



# December Community Panel Meeting Minutes

<b>Date</b>	1 December 2021
<b>Time</b>	2.00-4.00pm
<b>Venue</b>	Zoom
<b>Attendees</b>	Aram Kim, Jordon Milroy, Michelle Mascoll, Margaret Brown, Sarah Sparks, Chloe Kincaid, Martin Rodgers, Amber Bill and Rory McKenzie. Guests: Rob Huddart from the Reconnecting New Zealanders programme team and Megan Stratford from the Policy team External guests: Mat Black – Chief Information Officer, Customs New Zealand, Kayt Robinson – Senior Communications and Media Advisor, Customs New Zealand, Kathy Milne – Senior Engagement Advisor, Customs New Zealand, Karen Jacobs Grant – Chief Advisor Equity, Ministry of Health and Kirkpatrick Mariner – Programme Lead Equity, Ministry of Health.
<b>Chair</b>	Sarah Sparks
<b>Minute taker</b>	Chloe Kincaid
<b>Apologies</b>	Api Talemaitoga, Anthony Taueki, Hafsa Ahmed, Callum Woodhouse

## Item 1: Welcome and apologies

1. Sarah welcomed Community Panel members with a karakia and the minutes from the previous meeting were agreed to.
2. Presenters at the meeting were from the DPMC Policy team, the Reconnecting New Zealanders programme team, Customs New Zealand the Ministry of Health's equity team.

## Items 2-9: Minutes and Actions

3. **Megan provided an update on the new COVID-19 Protection Framework (CPF) and using vaccination as a key public health measure moving forward.**
4. She asked the Panel for their impressions of the framework and what their experiences have been, in particular for those in Auckland about the transition from the Alert Level Framework to the CPF.
5. Michelle discussed her primary concerns being that many parts of Auckland weren't complying very well with Alert Level restrictions anyway, so the changes didn't make a big difference. Additionally, that there is a significant amount of guidance for businesses across sectors but at first there was a lack of guidance for community events or personal undertakings.

6. Megan has since found some guidance for different personal situations under the CPF which can be found here: <https://covid19.govt.nz/traffic-lights/life-at-red/gatherings-and-visits-at-red/public-and-private-gatherings-at-red/> and <https://covid19.govt.nz/traffic-lights/life-at-red/gatherings-and-visits-at-red/visiting-friends-and-whanau-at-red/>.
7. **Amber provided some insights from meeting with the developers of the My Vaccine Pass** verifier app on the identifying features which are displayed when the My Vaccine Pass is scanned. The developers discussed potential privacy implications and issues around deadnaming/alternative names being used. Ultimately, the purpose of the identifying details being used is to ensure that businesses are able to verify the validity of the My Vaccine Pass if required.
  - a. Subsequent engagement with the Ministry of Health has taken place to try and rectify specifically the issue of people being deadnamed on their My Vaccine Passes.
8. Michelle discussed briefly confusion surrounding who would be responsible for enforcing or not enforcing the use of My Vaccine Passes at hired or public facilities. Megan talked about in general, these are covered by the nature of the event as outlined on the Unite Against COVID-19 website but local councils are also setting their own regulations with regards to their facilities.
9. Margaret discussed the response to the new CPF in her community. There is a sense of lack of interest to understand the system due to confusion in many rural communities. There is a level of fatigue in trying to digest new information constantly, especially when there is a strong feeling of not being overly affected by the pandemic (day-to-day).
10. She also talked about how farms and rural events would manage the enforcement of My Vaccine Passes either as a business or as an event. Logistically it could be challenging to sight My Vaccine Passes for visitors to a farm (as an example) when work could be carried out without coming into contact with another person. Another example given was managing enforcement of My Vaccine Passes at an event where support could be an hour away in another town.
11. **Jordon discussed how use of the My Vaccine Pass can be difficult with a physical disability**, coupled with having to scan in for record keeping purposes isn't very practical. He also raised the issue of getting a My Vaccine Pass not being easy to navigate, particularly if you don't have a RealMe account.
  - a. As a secondary issue, some of his community have received spam emails purporting to be from RealMe. He mentioned that some further awareness should be done on cyber security to try and mitigate these spams.
12. Sarah supported Jordon's statements about the difficulties using RealMe and relying on access to computers and reliable WiFi. She said that there are barriers before people can even access necessary information.
13. **Sarah also raised issues around questions coming from the faith communities** to do with vaccine passes in places of worship, issues that some people had with not having a choice of vaccination to use and also rongoa practitioners wanting to work with the government on potential natural solutions available, rather than synthetic.
14. Martin discussed alternative ways of getting a vaccine pass with the Panel, examples given were: ringing the 0800 number and accessing passes via participating pharmacies.

15. **Michelle raised issues with vaccine passes in Auckland and the LGBTQ+ communities:**
  - a. New system is difficult to understand and impacts most on diverse and low-income communities.
  - b. Within a single day, members of LGBTQ+ communities may have to go through the trauma of being deadnamed multiple times either in person or through the 0800 number. Identities have been questioned because of vocal tones etc.
16. Amber then discussed DPMC's role in the system to convene and coordinate and asked whether Michelle would be available to discuss issues directly with the Ministry of Health. DPMC will facilitate this action.
17. **Rob Huddart then joined the meeting and provided an update on moving to the CPF.** He said that when the borders open, the settings will likely stay as they are unless there are significant risks, e.g. new variants.
18. He said that the third step for the Reconnecting New Zealanders programme is still being developed. A paper went to Cabinet with some decisions on this piece before Christmas.
19. Margaret discussed the hesitancy in her community with new variants and weariness of changes to current settings.
  - a. Rural people tend to hunker down when there is a problem, e.g. not making travel plans until there is more certainty which can be difficult to restart economy.
20. **Mat Black from Customs New Zealand then joined the meeting.** He introduced himself and presented to the group on the traveller health declaration (New Zealand Traveller Declaration (NZTD)) of which Customs is leading the development.
21. Mat discussed what the NZTD would look like and the different stages in the process. The launch date is currently March 2022. User testing is currently being done and external stakeholder engagement (in confidence). Pilots of the system will be run in February and it will go live at the end of March.
22. Sarah asked Mat about Customs' current engagement with Māori given their tangata whenua responsibilities. Mat responded that the team is looking to expedite engagement with Māori, initially it has only been on a small scale. Mat will take as action to ensure that this happens and Sarah offered to be a part of engagement with Customs. Chloe connected them together as an action from this discussion.
23. Michelle asked about engagement with ethnic communities and commented that the system evolution seems to be coming from a very privileged position. Mat responded that the project is looking to be careful about not having bias in its evolution but will talk to Rob Huddart about that aspect of the whole Reconnecting New Zealanders programme.
24. Aram questioned Mat on aspects on the NZTD, including the length of validity of the travel pass and how this will work if travel plans changed and how the NZTD can be clear and easy to use to try and remove some of the uncertainty currently surrounding travel to New Zealand.
25. Sarah raised issues with language and digital accessibility in using the platform. Mat agreed with these points and emphasised that Customs is trying to focus on clear communication and expectations for travellers.
26. Mat then closed out the presentation by inviting any Panel members in Wellington to come and test the system and provide feedback.

27. **Karen Jacobs-Grant and Kirkpatrick Mariner joined the meeting, both from the COVID-19 Equity team at the Ministry of Health.** Karen is the Chief Equity Advisor. She presented on the equity workstream at the Ministry of Health and the directorate's current priorities. All areas of the directorate were required to develop equity plans for their work and focus on a manageable number of areas of impact. From these, Karen's team developed a high-level equity plan.
28. The directorate recently underwent a review and the advisory groups within the directorate are restarting their engagement. The equity team manages an advisory group, Te Kōtuku e Rere (COVID-19 Lived Experience Advisory Group) which meets regularly and has new members joining shortly.
29. Sarah asked Karen where the Māori Health Authority fits into this programme and she asked about the 31 Waitangi Tribunal applications currently sitting with the court. She raised the inequities across funding and resources with Māori and ethnic communities.
30. Karen acknowledged that it is frustrating and that although there has been a lot of funding provided, there are still inequities with Māori health providers. She also discussed current planning being done by iwi/hapū and how this will require further funding.
31. Karen invited Panel members to send through any further questions and comments via email, Chloe sent out Karen's email address.
32. Michelle asked Kirkpatrick whether there will be translations of the templates for planning for COVID-19 outbreaks in communities for ESOL communities/businesses to use and what supports will be available for these communities.
33. Kirkpatrick said that the Ministry usually works through intermediaries to reach excluded/deprived or otherwise vulnerable communities. They lean heavily on existing providers to make connections in these areas and Kirkpatrick asked to be connected with Michelle to work further on these issues.
34. Aram suggested that more work needs to be done on providing helpful translated material and providing translation services, as it's currently all one-way. This doesn't allow some communities to have valuable conversations with public officials or helplines in their own language. Sarah suggested there could be more dedicated resourcing for call centres to talk through struggles members of a particular community may be facing in their own language.
35. Kirkpatrick thanked the Panel for their time and suggestions and is keen to return in a few months and hear further kōrero from members.
36. Aram's parting comments were that he has come across a lot of people who, even though they are vaccinated, are feeling disempowered because the vaccine mandate is so wide. He said in his communities there is also a fear of hostility between vaccinated/unvaccinated populations and even racial slurs with the vaccine pass mandates.
37. **The key insights** that came from the panel discussion were:
  - a. There is a lot of confusion throughout communities with the introduction of the CPF and what the requirements mean across different situations.
  - b. The introduction of the My Vaccine Pass and the accompanying mandates have not gone smoothly for many communities and a myriad of issues have arisen:
    - i. Enforcement of My Vaccine Pass in rural/isolated communities is difficult to manage.

- ii. Scanning of a the physical/digital pass is challenging for those with a physical disability. Getting the pass was difficult those not digitally savvy.
- iii. Deadnaming occurs constantly for members of the LGBTQ+ which can be traumatising for some.
- c. There is a general weariness across communities towards COVID-19 restrictions, particularly when it impacts lower socioeconomic communities.
- d. The Community Panel has raised issues of engagement with Māori, ethnic communities and diverse communities across many workstreams in the COVID-19 response but engagement is still lacking in many areas.
- e. More translated material/multi-language community services are needed to provide support to communities where English is not their first language.

### **Item 9: Final thoughts and wrap up**

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- 38. Martin thanked the Panel for their time and their honest and challenging kōrero.
- 39. The meeting closed at 4.20pm with a closing karakia from Martin.
- 40. The next meeting will take place on 2 February 2022, 2.00 – 4.00pm.

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