 2022	Has received a booster	Overdue for booster	Eligible in coming months	Under 18	Unknown*	Total
	859 (96.2%)	5 (0.6%)	20 (2.2%)	3 (0.3%)	6 (0.7%)	893

The Workforce Testing and Vaccination team will investigate the five workers showing as overdue for a booster to check if they were breaches of the Vaccination Order or if there was another reason for that (e.g. a data error).

Of the seven workers who were on site between 11-17 April who appeared to be overdue for a booster (in breach of the Vaccination Order), follow ups identified three workers who were on site who should have had a booster. In these cases, management is notified at the facility so they can make sure security staff understand the booster entry requirements. Other workers were eligible for a medical exemption due to recent recovery from COVID-19, but BWTR is not yet updated. Another was an incorrect sign-in, and one has been contacted but still awaiting confirmation of their vaccine status.

*The 'unknowns' will likely have their vaccine status updated in due course as they are NHI matched, or any vaccine data issues are sorted.

4.2.5 Staff Testing

The Ministry of Health have updated their systems so that border workers' RAT results are now pulled from "My Covid Record" into the Border Worker Testing Register (BWTR).

Reporting from the BWTR shows that 893 people undertook work in our facilities last week. The table below shows how many of those workers were either compliant with the Testing Order, overdue for a test or still needed to be NHI-matched.

	Workers on site 18-24 April 2022	Percentage of total NHI-matched workers on site
Compliant NHI-matched workers	580	65%
Overdue NHI-matched workers	307	35%
Need NHI-match	6	
Workers on site	893	

4.3 Ombudsman Complaints

MBIE are currently managing 92 cases, with 68 of those being preliminary enquiries.

Of the 17 active cases:

- one concerns MIAS;
- five concern emergency allocations;

- three concern exemptions from managed isolation;
- three concern undue financial hardship;
- one concerns access to fresh air in a facility;
- three concern MIQ facilities, and;
- s9(2)(ba)(i)

MBIE closed four cases in the week ending 22 April 2022.

4.4 Grounded Kiwis Judicial Review

On 27 April, the High Court published its judicial review of the requirement to have an MIQ voucher to enter New Zealand and the MIQ booking system, brought by Grounded Kiwis. The judgement left open the wording of the declaratory relief statement.

The parties have 14 days to agree to the wording of appropriate declaratory relief, or jointly seek an extension. As at Thursday morning MBIE have had only one general media query for a statement. s9(2)(f)(iv)

4.5 Upcoming Communications Issues and Activities

As at 26 April 2022:

Date	Activity	Lead agency	Comms material	Ministerial Involvement Y/N
In Progress	Grounded Kiwis	MIQ	Reactive comms	Y
1 May (TBC)	LAMP Trail with Air NZ	MIQ	Reactive comms with Air NZ	Y – Minister Verrall
13 May	Proactive release of original glide path/future of MIQ documents	MIQ	Reactive comms	Y
June	s9(2)(ba)(i)	MIQ	Reactive comms	Y

4.6 Invoicing

The table below shows the number of invoices issued up to 24 April 2022.

Grouping	Invoices issued (net of credit notes)	Paid	Issued not due	Issued overdue	Invoices issued (\$)	Paid (\$)	Issued not due (\$)	Issued overdue (\$)	90+ days over due	90+ days overdue (\$)
Groups /Temp Visa	9,984	6,818	1,124	2,042	\$75,269,215	\$62,834	\$3,349,448	\$9,085,683	1,300	\$6,953,626
Maritime	783	650	60	73	\$3,571,616	\$3,201,822	\$91,658	\$278,136	28	\$118,312
Aircrew	317	267	24	26	\$4,790,585	\$2,804,329	\$778,478	\$1,207,778	9	\$115,608
Other	41,532	25,906	5,541	10,085	\$124,953,107	\$86,713,428	\$10,599,370	\$27,640,309	5,949	\$19,239,243
Total	\$52,616	33,641	6,749	12,226	\$208,584,523	\$155,553,663	\$14,818,954	\$38,211,906	7,286	\$26,426,789
Percentage	100%	64.5%	12.1%	23.2%	100%	74.6%	7.1%	18.3%	14% of invoices issued	13% of \$ value of invoices

4.6.1 Fees Collection

Invoicing is up to the point where returnees left MIQ from 18-25 January 2022. In addition:

- The number of invoices processed in the month of April 2022 will be impacted by the three four-day working weeks due to public holidays;

- Unmatched data remains an issue and will be further investigated once invoicing is up-to-date;
- There are 6,474 unmatched records in the database for the period 25 March 2021 - 28 February 2022;
- These returnees will need to have their liability determined before they are invoiced. The number of people yet to be invoiced is undetermined until those unmatched records are processed through liability rules.

4.6.2 Invoicing Backlog

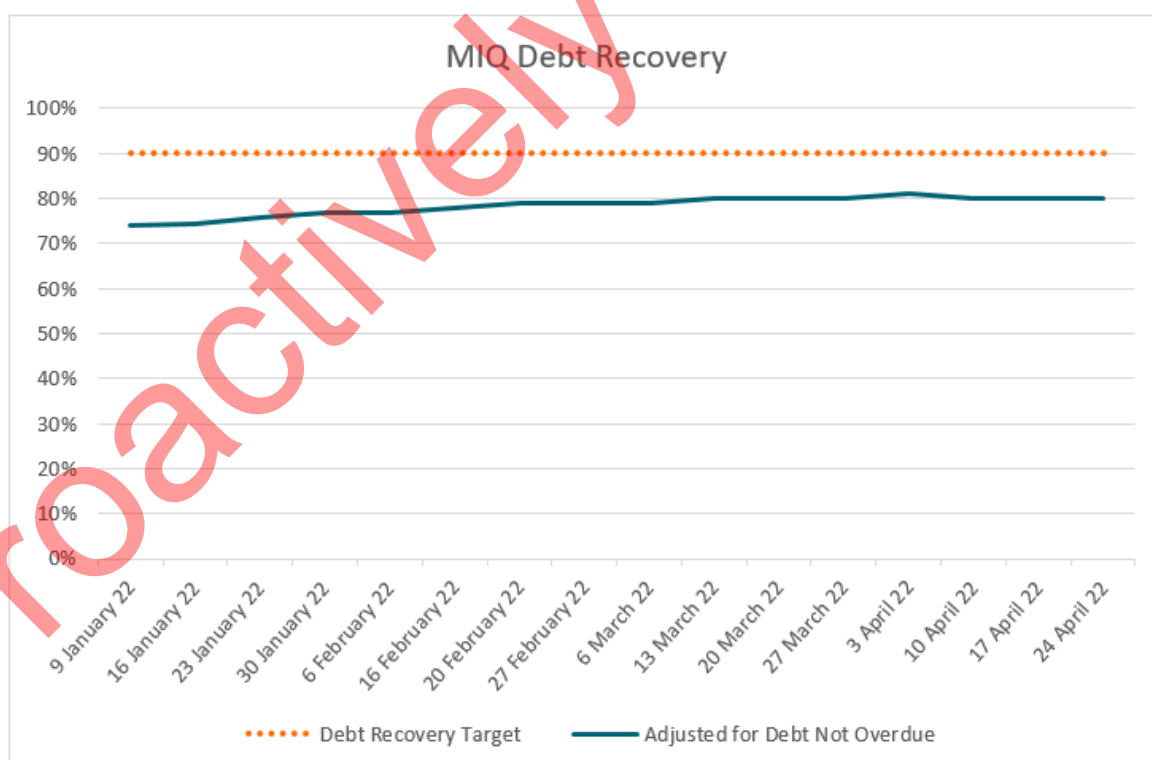
The process to invoice backlog returnees from August 2020 to 24 March 2021 has been completed, with invoices sent up to 24 March 2021. This has led to 4,624 invoices being sent out, with a total value of \$15.5m.

s9(2)(g)(i)

4.6.3 Debt Recovery

The debt recovery percentage, factoring in all repayments to date, is tracking at 80 percent. In addition:

- As at 24 April 2022, 8,781 invoices worth \$31.469m has been passed on to our partner, and \$10.715m has now been paid;
- An additional \$691k of debt is under instalment with our partner and is expected to convert to payments received over the coming weeks;
- Of the invoices sent, 602 customers worth \$2.208m have now submitted waiver applications, and while applications are processed, they stay as outstanding debt;



4.6.4 Fee Waivers

The table below breaks down the waiver application information between 11 August 2020 and 24 April 2022. The numbers below relate to all waiver applications; waivers can be applied for before, during and after an individual has stayed in managed isolation.

All Waiver Applications Received	Received and not progressed	Total Completed	Approved Waiver Applications			Declined Waiver Applications		
			Financial Hardship	Special Circumstances	BOTH	Financial Hardship	Special Circumstances	Financial Hardship
17,174	2,872	12,331	92	8,193	17,174	2,872	12,331	92

4.6.5 Reducing the Fee Waiver backlog

At the end of 2021 MBIE reported on the backlog of fee waiver applications:

- The number of new applications received (weekly) from 17 April to 24 April 2022 is 187.
- This is a net decrease in weekly application from 17 April to 24 April 2022 of 250.
- This is a net reduction in applications from 13 December 2021 to 24 April 2022 of 3,116.

Please note: It is not possible to determine a dollar value for the waivers granted, as when a waiver is granted a requestor does not necessarily get to the liability assessment and invoice stage.

Status	Backlog at 13 December 2021	New Applications Received since 13 December 2021	Backlog at 17 April 2022
Processing or to be processed	3,979	3,963	1,771
Waiting for Customer	1,108		200
Total	5,087	3,963	1,971

4.7 Group Arrivals Update

Summary of approved group arrivals as of 27 April 2022 (to end June 2022):

Group	Date of Arrival	Allocation Approved	Final number of rooms allocated	Comments
Refugee Quota	25 April – 1 May	34	14 (34 pax)	The Refugee Centre is forecasting arrivals of 45 pax (30 rooms) per fortnight until end of June 2022. They are confident they will meet their target of 800 refugees for the fiscal year 21/22.
	Apr (TBC)	6	3 (6 pax)	
	2 – 8 May	0	0	
	9 – 15 May	18	12 (18 pax)	
	16 – 22 May	15	10 (15 pax)	
	23 – 29 May	31	17 (31 pax)	
	May (TBC)	104	47 (104 pax)	
June (TBC)	90	45 (90 pax)		
Afghanistan Arrivals	25 - 30 April	33	16 (33 pax)	MFAT expects a remaining 103 pax to enter New Zealand as part of the Afghanistan response. The taskforces for MFAT and Immigration New Zealand will wind down over the next two weeks.

5. The Border Executive Board Report



5.1 Items to Note / Update

5.1.1 Border Executive Board Meeting

The BEB met on 27 April 2022 to begin developing a border sector strategy. As part of the discussion the Board identified the following areas of focus for the next 12 months:

- reopening New Zealand;
- health at the border;
- supply chain;
- digitisation;
- data sharing and privacy.

The next BEB meeting is 4 May 2022.

5.1.2 Maritime Border Programme

Tranche 1: On Friday 22 April 2022, you signed the urgent changes to the Maritime Border Order that will remove the mandatory isolation and MIQ requirements on people arriving through the maritime border. These changes will take effect from 11.59pm on Monday 2 May 2022. This has the downstream effect of removing the regular testing requirements for maritime border workers. Vaccination requirements for maritime border workers will be retained along with PPE for certain circumstances.

Tranche 2: You have agreed to reopen the maritime border to passengers from 31 July 2022. This will be publicly announced on 11 May, once the final health settings have been confirmed. A briefing confirming those health settings (including vaccination and testing requirements for arriving passengers) is due by the end of this week (29 April 2022). A communications team with participants from all the border agencies has been set up to support the announcement.

5.1.3 Reconnecting New Zealanders – Air Border Implementation

Overall, volumes for passenger processing are being well managed operationally. Work continues towards the 1 May 2022 reopening step, with agencies confident of being ready (as at 27 April 2022). Agencies are supportive of the Ministry of Health's approach to an Omnibus Order in May 2022 that will roll-up a range of changes instead of continual individual change.

5.1.4 Vote Customs Standard Estimates Questionnaire 2022/23

As part of Parliament's financial scrutiny process, Select Committees examine the appropriations a Minister responsible for a Vote is seeking from Parliament in the Estimates of Appropriations for the upcoming financial year. The Estimates examination is commenced through the Standard Estimates Questionnaire issued by the Finance and Expenditure Committee.

You have received a Standard Estimates Questionnaire for Vote Customs as you are responsible for the Vote Customs Border System Performance appropriation and the Traveller Declaration System Development appropriation.

Your office has agreed to an amalgamated response for Vote Customs. The response will be submitted by the Minister for Customs, subject to consultation with your office on relevant content. The response must be provided to the Finance and Expenditure Committee between 2.00pm on 19 May 2022 and 1.00pm on 20 May 2022.

6. New Zealand Customs Service Weekly Report



6.1 Items to Note/Updates

6.1.1 New Zealand Traveller Declaration System

The New Zealand Traveller Declaration systems and processes are operating as designed.

6.1.2 Compliance Checking at the Border

As part of Reconnecting New Zealanders, the COVID-19 Public Health Response (Air Border) Order 2021 came into force on 28 February 2022. Customs staff undertake compliance checks for all travellers at the border. There are now different requirements placed on travellers based on their citizenship and the countries they have travelled to within 14 days of beginning their journey to New Zealand.

Customs continues to check all passengers on arrival for evidence of pre-departure testing or exemption, vaccination verification or exemption or a travel pass. Travellers who do not provide the required evidence may incur an infringement offence fee between \$500 and \$4,000 depending on the nature of the offence. New Zealand citizens who do not provide the required evidence of vaccination status will be referred to Ministry of Health officials for further intervention.

For the period 19 to 25 April 2022 (both dates inclusive), a total of 32,037 passengers travelled to New Zealand. Of this number, 62 were considered to not meet the requirements for air travel into New Zealand:

- 7 travellers were issued warning letters, and 55 travellers have been issued with an infringement offence fee for not meeting pre-departure testing requirements;
- no travellers have been issued with an infringement offence fee for not meeting vaccination verification requirements, and no travellers have been referred to Ministry of Health for further intervention.

7. COVID-19 Chief Executives Board

7.1 Items to Note/Updates

The COVID-19 Chief Executives Board did not meet this week, with the next meeting scheduled for 3 May 2022. This will involve discussions on an amendment to its Terms of Reference, the future structure and content of the System Assurance Framework, as well as planning underway to support the identification and management of key lessons in the response across agencies. It will also establish the basis for a plan to transition the management of COVID-19 towards a more sustainable mode of operation.

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 26 April 2022. Peter Mersi, Chief Executive of the COVID-19 All of Government Response, attended the meeting to reflect on what the next phase of the response is likely to look like. The Group also discussed the rapid review of the lessons from the response to the Omicron variant, as well as the future of the advisory group.

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 and is next scheduled to meet on 4 May 2022.

10. Business Leaders Forum

10.1 Items to Note/Updates

The Business Leaders Forum did not meet this week and does not currently have a date for its next meeting.

11. Community Panel

11.1 Items to Note/Updates

The Community Panel did not meet this week and is next scheduled to meet on 4 May 2022. This meeting will include a discussion on the next phase of the COVID-19 response and the future of the Panel.


12. Government Modelling Group

12.1 Items to Note/Updates

There are no updates from the Government Modelling Group this week. Future updates will be provided where significant.

13. Upcoming Cabinet Papers

s9(2)(f)(iv)



Proactively Released

COVID-19 Insights References

¹ Vice. COVID Conspiracy Theorists Wreak Havoc with a Story About Snake Venom. <https://www.vice.com/en/article/m7vdkp/bryan-ardis-watch-the-water-snake-venom-covid> – Accessed 20 April 2022

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³ Hatchard Report. <https://hatchardreport.com/> - Accessed 20 April 2022

⁴ Counterspin media. <https://counterspinmedia.com/resources-videos/> - Accessed April 20 2022

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⁶ Vaxxed Déjà vu. <https://counterspinmedia.com/blog/resources-videos/episode-62-vax-deja-vu/> - Accessed April 20 2022

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