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

Proactive Release

The following item has been proactively released by the Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern, Prime Minister:

Paper: COVID-19 Weekly Monitoring Report, Tuesday 04 August 2020

COVID-19 Weekly Monitoring Report

Tuesday 04 August 2020

Current strategy: Elimination.

Current Alert Level: 1

This weekly report responds to COVID-19 Ministerial Group's 09 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 (AL) or the overall strategy.

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

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.

There are some gaps in measures and data, and these are noted where applicable.

Key changes and developments from last week

Developments to note:

- The number of returnees in Managed Isolation & Quarantine (MI&Q) has increased by approx. 50% as forecast in last week's report due to a gap in Air New Zealand's ticket freeze, which has now been closed.
- The seven day average testing rate has increased from this time last week.
- Reporting indicates prolonged loneliness was particularly observable among youth, solo parents and the disabled during Alert Level 4 (AL4).
- There are currently 22 active cases in New Zealand, all of which are imported cases.

Changes to the report:

- The Testing, tracing and isolation section has been changed to Managed Isolation and Quarantine. This section currently reflects isolation data, and a compliance section is currently being developed for future reports.
- The testing capacity graph has been moved to the Health system capacity section.
- A workforce surge capacity graph has been added to the health section.
- The public movements section is currently under review. The intent of this is to obtain more relevant data to accurately reflect public movements.
- A weekly overview of themes emanating from social media and online news sites, has been added to reflect public sentiment on COVID-19 related topics.

COVID-19 in New Zealand

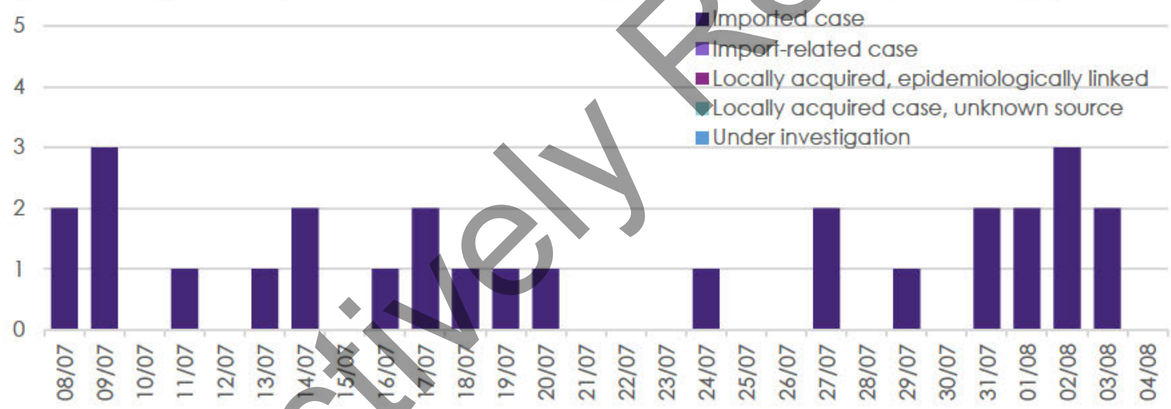
As at 9am 04 August 2020, there are currently 22 active cases in New Zealand. All of these cases have been imported (Figure 1 and 2).

Figure 1: Summary of COVID-19 in New Zealand as at 9am 04 August 2020

22	**Active cases**
1	**Days since last imported case reported**
89	**Days since last import-related case reported**
74	**Days since last locally-acquired epidemiologically-linked case reported**
95	**Days since last locally-acquired, unknown source case reported**
0	**Significant open clusters[1]**
0	**Clusters with a new case reported in the last 14 days**

Source: Ministry of Health

Figure 2: Daily cases by source of transmission (cases reported in the past 28 days)[2]



Source: Ministry of Health (via EpiSurv)

Definitions:

- Imported cases: Cases with a reported history of international travel within 14 days of onset.
- Import-related case: Cases that have a link to an imported case.
- Locally acquired cases, epidemiologically linked: Cases that have a link to a locally acquired case with an unknown source.
- Locally acquired cases, unknown source: Cases that have no link to another case or overseas travel (potential community transmission).

[1] A cluster is considered closed when there have been no new cases for two incubation periods (i.e. 28 days) from the date when all cases complete isolation.

[2] The daily case numbers used in this report differ slightly from the figures reported each day by the Ministry of Health. The Ministry's figures are usually based on the change in the 24 hours to the 9am reporting time. The numbers in this report are based on the actual calendar dates of case reporting.

Managed Isolation and Quarantine

Border measures

Officials are implementing rolling surveillance testing of staff in managed isolation facilities and this will be progressively implemented in other high-risk locations.

Only New Zealand, Cook Islands, Niue, Tokelau and Australian citizens or permanent residents who normally reside in New Zealand are permitted to enter the country. This includes diplomats who hold a post in New Zealand.

There are exceptions such as medical evacuations and essential health workers which are granted on a case by case basis. Compassionate exemptions have resumed, with MBIE assuming the lead agency role.

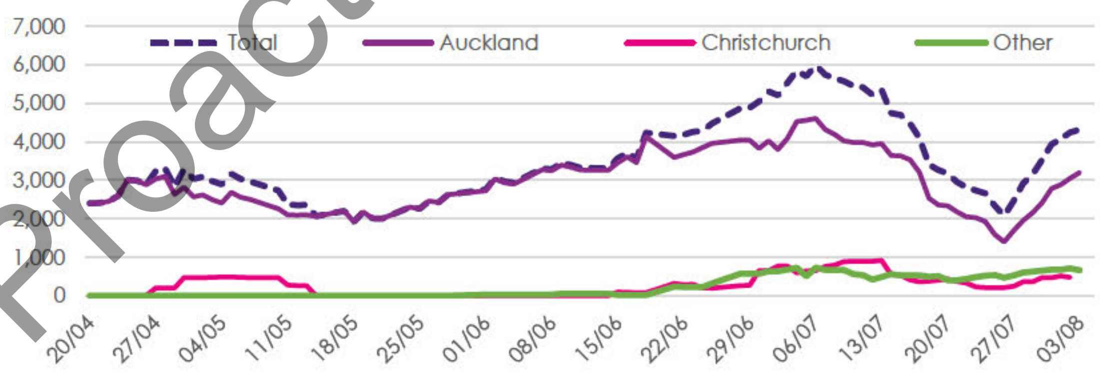
Isolation

As at 04 August 2020, there is total effective capacity to accommodate 7,100 returnees in MI&Q in Auckland, Christchurch, Wellington, Hamilton and Rotorua. Total effective capacity allows for a 24 hour room turn-around for sanitisation. At the time of release of this report, 2,784 beds are vacant.

During the last reporting period, the number of individuals in MI&Q has Increased from 2,469 to 4,316 (Figure 3). This is due to a temporary gap in the ticket freeze which ended 26 July 2020. The freeze has been now been extended until 09 August 2020. Over the next seven days the number of returnees is forecast to increase to a total of 6,026 with a total effective capacity of 7,146.[3]

The Managed Isolation Allocation System (MIAS) currently under development will enable returnees to book a place in MI&Q, prior to booking a plane ticket.

Figure 3: Number of people in managed isolation or quarantine[4]



Source: Isolation, Quarantine and Repatriation SITREP, AoG calculation

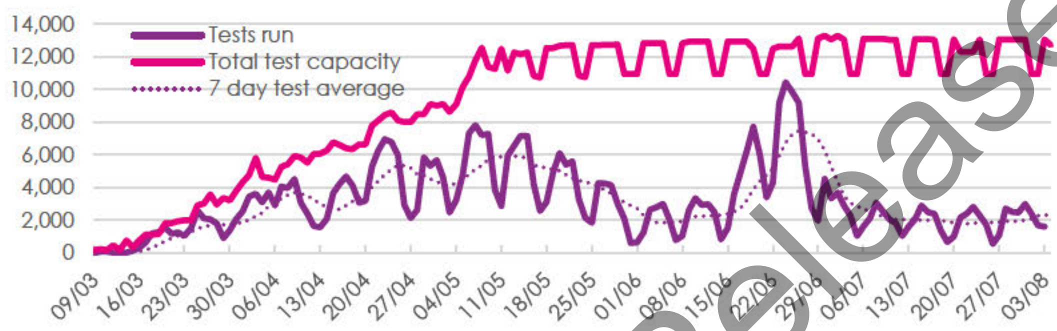
[3] The forecast capacity fluctuates and is based on actual capacity available at the time of the report. The numbers are determined by the number of available rooms provided by the hotels.
[4] "Other" includes Rotorua, Wellington and Hamilton. These will be displayed individually when numbers increase.

Health system capacity

Testing capacity

As at 04 August 2020, test stock is 126 days of supply at current testing levels, with testing capacity marginally lower than last week at 12,707 tests per day (Figure 4). The seven-day average testing rate has increased to 2,348 tests per day compared to 1,880 last week. This is possibly linked to an increase in messaging from MoH regarding testing and a confirmed positive case in Korea that led to speculation of community transmission in New Zealand.

Figure 4: Testing capacity

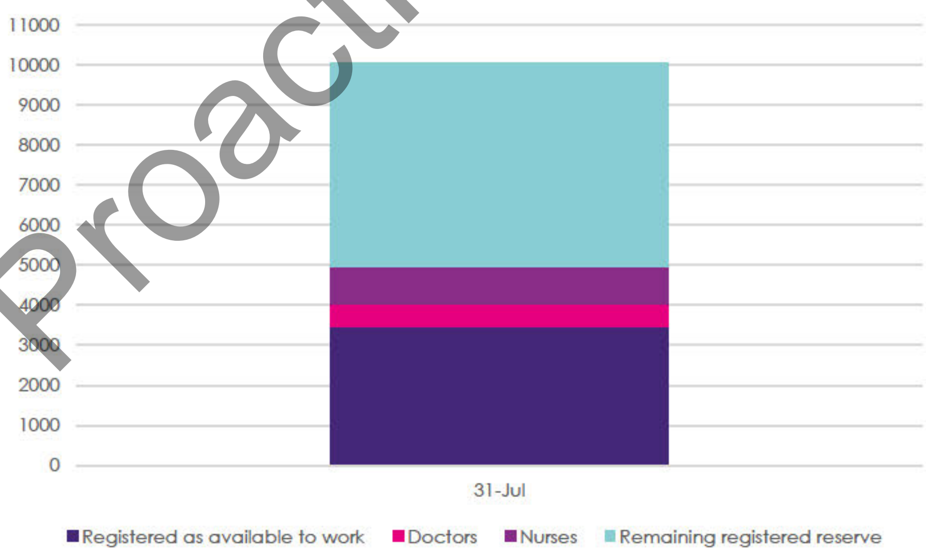


Source: Ministry of Health

Workforce surge capacity

As of 31 July 2020, there are 10,035 people registered in the surge capacity database of which 3,472 have indicated they are still available to work (Figure 5). Of those available, 559 are doctors and 925 are registered nurses.

Figure 5: Workforce surge capacity



Source: Ministry of Health COVID-19 SITREP

Personal protective equipment

Ministry of Health (MoH) currently have sufficient personal protective equipment (PPE) stocks for the health and disability workforce (Figure 6). This has remained unchanged in recent weeks.

A small number of mask shipments remain on hold pending quality assurances, with results expected mid-August.

Emerging second-wave pandemic models are providing indicators for areas where additional supplies will need to be sourced.

Further analysis is underway to identify areas of the health system which require strengthening in order to effectively manage both a local and national return to AL restrictions.

Figure 6: PPE availability for the health sector and non-health essential services

Product Description	Stock on Hand		Average Distribution over Last Fortnight	PPE on Order	
	DHBs (27 July)	National Reserves (29 July)		Expected in Next Fortnight	Total on Order (29 July)
N95 Mask (or equivalent)	1,268,262	21,622,992	550	0	1,070,000
Procedure Mask (or equivalent)	6,003,696	90,012,350	346,200	16,685,500	38,985,550
Isolation Gown (or equivalent)	482,259	3,119,100	97,500	373,500	2,281,380
Disposable Apron	1,034,224	2,576,150	2,250	0	0
Glasses/goggles (or equivalent)	127,317	1,099,001	0	0	1
Face shield (or equivalent)	184,471	970,560	600	52,800	53,000
Nitrile Gloves (all sizes, Each)	13,083,019	44,795,300	2,261,950	15,000,000	205,692,800
Hand Sanitiser (500mL equivalents)	54,174	336,207	0	0	14
Hand Sanitiser (2L equivalents)	0	155,862	0	0	0
Detergent Wipe (or equivalent)	431,500	0	0	0	0
Disinfectant wipe (or equivalent)	3,785,157	109,609,900	1,028,750	0	34,064,100

Source: Ministry of Health PPE data as at 29 July 2020.

Effects of the measures on society

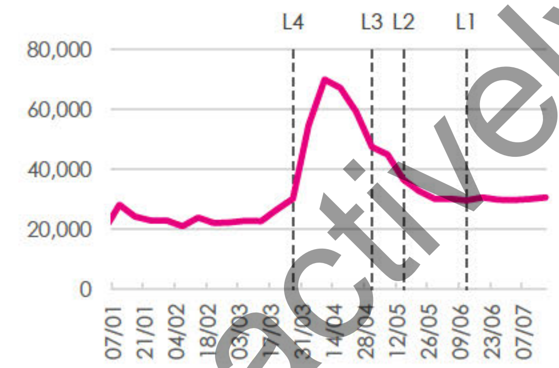
The number of Special Needs Grants for food remains largely unchanged since mid-June, with 29,853 reported for the week ending 17 July 2020. The number is higher than compared to pre-COVID-19 and 2019 figures (Figure 7).

The number of creditor payment holidays has steadily declined since the start of July 2020, falling from approximately 147,000 to 99,000 as at 26 July 2020 (Figure 8). This does not necessarily reflect a reduction in financial hardship for those households no longer on a payment holiday. Other data provided shows that 10.2% of households which have come off the payment holiday, are now at least 30 days overdue on payments.

Reporting from the latest COVID-19 Health and Wellbeing Survey (as of week ended 26 July) indicated a marginal change in depression and anxiety symptoms. Approximately 9% of respondents reported symptoms (Figure 9), a 2% increase from last week. Approximately 21% of respondents reported experiencing feelings of loneliness and isolation.

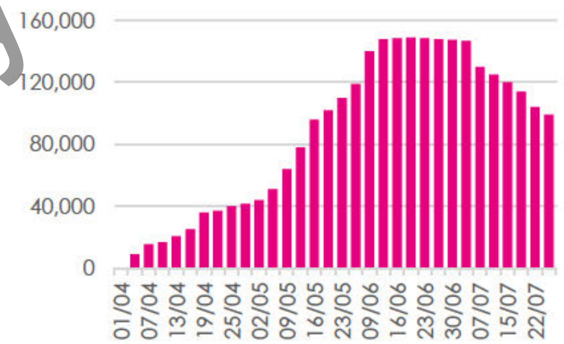
Reporting from the August 2020 Loneliness New Zealand paper found that levels of prolonged loneliness in New Zealand increased sharply during lockdown, before it reduced slightly post lockdown. It was particularly observable among youth, solo parents, disabled people and other demographics (Figure 10).

Figure 7: Special Needs Grants for food



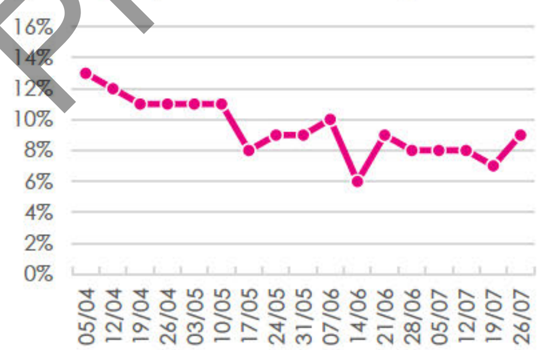
Source: MSD

Figure 8: Creditor payment holidays



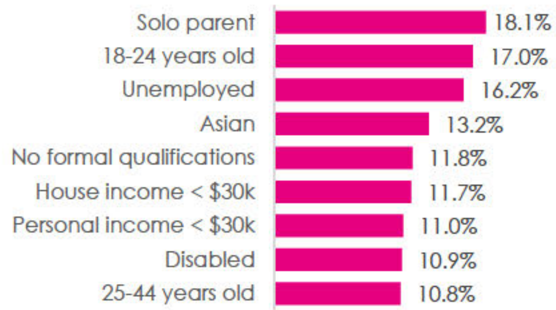
Source: Centrix

Figure 9: Percentage of survey respondents reporting depression and anxiety



Source: MoH

Figure 10: Highest prolonged loneliness after lockdown, by group



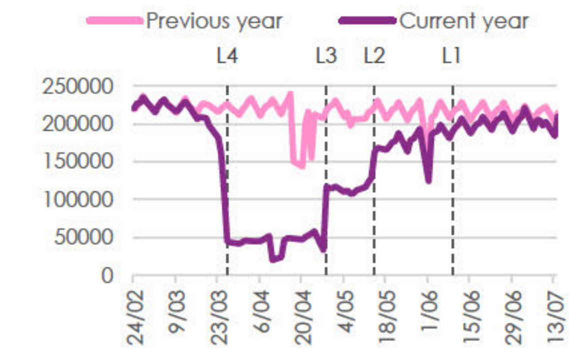
Source: Lonlieness New Zealand

Public movement

Over the last fortnight, data from Apple Maps show direction requests are consistent with pre-COVID-19 levels (Figure 11).

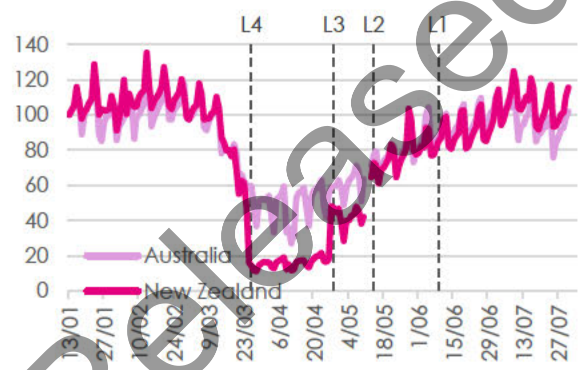
Light vehicle traffic volumes indicate mobility remains slightly below pre-COVID-19 levels (Figure 11 and Figure 12). Normal traffic volumes will likely return gradually, as border measures ease and the economy recovers.

Figure 11: Light vehicle traffic volumes in main centres



Source: NZTA

Figure 12: Volume of driving direction requests on Apple Maps (13/01=100)



Source: Apple Mobility Trends

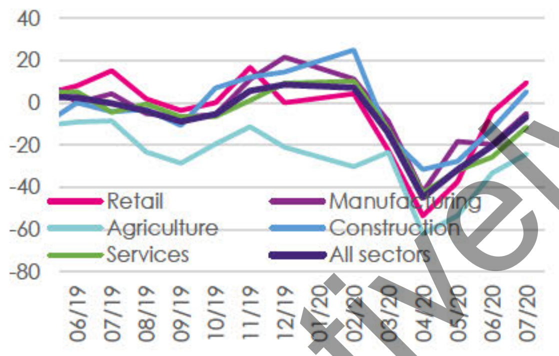
Effects of the measures on businesses

The full July Business Outlook data indicates post lock down growth is slowing. This is in contrast to the Outlook at the start of July. Despite this, levels in July are still significantly higher than what was observed in June.

Investment intentions reduced marginally since the preliminary read in early July. A net 6.7% of businesses expect to reduce investment compared to 4.5% in the partial survey. However this is a significant improvement from June when 20.7% of firms expected a reduction in investment. Retail and construction industries reported positive investment intentions, the first for any industry since February. Agriculture is the most negative industry on the investment outlook despite the ongoing good returns to agricultural exports (Figure 13).

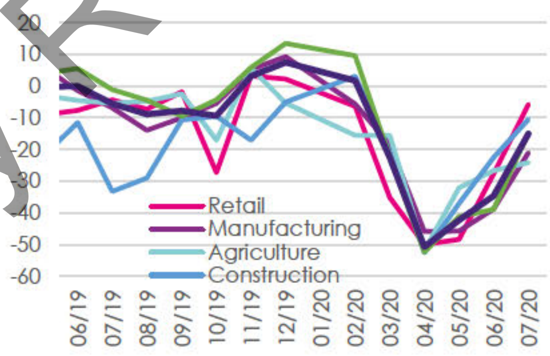
Employment intentions continued to improve with a net 15.1% of businesses expecting to reduce staff, a significant improvement of the preliminary results of 34.7% for businesses in June 2020. There was both an increase in the number of firms planning to employ staff and a reduction in firms planning to reduce employment. Agriculture and manufacturing are the most negative sectors, while retail and construction are the most positive (Figure 14).

Figure 13: Investment intentions



Source: ANZ

Figure 14: Employment intentions



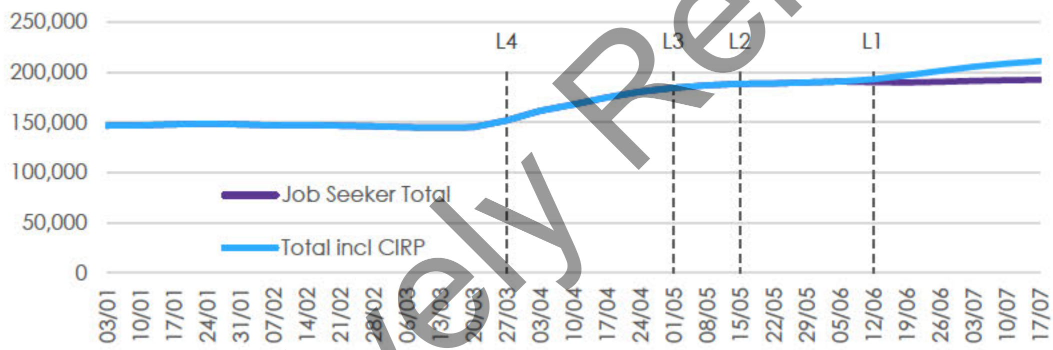
Source: ANZ

Macroeconomic and fiscal effects of the measures

Retail spending has maintained consistent, despite an increase in income support numbers, though growth is slowing. New Zealand recorded its first quarterly trade surplus since 2014, due to a large fall in import values. Job numbers continued to recover in June, but remained below pre-COVID levels. Bank customer lending data suggests that the outlook for consumers has improved, though the number of missed business loan payments remains high. New home consents were boosted by a record number of consents for townhouses, flats and units.

Approximately 20,000 people were receiving the COVID-19 Income Relief Payment (CIRP) as of 24 July 2020, an increase of 1,400 on the previous week (Figure 16). The total number of individuals receiving Jobseeker and CIRP was 212,400, which was up 1,500 on the week prior and 67,000 since 20 March 2020. The weekly increase in total income support has slowed in each of the past four weeks.

Figure 16: Jobseeker Support recipients



Source: MSD

Fiscal measures

New Zealand's fiscal response packages for COVID-19 announced to date amounts to approximately $47.8 billion in committed spending. As at 03 August 2020 approximately $14.3 billion remains in the CRRF.

Figure 19: Fiscal costs of commitments and programmes already announced and estimated expenditure

Spending package	Total impact on net core Crown debt ($m), period to 2023/24
Infrastructure	4709.184
Education, Skills and Training	4709.184
Business and Firm	10046.459
Income Support	20,697.13
Health	2,584.09
Housing	1,065.47
Other	4,193.98
Total Allocated Spend to date	**47874.795**
Unallocated CRRF remaining	14330.735

Weekly key Open Source observations and themes[5]

Below are a summary of key themes emanating from social media and news sites for the period 28 July – 04 August 2020.

Complacency over COVID testing. Numerous articles published and subsequent commentary indicates there remains a level of complacency amongst the public, with commentary signifying an aversion to testing – due to both discomfort experienced, and confusion surrounding guidelines. However, the South Korean traveller who tested positive after departing NZ, has led to an increased awareness that while New Zealand has no local transmission, the potential for another outbreak remains. Other key themes indicate a high interest in international COVID related articles, and how these countries are responding to the pandemic, compared to New Zealand.

The Victoria COVID crisis and how the state has been dealing with it in comparison to the NZ response. Ongoing discussions and sentiment indicates that the Victorian state government has placed the economic benefits over the health of its citizens. Ongoing discussions have focused on if another outbreak were to occur, should there be a compulsory wearing of face masks under the health act, and how this would be enforced.

NZ Government response to returning New Zealanders and those on temporary visas, as well as isolated persons absconding from managed isolation facilities. Overwhelming sentiment indicates the government should impose harsher punishments for absconders. In line with this theme, the public feel all returnees or visitors should pay for managed isolation to offset the cost to tax paying citizens. Generally, the public has been receptive to the government's implementation of legislation to recoup costs from returnees, whether New Zealanders or temporary visa holders.

The proposed travel bubble and what this will mean for isolation. Key themes highlight confusion of what the travel bubble will mean with respect to MIQ requirements, and the cost of flying to countries eventually included in the travel bubble.

The South Korean traveller movements while in New Zealand. For the majority of last week, the movements of the South Korean traveller generated high interest, and has likely resulted with an increase of testing, particularly in the areas where the South Korean travelled to. Opportunities exist to highlight the importance of contact tracing individual movements to the New Zealand public.

[5] Refer to daily Insights and Reporting Team, Open Source Observations reports