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

Proactive Release

The following items have been proactively released by the Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern, Prime Minister:

Paper: COVID-19 Weekly Monitoring Report

Minute of Decision: COVID-19 Weekly Monitoring Report

COVID-19 Weekly Monitoring Report

Wednesday 22 April 2020

[IN-CONFIDENCE]

Current strategy: Elimination through stamping out the virus

Current Alert Level: 4

This weekly report responds to COVID-19 Ministerial Group's 9 April directive for All-of-Government officials to develop a set of measures and regular reporting that will inform future decisions on changing Alert Levels or the overall strategy, and to report them regularly.

The report places information about COVID-19 in New Zealand and health system capacity alongside evidence of the effects of the restrictions on the economy and society more broadly, and public attitudes towards, and compliance with, the restrictions.

Contents

This report covers:

The contents of this report reflect the principal matters that need to be taken into consideration when determining whether to change alert levels – as noted by the COVID-19 Ministerial Group on 9 April.

There are some gaps in measures and data and these are noted where applicable. All-of-Government officials will continue to improve the measures.

Key changes and developments from last week

Developments to note

- Daily cases and active cases continue to drop whilst recoveries increase.
- Testing capacity continues to increase.
- There has been no material change in measures of traffic and people movement from low levels recorded earlier in the lockdown, apart from a reduction in traffic over Easter.
- Social measures show hardship continuing to increase. Feelings of isolation and loneliness are increasing. Demand for food banks has doubled.

Additions to the report

- Data on PPE availability and demand.
- Data on regional testing rates per 1,000 population.
- International comparisons of cases and testing rates.
- Company liquidations.
- Changes to the selection of social indicators. The current indicators have been chosen to cover the domains of safety, hardship and wellbeing.
- The poll used to report measures of public attitudes has not been rerun since last week. We expect updated data for next week and have reported some findings from MoH's Health and Wellbeing survey in the interim.

Improvements we are working on

- There are some problems with data quality regarding source of transmission. Ministry of Health officials are working with ESR* and public health units on this. The definitions changed last weekend and this is reflected in the chart on page 5. We understand that further changes to definitions are being made.
- All-of-government and health officials are working together to include measures of the performance of New Zealand's test-trace-isolate system.

*ESR is the Crown Research Institute which holds and maintains the EpiSurv database of COVID-19 cases in New Zealand.

COVID-19 in New Zealand

New case numbers have declined further over the past week. We continue to have relatively few serious cases, and relatively low incidence of cases amongst the particularly vulnerable elderly population.

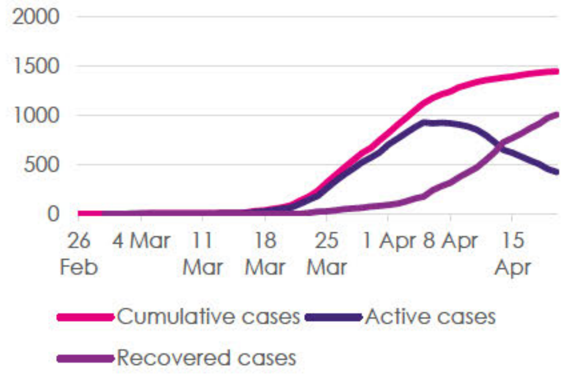
We have increasing confidence that we have limited community transmission and that we have not had a large number of cases that have not been tested. There have been small numbers of cases of community transmission (locally acquired from an unknown source) each day (0–4 daily cases). Data has become more comprehensive over the past week. Our high number of tests (see page on testing and tracing), low proportion of positive tests and negative sentinel testing results, together with our low number of hospital presentations, increasingly suggests that there is not widespread community transmission of the virus at this time.

Regionally, cases over the past 14 days have been concentrated in five DHBs: Auckland, Canterbury, Southern, Waikato and Waitematā. Hutt Valley, Taranaki, Wairarapa and West Coast have had no new cases over the past 14 days.

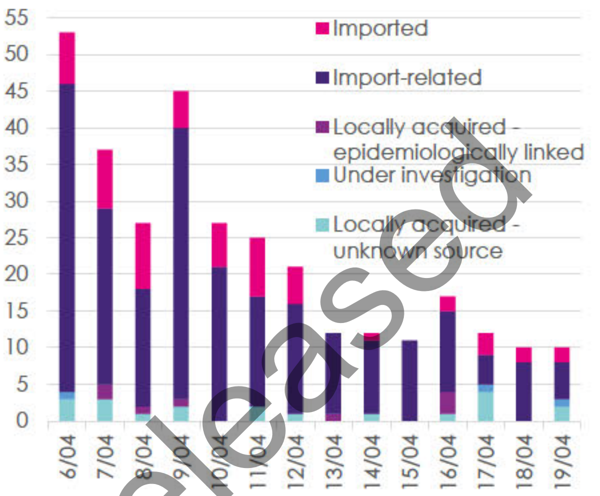
COVID-19 in New Zealand

All data presented on this page is from Episurv via the Ministry of Health. These differ from the new case numbers reported publicly, as the data below reflects the actual date each case was logged and subsequent data revisions.

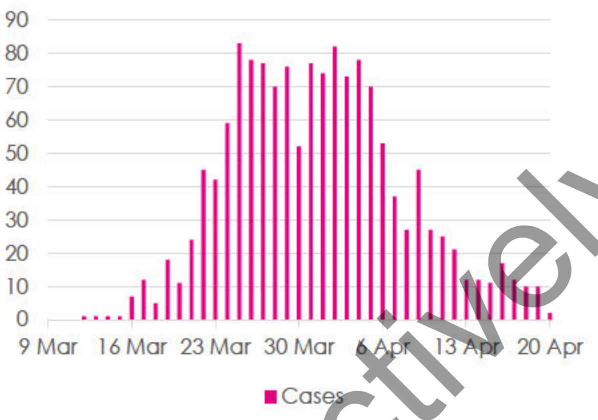
Cumulative, active and recovered cases



Daily cases by source of transmission (past 14 days)



Daily cases

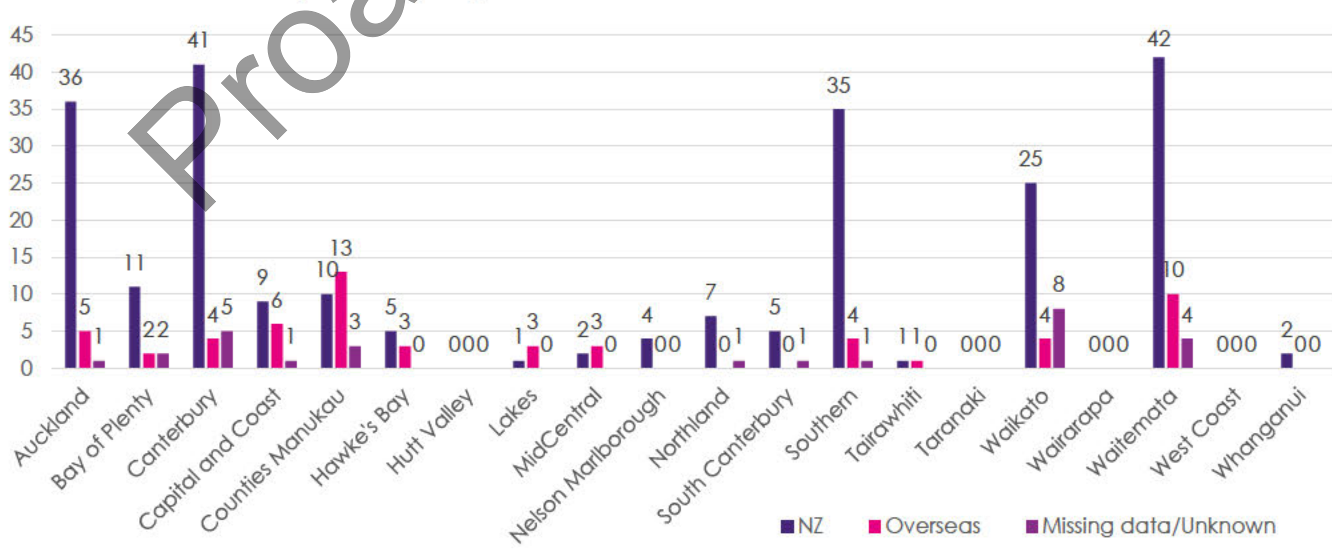


Definitions:

- **Import-related cases**: Cases that have a reported link to an overseas acquired case.
- **Locally acquired cases, epidemiologically linked**: Cases that have a reported link to a locally acquired case with unknown source.
- **Locally acquired cases, unknown source**: Cases with no reported link (potential community transmission).

Note that these definitions are under review. We also understand that further investigation has been conducted into 'locally acquired – unknown source' cases (potential community transmission), which is not reflected in the EpiSurv figures (and therefore not reflected in the chart above).

DHB cases over the 14 days to 20 April, by location of transmission



Testing and tracing system

Our testing capacity is now over 7,500 tests per day. As at 21 April, complete test stock on hand in labs is 83,000, which is 23 days' supply at current (7-day average) levels. We have confidence in our testing regime but the average speed of the process needs to improve.

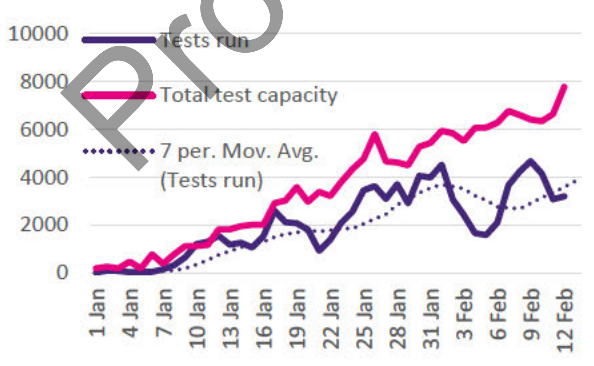
National testing rates and capacity are good, but to date some regions and populations may be somewhat under-represented. This is increasingly being addressed.

Our contact tracing capacity is now at around 1,000 contacts per day. The contact tracing centre is starting to see a reduction in the number of close contacts (now to 2-3 close contacts per person). This is likely due to the lockdown, which makes close contact tracing simpler. Additional pressures on capacity associated with greater personal movement at Level 3 (and in time, Level 2) will need to be estimated and planned for in order to provide assurance as we move between Levels.

In addition to capacity, timeliness measures are critical to understanding the performance of the testing and contact tracing systems. The Ministry of Health created a one-off set of testing and tracing performance measures to inform the decision to move from Alert Level 4 to Alert Level 3. This is not yet calculated on a regular basis and will be critically important when making future decisions regarding Alert Levels.

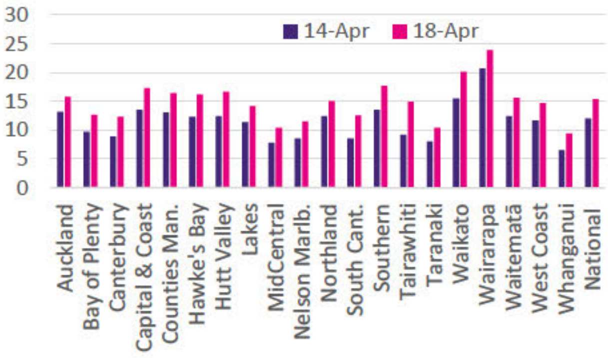
All-of-government officials are working with Health officials to include measures of the performance of our test-trace-isolate system in this report. These measures will align with the critical indicators recommended in Dr Ayesha Verrall's Rapid Audit of Contact Tracing for COVID-19 in New Zealand.

Testing capacity



Source: Lab testing dashboard 21 April

Testing rate per 1000 population, by DHB



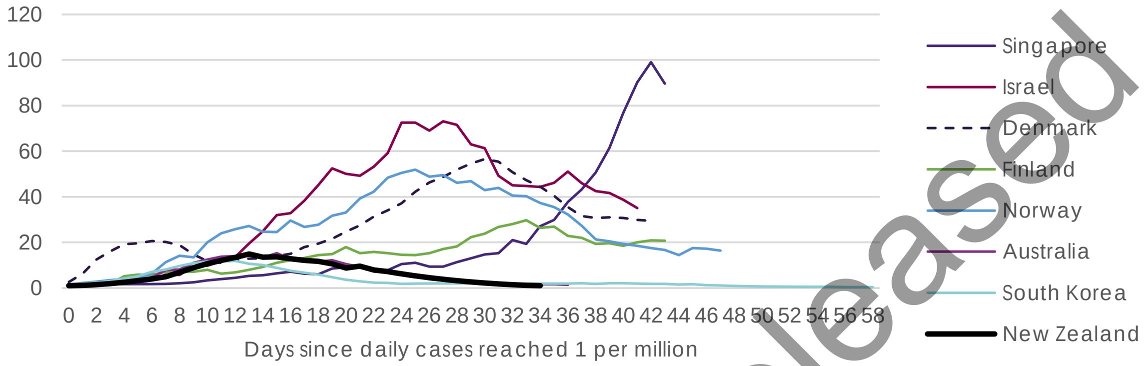
Source: MoH

International comparisons of cases and testing

International comparisons are limited by different case reporting standards, testing processes and test reporting methodologies.

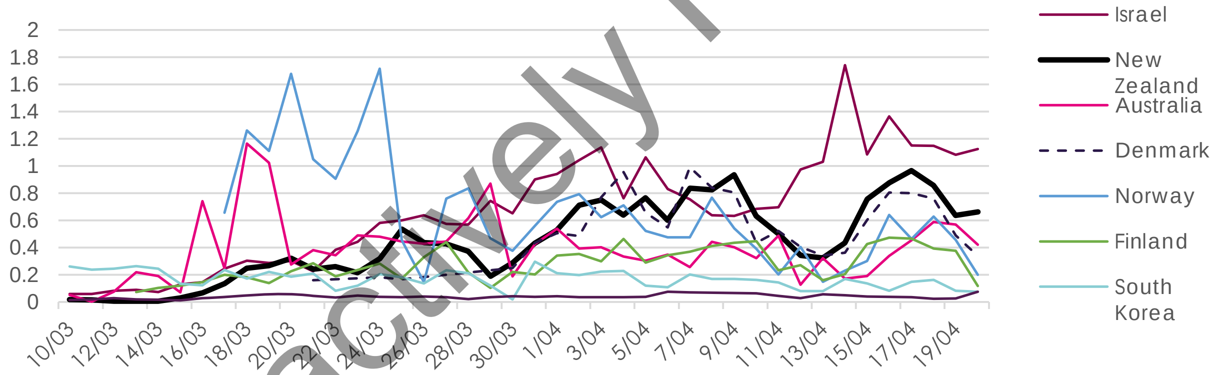
However, New Zealand appears to have performed well internationally in reducing daily cases and increasing testing. It is notable that cases have increased rapidly in Singapore over the past two weeks, after a long period of successful containment.

Daily cases per million people



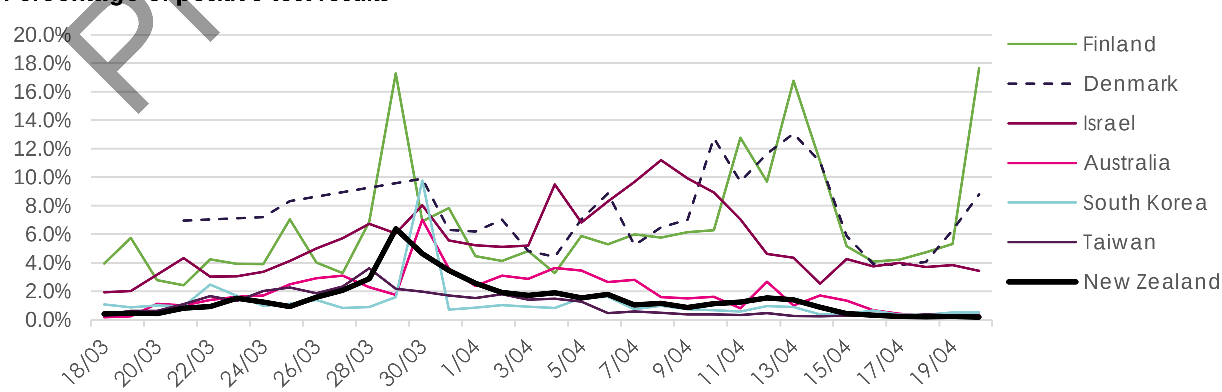
Source: Our World in Data

Daily tests per thousand people



Source: Our World in Data

Percentage of positive test results



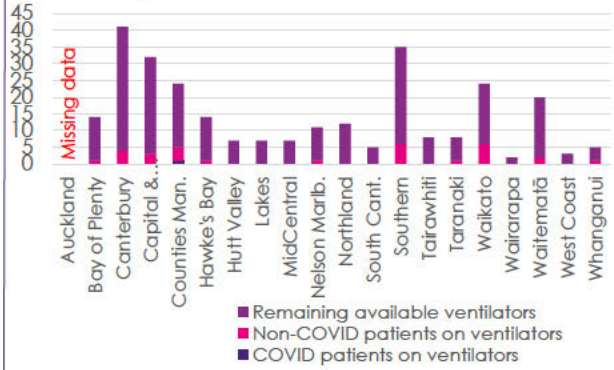
Source: Our World in Data

Health system capacity

Our health system is not currently under significant strain due to cases of COVID-19. However, benchmarks have not been set for what capacity the health system would require under a more severe outbreak of COVID-19.

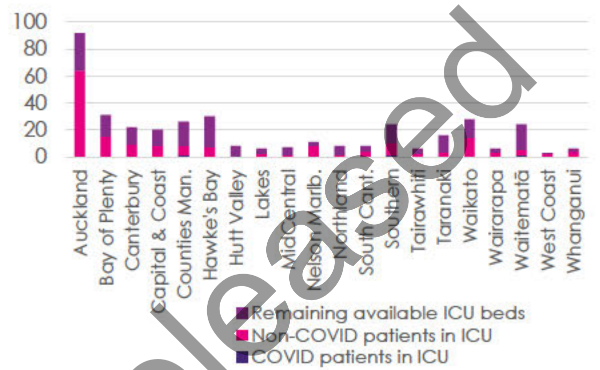
PPE stocks are increasing.

Availability of ventilators



Source: Daily COVID DHB SITREP as at midnight 20 April

Availability of ICU beds



Source: Daily COVID DHB SITREP as at midnight 20 April

Workforce

Current workforce (2019 estimate)	109,934
Total registrations in recruitment database (available to support the COVID-19 effort if required)	9,399
• Registrations with Annual Practising Certificates	5,053
• Registrations vetted and ready to be deployed	302
• Registrations deployed into roles	17

Source: MoH COVID-19 recruitment database

Available ventilators and ICU beds, nationally

National ventilators*		National ICU beds	
In use, COVID	1	In use, COVID	3
In use, other	30	In use, other	167
Available	248	Available	212
Total	279	Total	382

* Auckland data is missing

Source: Daily COVID DHB SITREP as at midnight 20 April

PPE availability

Status	Product Description	PPE Stock Received (Since 6 April 2020)	PPE Stock on Order - Expected in next Fortnight	All PPE Stock on Order	Estimated Fortnightly Demand Forecast for PPE		
					DHB and All Health	Other Essential Services	ALL Essential Services
🟢	N95 Mask (or equivalent)	150,400	2,047,000	12,047,000	452,769	1,681,121	2,133,890
🟢	General Purpose (Procedure) Mask	3,482,500	17,180,000	104,682,044	5,366,769	12,415,648	17,782,418
🟢	Isolation Gown (or equivalent)	50,000	1,003,000	3,103,000	530,769	180,527	711,297
🔴	Disposable Apron		103,000	2,803,000	75,415	398,782	474,198
🟡	Glasses (or equivalent)		400,000	1,150,000	53,215	373,563	426,778
🟢	Face shield (or equivalent)	86,000	567,000	567,000	6,462	206,927	213,389
🔴	Gloves (all sizes) (Single Item)	13,774,800	unknown	unknown	6,313,371	41,106,409	47,419,780

🟢	anticipated fortnight demand is sufficiently covered by stock on hand, received in the last week and expected stock arrivals in next fortnight
🟡	anticipated fortnight demand is barely covered by stock on hand, received in the last week and expected stock arrivals in next fortnight
🔴	anticipated fortnight demand is not covered by known stock on hand, received in the last week and expected stock arrivals in next fortnight

Source: MoH and NCMC as at 20 April

Public and business compliance and movement

People generally appear to be complying with Level 4 restrictions and movement continues to be well below pre-lockdown levels. Measures of physical movement (light vehicle traffic volumes and people movements as indicated by mobile phone location data) show sharp declines from 26 March, which have endured. Light vehicle traffic fell markedly over Easter, and remained low as at 20 April.

Public reports of breaches and Police recorded breaches have continued to steadily accumulate. As at 21 April there have been a total of 4,128 breaches under the Health Act or Civil Defence and Emergency Management Act. Of these, the majority (86.7 per cent) have resulted in a warning. Approximately 52 per cent of breaches were by persons who have been prosecuted for an offence in the last two years prior to Alert Level 4.

All international arrivals are now quarantined for two weeks, which has increased our confidence in our ability to manage imported cases. As at 2pm 21 April there were 2,403 people in quarantine or managed isolation. Suspected and confirmed COVID-19 cases, as well as close contacts of confirmed cases, are meant to self-isolate. We currently have little understanding of compliance with that self-isolation.

There is limited information about business plans and processes for physical workplaces, which is a key area of transmission risk. There are an estimated 529,000 essential workers at physical workplaces under Alert Level 4, and there will be an estimated 1.2 million workers at physical workplaces under Alert Level 3. MPI has been conducting onsite visits to check that primary sector businesses have robust plans and processes in place. As of 9 April MPI had completed 2,730 on-site verification visits and 2,401 remote verifications, resulting in 9 warning notices. We do not have data on whether other essential workplaces have robust plans and processes in place.

Public and business compliance and movement

People generally appear to be complying with Level 4 restrictions, based on measured traffic and people movement. There are large number of online breach reports, but these appear to be slowing.

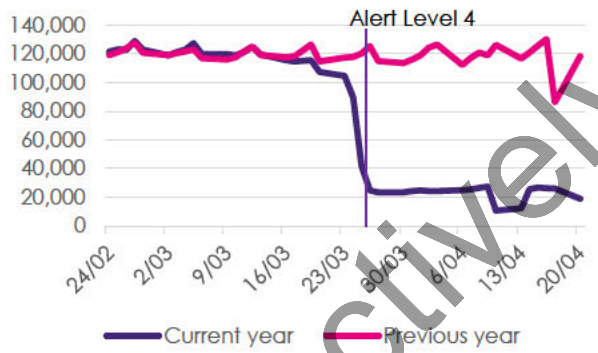
There are a large number of essential workers at physical workplaces under Alert Level 4, and the number of workers at physical workplaces will grow substantially under Alert Level 3.

Summary of essential and non-essential workforce estimate between Alert Level 4 and Level 3

	Level 4			Level 3		
	Essential Service	Non-Essential Services	Total	Essential Service	Non-Essential Services	Total
Going to work	529,000	-	529,000	701,000	471,000	1,172,000
Working from home	139,000	501,000	640,000	200,000	307,000	507,000
Unable to work	457,000	1,019,000	1,476,000	225,000	742,000	967,000
Total	1,125,000	1,520,000	2,645,000	1,126,000	1,520,000	2,646,000

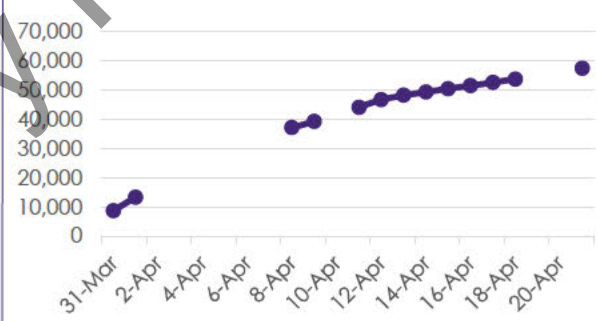
Source: MBIE

Light vehicle traffic volumes in main centres



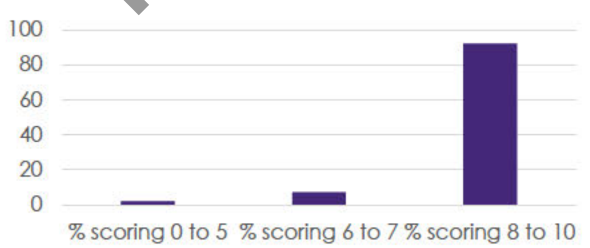
Source: NZTA

Breaches of Level 4 restrictions reported online (cumulative)



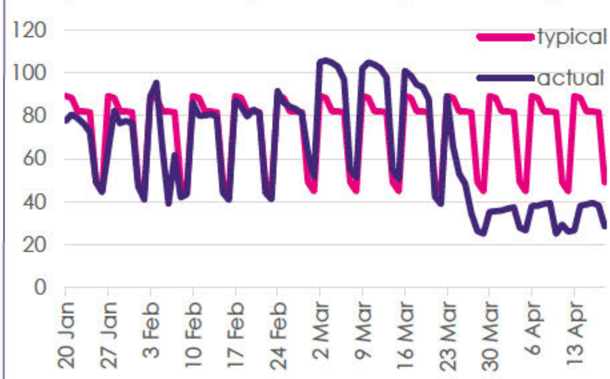
Source: NZ Police

Survey question: Thinking about all of the things the Government has asked New Zealanders to do to slow down the spread of the coronavirus, please give yourself a score between 0 and 10 for how consistently you do these things?



Source: Colmar Brunton survey 8 April, NZers 18+ (n=601)

People movement (between neighbourhoods)



Source: Data Ventures, st dev of SA2 hourly populations

Effects of the measures on society

COVID-19 is affecting material wellbeing. People are requesting Special Needs Grants, taking payment holidays (rising by 76% last week) and seeking finance for 'Buy Now Pay Later' purchases. There are currently no signs of an increase in arrears due to COVID-19, but this may change overtime, as people store up debt. Credit application enquiries returning 'hardship flags' almost tripled in April and are expected to rise (see graph).

After a slight increase in the first week of Alert Level 4 restrictions, police call-outs for family harm have reduced to pre-Lockdown levels. Reports of sexual harm have declined. As have Reports of Concern for children and young people, which have dropped to levels slightly below those seen in the 2019 Easter holiday period.

It is unclear if we are getting an accurate picture of harm under lockdown, especially as other sources indicate an increase in help-seeking. There is an upwards trend in contacts to Youthline. Suicide and depression continue to be the main reason, but reports of sexual and emotional abuse are relatively high. Help-seeking by men who have previously perpetrated family harm has also risen.

Te Hiringa Hauora / Health Promotion Agency conducted a survey during Alert Level 4 to understand the impact on harmful behaviours and wellbeing. While some respondents (20%) report drinking more than usual, a higher proportion of Māori, Pasifika and Young People are drinking less. Half of gamblers report gambling less. However, a fifth report gambling online.

Nearly a fifth of respondents (17%) report moderate to severe distress since lockdown. There is little difference between ethnic groups. Younger age groups are worst affected. The effect on wellbeing may have been more pronounced at the start of lockdown, as the Health and Wellbeing survey suggests depression and anxiety have remained static since. However, people feeling isolated or lonely has increased, especially older people (see graph).

Organisations across the country report that demand for food banks has doubled and is expected to increase further in the coming weeks. The Salvation Army has advised that calls to its foodbank have increased ten-fold from 800 per week pre-COVID-19 to 8000. It says that when people are unable to get through to MSD, they try The Salvation Army.

Key issues raised by selected Priority Communities:

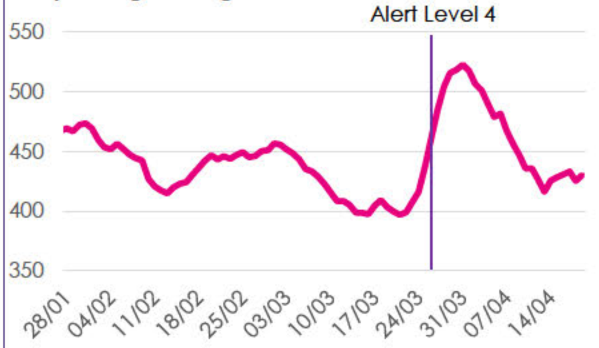
Some whānau report difficulties accessing usual food sources, such as school lunches, food banks and kaimoana. It is noted that some rangatahi are struggling with Alert Level 4 restrictions, impacting family harmony. Anxiety is reported about the high number of essential workers who are Pacific, and the risks posed to their families.

Older people report concerns that regular help, such as gardeners, cannot visit. Disabled people want COVID-19 communications to be made more accessible. Both older people and disabled people report multiple check-in calls, which has raised concerns about their personal data. Distribution and access to PPE also remain a concern for them.

Effects of the measures on society

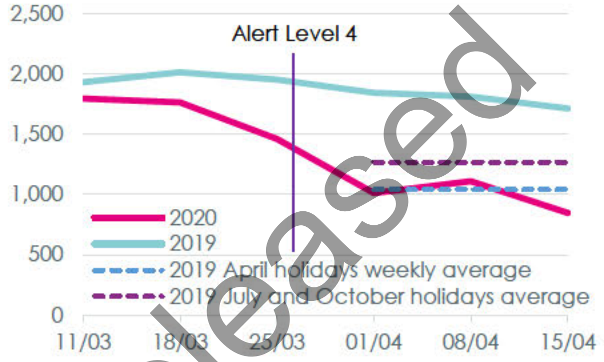
Since the beginning of Alert Level 4 there has been an increase in people seeking financial help from grants and credit. There was initially a rise in police family harm investigations, but this has dropped again. Reports of Concern for children and young people are lower than last year, but similar to Easter 2019. There is some indication of an impact on wellbeing, with some reporting distress and loneliness.

Safety: Family harm investigations by Police – 7 day rolling average



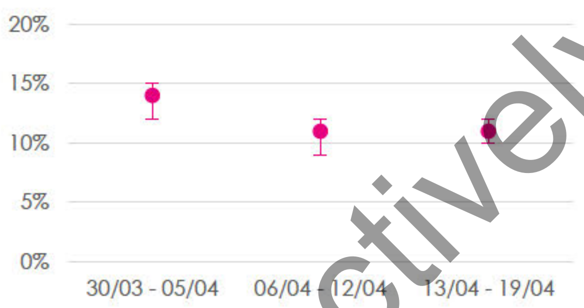
Source: NZ Police

Safety: Reports of Concern to Oranga Tamariki



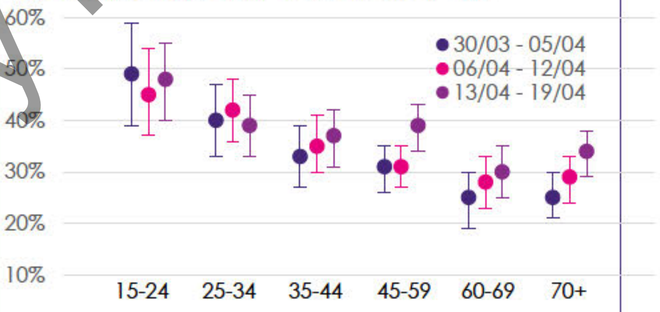
Source: Oranga Tamariki

Wellbeing: Percentage of survey respondents reporting depression or anxiety symptoms



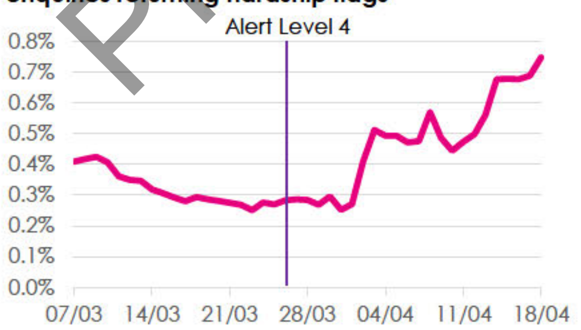
Source: Provisional data from the COVID-19 Health and Wellbeing Survey, Ministry of Health

Wellbeing: Percentage of survey respondents reporting being lonely or isolated, by age



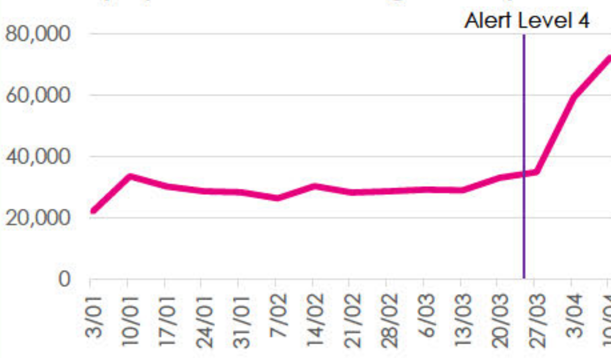
Source: Provisional data from the COVID-19 Health and Wellbeing Survey, Ministry of Health

Hardship: Percentage of consumer credit enquiries returning hardship flags



Source: Centrix*

Hardship: Special Needs Grants granted by MSD



Source: MSD

* Not all credit providers report data to Centrix but it has good coverage across NZ and depicts an accurate trend

Effects of the measures on businesses

Real-time economic indicators continue to show substantial falls in business activity across many industries since the start of Level 4. Total weekly retail spending (excluding online) is down about 60% on last year, according to electronic card transactions (ECT) data. Most non-essential categories are close to 100% below last years' levels. Food and liquor retailing is the outlier, with spending remaining at elevated levels during lockdown. Other essential services, including fuel, medical, and pharmacies are down 70% or more. A more detailed breakdown of spending shows spending on digital goods/games more than trebling compared to a year ago. Share brokering and trading is proving nearly as popular. Digital books and movies, and the equipment to support these, are also up. Note though that as the ECT data does not include certain types of spending, e.g. online transactions, these data may exaggerate the fall in retail spending.

A large labour market adjustment is likely in coming months with recent indicators suggesting that hiring freezes are already underway. According to data released by BNZ and Seek last week, job ads declined close to 30% in March 2020 when compared to February 2020. The biggest declines were in the lower South Island regions while by industry, the biggest falls were in engineering, science and technology, and sales.

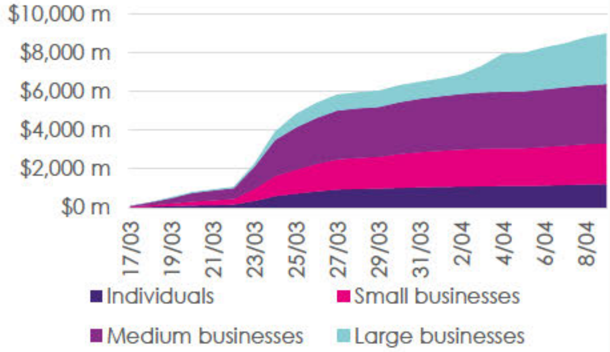
Data from the New Zealand Companies Office generally show a flattening in activity relative to the sharp declines of the last few weeks, although we note that the different timing of Easter this year is distorting year-on-year comparisons. While it is hard to draw clear conclusions from these data sets right now, we expect that they will become increasingly important as a measure of the dynamism of New Zealand's business sector post-COVID-19.

Despite provisional data on merchandise goods exports holding up well to date, the April Preliminary ANZ Business Outlook saw exporters intentions hit a record low. A net 43.6% of exporters expect sales volumes to decline in the coming year. This series typically has a good correlation with the growth in non-food manufactured exports and suggests a sizeable decline may be ahead.

Effects of the measures on businesses

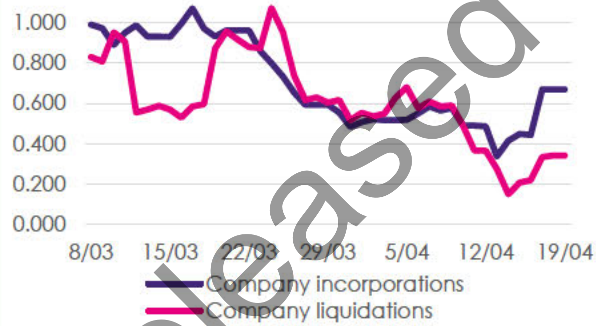
Economic indicators continue to show substantial falls in business activity across many industries since the start of Level 4. Business survey measures of activity have hit record lows and businesses across every sector have slashed expectations to employ and invest. Large numbers of businesses have applied for the wage subsidies. Companies Office data shows an immediate impact on company incorporations and liquidations. Electronic card spending data shows the retail sector has been hit hard outside of food and liquor.

Wage subsidy – cumulative paid ($millions)



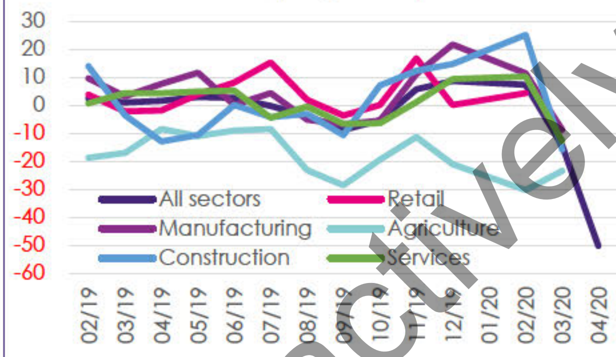
Source: MSD

Companies Office activity (ratio to year earlier of 7-day rolling average)



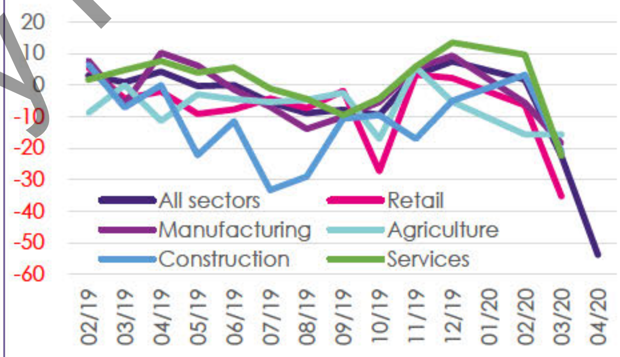
Source: Companies Office, MBIE

Investment intentions (net positive)



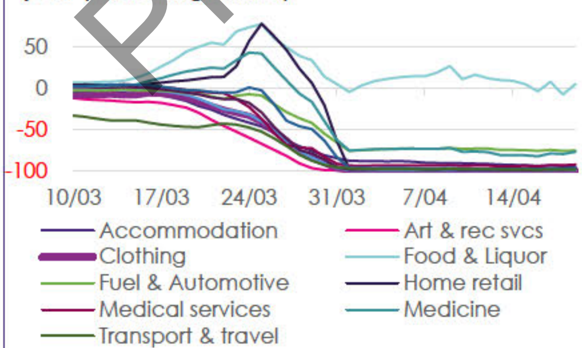
Source: ANZ Business Outlook

Employment intentions (net positive)



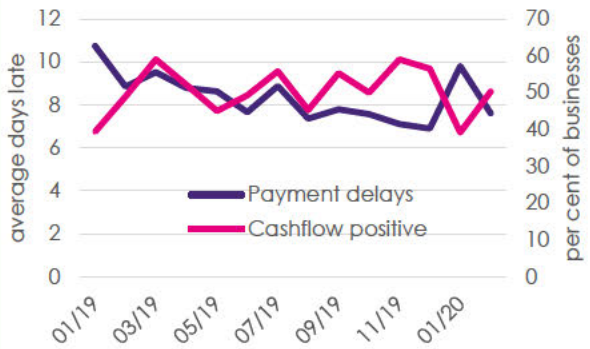
Source: ANZ Business Outlook

Card spending compared to same period last year (excluding online)



Source: Marketview

Xero Small Business Insights



Source: Xero – update expected in the coming weeks

Macroeconomic and fiscal effects of the measures

Latest data confirm the continuation of substantially curtailed economic activity under Level 4. Traffic volumes (see chart), electricity demand and consumer card spending are running at similar levels to the previous week. The number of job seeker support recipients has increased sharply by almost 30,000 since 20 March (see chart), confirming that layoffs are underway. This is despite a large number of businesses now receiving the wage subsidy, with over 1.62 million individuals now covered, and over $10 billion paid out. Consumer and business sentiment have fallen sharply (see chart; no new data since last week).

The New Zealand dollar exchange rate remains broadly stable at lower levels since the COVID-19 event emerged (see chart), reflecting the markedly weakened global and domestic economic outlooks. IMF has called the COVID-19 pandemic "The Great Lockdown", and expects the global economy to contract by 3% in 2020, with advanced economies contracting by 6.1%. China is slowly recovering, which is promising for the New Zealand primary sector in particular, while a number of other countries are loosening movement restrictions.

How the economy performs from here will depend on how the New Zealand Alert level evolves, global demand conditions, and household and firm behaviour. MBIE estimates that an additional 405,000 people will able to work at level 3 compared to level 4, with an additional 528,000 people able to go into work. Treasury estimates that at alert level 3, output will be curtailed directly by 10-15% relative to normal levels, less of an impact than the 40% estimated for alert level 4.

Fiscal response packages announced to date amount to around $22bn in committed spending (across a range of income support, general business support and sectoral measures) and the expected costs of guarantees and indemnities (see table).

Excerpt from the Executive Summary of The Treasury's 13 April Report on Economic Scenarios

"The first five scenarios assume no additional fiscal support measures beyond the approximate $20 billion of direct support that has already been announced. We also consider the economic outlook if the world economy is weaker and takes longer to recover. Key results include:

- "Falls in annual GDP are greatest in the year to March 2021, and vary from a decline of around 13% in Scenario 1, the least restrictive of the scenarios considered, to closer to one third in Scenario 3 which involves tight restrictions throughout the year.
- "Peaks in the unemployment rate vary from around 13% in Scenario 1 to nearly 26% in Scenario 3.
- "Inflation remains below the 2.0% mid-point of the target range throughout the forecast period, and monetary conditions are supportive throughout.

"…an additional $20 billion in fiscal support ($40 billion in total) cushions the decline in output and lowers the unemployment rate. In Scenario 2a, additional direct fiscal support is increased by $40 billion ($60 billion in total). Relative to Scenario 2, GDP growth is higher and the unemployment rate is lower by around 6 percentage points in the June 2021 quarter."

Macroeconomic and fiscal effects of the measures

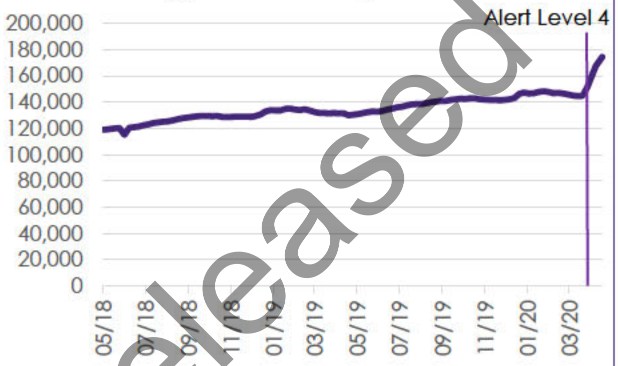
Latest data confirm the continuation of substantially curtailed economic activity under Level 4.

How the economy performs from here will depend on how movement restrictions evolve, global demand conditions and household and firm behaviour under different alert level settings.

ANZ Business Outlook

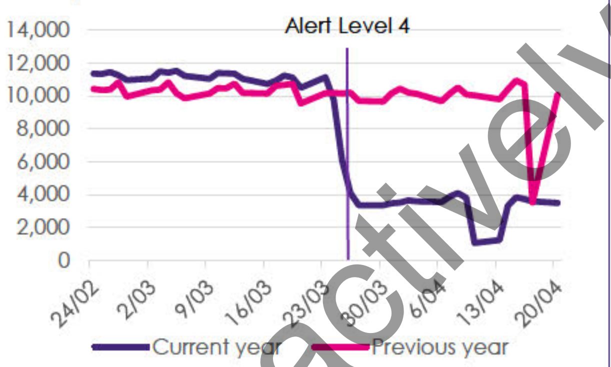
Source: ANZ

Jobseeker Support benefit recipients



Source: MSD

Heavy traffic volumes in main centres



Source: NZTA

Trade Weighted Exchange Rate Index

Source: RBNZ

Fiscal costs of commitments and programmes already announced

Spending package	Total impact on net core Crown debt ($bn), period to 2023/24
Income Support	14.884
General business and firm support	5.734
Aviation support	0.600
Health	0.606
Other	0.197
Total all packages	**22.021**

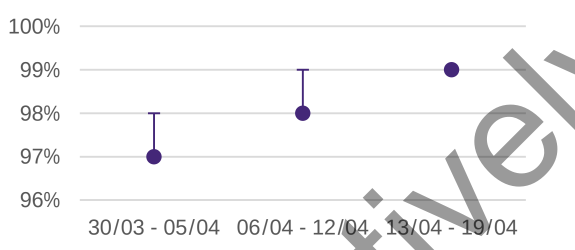
Public attitude towards the measures

There has been little formal polling activity over the past week.

Informal online polls have focused on whether New Zealanders are willing to stay at Alert Level 4. These informal polls have generally suggested that the majority of New Zealanders are willing to stay at Level 4 for longer (note that these informal online polls can suffer from self-selection bias).

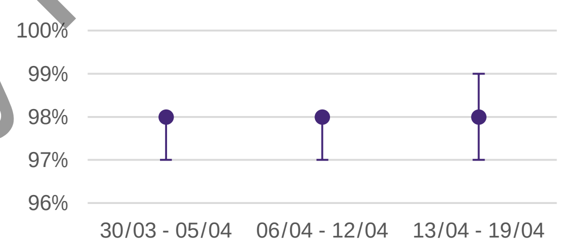
Next week we expect to be able to report on a Colmar Brunton poll that is currently in the field. This poll will include questions about how long people think restrictions will be in place, whether people think the restrictions will be worthwhile in the long run, and whether enforcement has been at the appropriate level.

Percentage of survey respondents reporting rules are clear, very clear or neither clear nor unclear



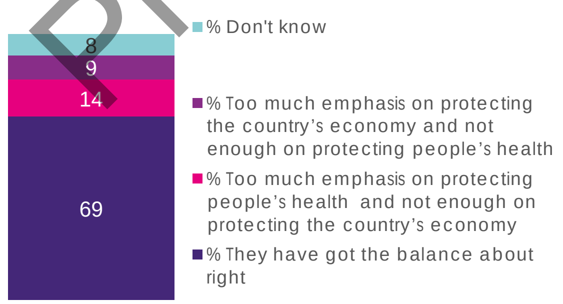
Source: Provisional data from the COVID-19 Health and Wellbeing Survey, Ministry of Health

Percentage of survey respondents reporting it as easy, very easy or neither easy nor hard to follow the rules at the current alert level

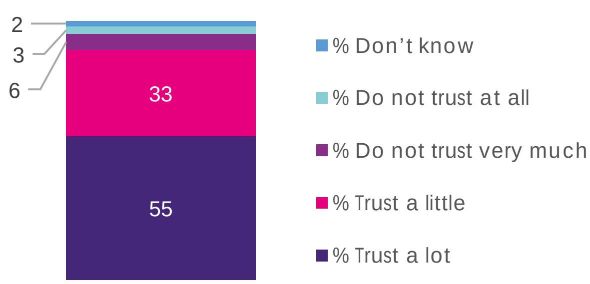


Source: Provisional data from the COVID-19 Health and Wellbeing Survey, Ministry of Health

Survey question: Which of these comes closest to your view on how the New Zealand Government is responding to the coronavirus outbreak?



Survey question: Still thinking about the New Zealand Government's response to the coronavirus outbreak, how much do you trust them to make the right decisions in the future?



Data source: Colmar Brunton report of 8 April. Base: All New Zealanders 18+ (n=601)

Meeting of the COVID-19 Ministerial Group

Minute of Decision

COVID-19 Weekly Monitoring Report

The group of Ministers with Power to Act on COVID-19 matters [CAB-20-MIN-0130] convened on 23 April 2020 at 10.30am, and in accordance with their Power to Act:

1 **noted** that on 9 April 2020, the COVID-19 Ministerial Group directed All-of-Government officials to develop a set of measures and regular reporting that will inform future decisions on changing Alert Levels or the overall strategy, and to report them regularly;

2 **noted** the weekly monitoring report as at 22 April 2020, which provides information about COVID-19 in New Zealand and health system capacity alongside evidence of the effects of the restrictions on the economy and society more broadly, and public attitudes towards, and compliance with, the restrictions.

Rachel Hayward
for Secretary of the Cabinet

Distribution:
The Cabinet
Hon James Shaw

Copied to officials via email