



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



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



**BORDER EXECUTIVE BOARD**



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



# COVID-19 Response Weekly Report

10 September 2021

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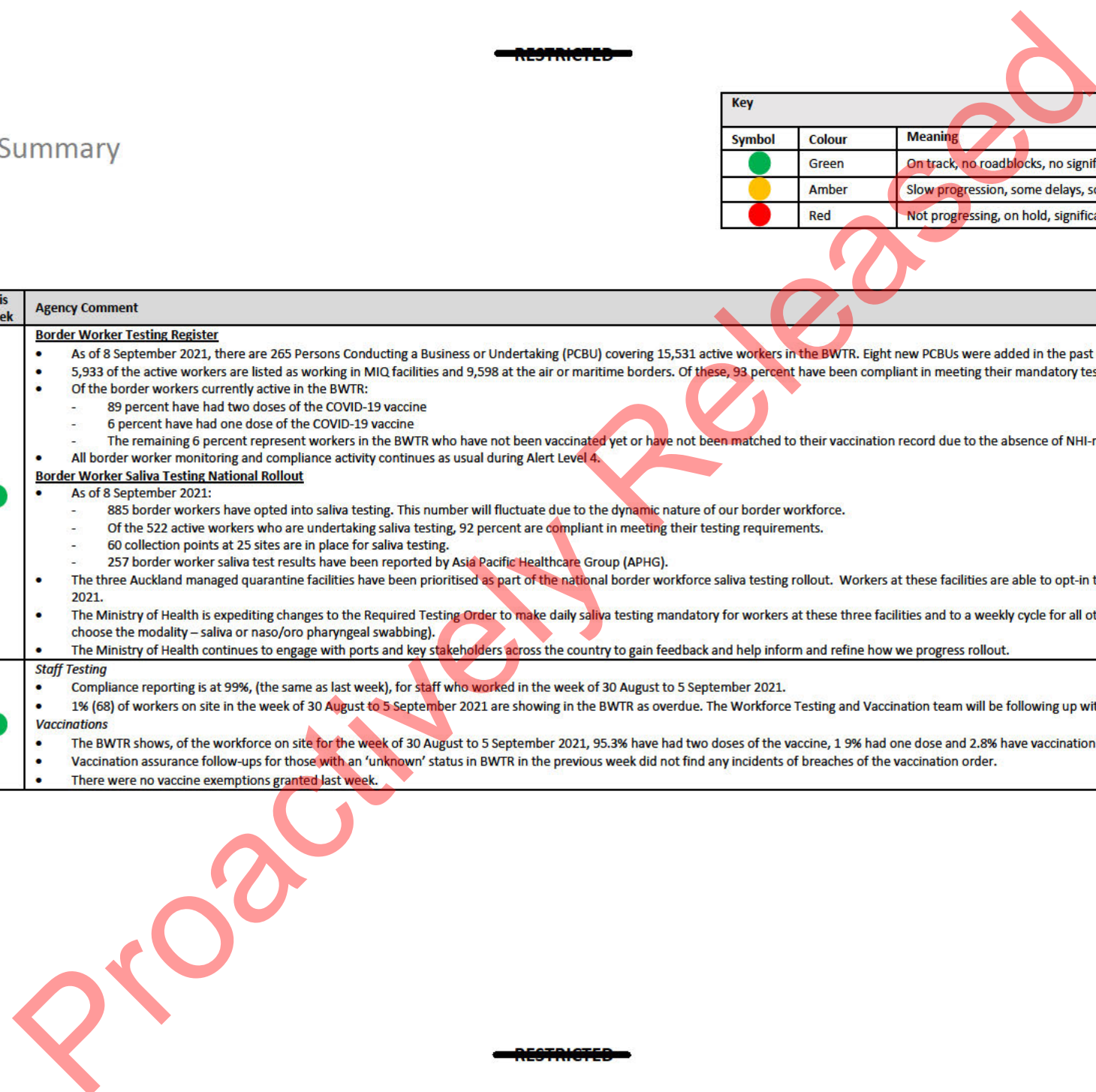
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# 1 Status Summary

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

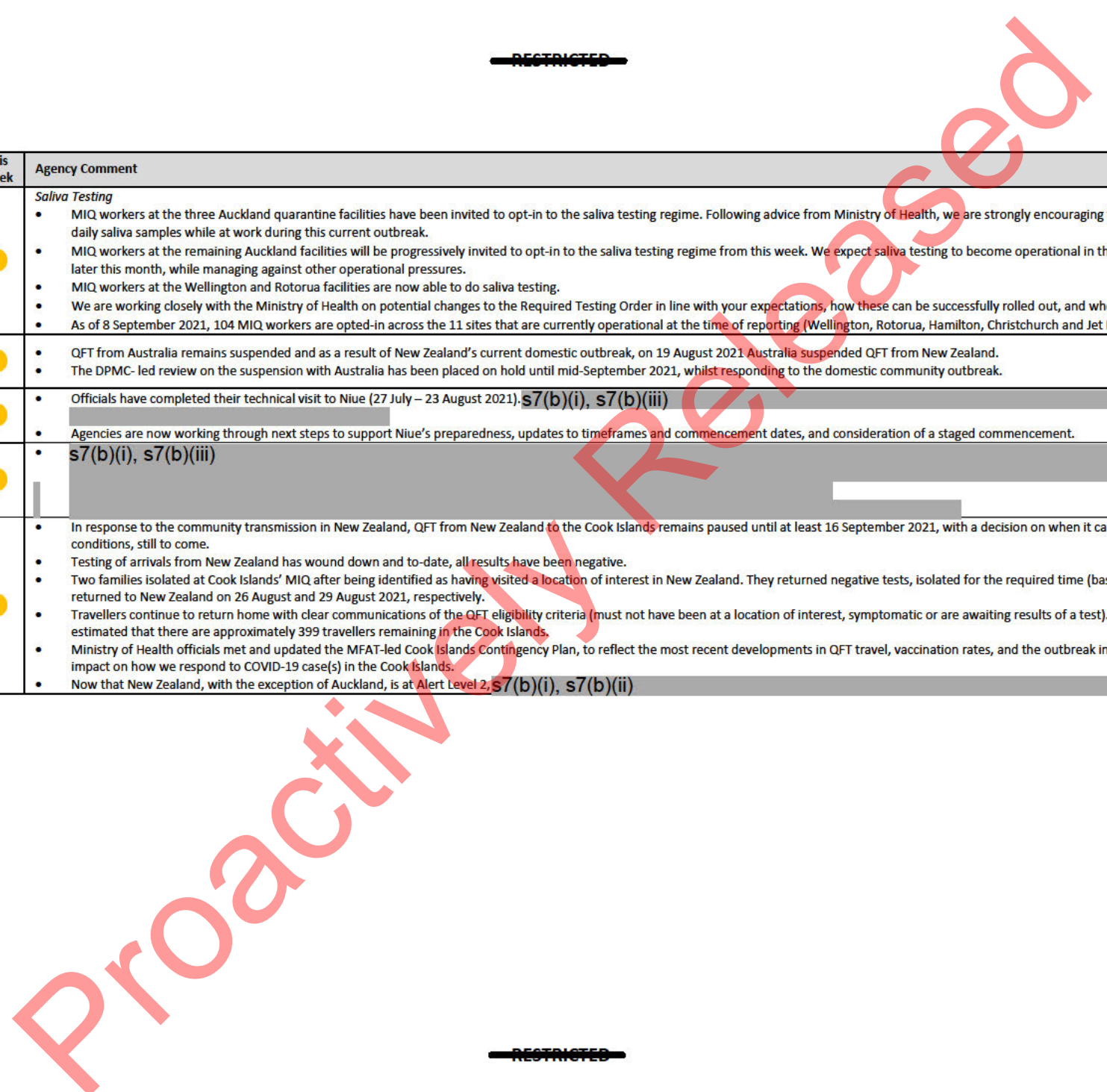
## Border

Agency	Last Week	This Week	Agency Comment
Testing and vaccination of border workforce	●	●	<p><b>Border Worker Testing Register</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As of 8 September 2021, there are 265 Persons Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU) covering 15,531 active workers in the BWTR. Eight new PCBUs were added in the past week.</li> <li>5,933 of the active workers are listed as working in MIQ facilities and 9,598 at the air or maritime borders. Of these, 93 percent have been compliant in meeting their mandatory testing requirements.</li> <li>Of the border workers currently active in the BWTR:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>89 percent have had two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine</li> <li>6 percent have had one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine</li> <li>The remaining 6 percent represent workers in the BWTR who have not been vaccinated yet or have not been matched to their vaccination record due to the absence of NHI-matching in the CIR.</li> </ul> </li> <li>All border worker monitoring and compliance activity continues as usual during Alert Level 4.</li> </ul> <p><b>Border Worker Saliva Testing National Rollout</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As of 8 September 2021:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>885 border workers have opted into saliva testing. This number will fluctuate due to the dynamic nature of our border workforce.</li> <li>Of the 522 active workers who are undertaking saliva testing, 92 percent are compliant in meeting their testing requirements.</li> <li>60 collection points at 25 sites are in place for saliva testing.</li> <li>257 border worker saliva test results have been reported by Asia Pacific Healthcare Group (APHG).</li> </ul> </li> <li>The three Auckland managed quarantine facilities have been prioritised as part of the national border workforce saliva testing rollout. Workers at these facilities are able to opt-in to daily saliva testing from 7 September 2021.</li> <li>The Ministry of Health is expediting changes to the Required Testing Order to make daily saliva testing mandatory for workers at these three facilities and to a weekly cycle for all other MIQFs (where workers get to choose the modality – saliva or naso/oro pharyngeal swabbing).</li> <li>The Ministry of Health continues to engage with ports and key stakeholders across the country to gain feedback and help inform and refine how we progress rollout.</li> </ul>
	●	●	<p><b>Staff Testing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compliance reporting is at 99%, (the same as last week), for staff who worked in the week of 30 August to 5 September 2021.</li> <li>1% (68) of workers on site in the week of 30 August to 5 September 2021 are showing in the BWTR as overdue. The Workforce Testing and Vaccination team will be following up with those workers.</li> </ul> <p><b>Vaccinations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The BWTR shows, of the workforce on site for the week of 30 August to 5 September 2021, 95.3% have had two doses of the vaccine, 1.9% had one dose and 2.8% have vaccination status 'unknown'.</li> <li>Vaccination assurance follow-ups for those with an 'unknown' status in BWTR in the previous week did not find any incidents of breaches of the vaccination order.</li> <li>There were no vaccine exemptions granted last week.</li> </ul>



**Border**

	Agency	Last Week	This Week	Agency Comment
Two-way Testing and vaccination of border workforce	MBIE	●	●	<p><i>Saliva Testing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MIQ workers at the three Auckland quarantine facilities have been invited to opt-in to the saliva testing regime. Following advice from Ministry of Health, we are strongly encouraging these workers to opt-in and provide daily saliva samples while at work during this current outbreak.</li> <li>MIQ workers at the remaining Auckland facilities will be progressively invited to opt-in to the saliva testing regime from this week. We expect saliva testing to become operational in these sites over a three-week period later this month, while managing against other operational pressures.</li> <li>MIQ workers at the Wellington and Rotorua facilities are now able to do saliva testing.</li> <li>We are working closely with the Ministry of Health on potential changes to the Required Testing Order in line with your expectations, how these can be successfully rolled out, and when they can happen.</li> <li>As of 8 September 2021, 104 MIQ workers are opted-in across the 11 sites that are currently operational at the time of reporting (Wellington, Rotorua, Hamilton, Christchurch and Jet Park Auckland).</li> </ul>
	MoH	●	●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>QFT from Australia remains suspended and as a result of New Zealand's current domestic outbreak, on 19 August 2021 Australia suspended QFT from New Zealand.</li> <li>The DPMC-led review on the suspension with Australia has been placed on hold until mid-September 2021, whilst responding to the domestic community outbreak.</li> </ul>
	MoH	●	●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Officials have completed their technical visit to Niue (27 July – 23 August 2021). s7(b)(i), s7(b)(iii)</li> <li>Agencies are now working through next steps to support Niue's preparedness, updates to timeframes and commencement dates, and consideration of a staged commencement.</li> </ul>
Two-way QFT Niue	MFAT	●	●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>s7(b)(i), s7(b)(iii)</li> </ul>
	MoH	●	●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In response to the community transmission in New Zealand, QFT from New Zealand to the Cook Islands remains paused until at least 16 September 2021, with a decision on when it can resume, and under what conditions, still to come.</li> <li>Testing of arrivals from New Zealand has wound down and to-date, all results have been negative.</li> <li>Two families isolated at Cook Islands' MIQ after being identified as having visited a location of interest in New Zealand. They returned negative tests, isolated for the required time (based on their exposure dates), and returned to New Zealand on 26 August and 29 August 2021, respectively.</li> <li>Travellers continue to return home with clear communications of the QFT eligibility criteria (must not have been at a location of interest, symptomatic or are awaiting results of a test). As of 3 September 2021, it was estimated that there are approximately 399 travellers remaining in the Cook Islands.</li> <li>Ministry of Health officials met and updated the MFAT-led Cook Islands Contingency Plan, to reflect the most recent developments in QFT travel, vaccination rates, and the outbreak in New Zealand, and how these might impact on how we respond to COVID-19 case(s) in the Cook Islands.</li> <li>Now that New Zealand, with the exception of Auckland, is at Alert Level 2, s7(b)(i), s7(b)(ii)</li> </ul>
Reopening new travel pathways - Pacific Islands				

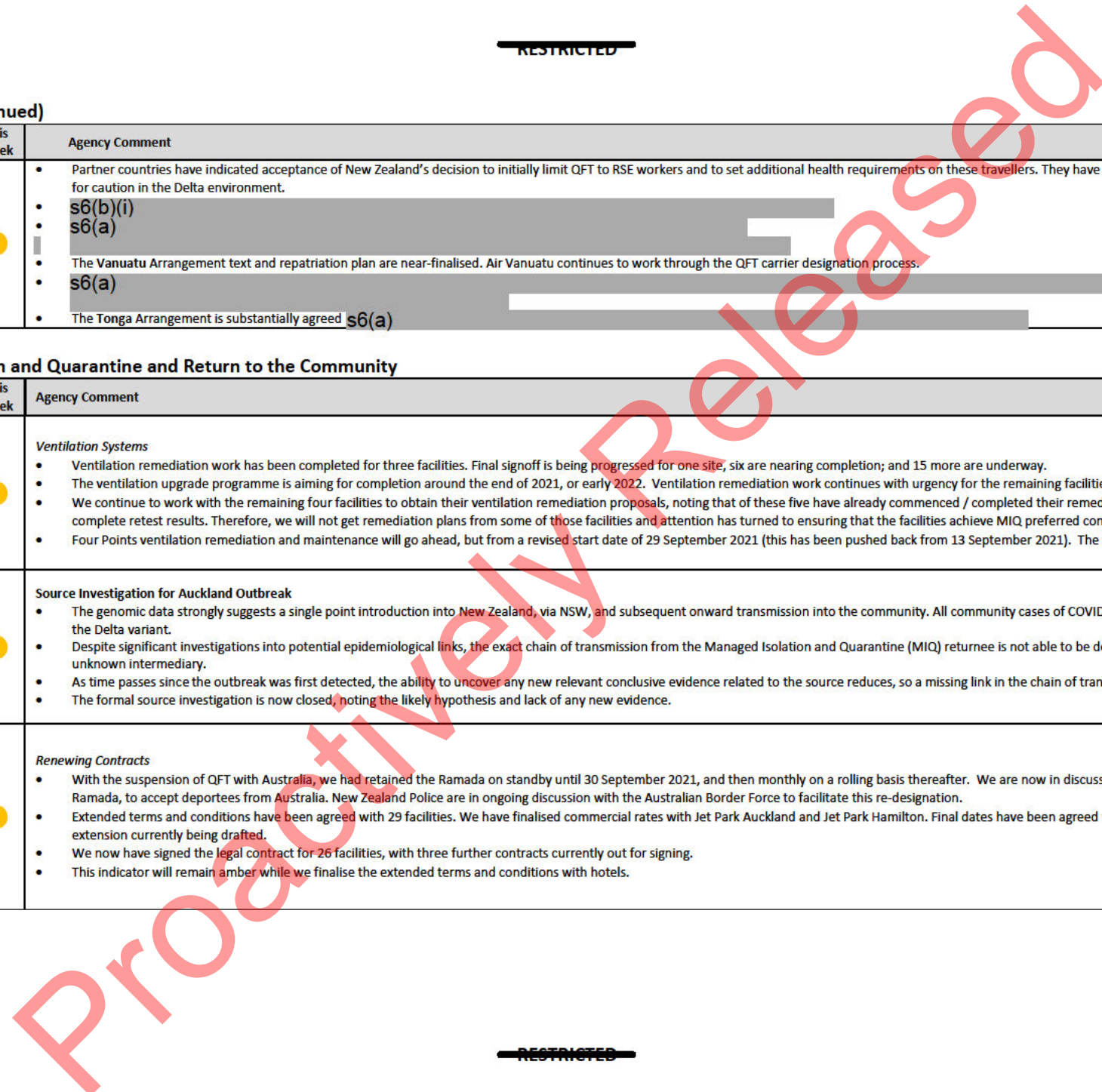


**Border (Continued)**

Agency	Last Week	This Week	Agency Comment
MFAT	●	●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partner countries have indicated acceptance of New Zealand's decision to initially limit QFT to RSE workers and to set additional health requirements on these travellers. They have acknowledged New Zealand's desire for caution in the Delta environment.</li> <li>s6(b)(i)</li> <li>s6(a)</li> <li>The Vanuatu Arrangement text and repatriation plan are near-finalised. Air Vanuatu continues to work through the QFT carrier designation process.</li> <li>s6(a)</li> <li>The Tonga Arrangement is substantially agreed s6(a)</li> </ul>

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

Agency	Last Week	This Week	Agency Comment
Transmission prevention	●	●	<p><i>Ventilation Systems</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ventilation remediation work has been completed for three facilities. Final signoff is being progressed for one site, six are nearing completion; and 15 more are underway.</li> <li>The ventilation upgrade programme is aiming for completion around the end of 2021, or early 2022. Ventilation remediation work continues with urgency for the remaining facilities.</li> <li>We continue to work with the remaining four facilities to obtain their ventilation remediation proposals, noting that of these five have already commenced / completed their remediation work, and provided partial or complete retest results. Therefore, we will not get remediation plans from some of those facilities and attention has turned to ensuring that the facilities achieve MIQ preferred conditions.</li> <li>Four Points ventilation remediation and maintenance will go ahead, but from a revised start date of 29 September 2021 (this has been pushed back from 13 September 2021). The work will take approximately 10 days.</li> </ul>
			<p><i>Source Investigation for Auckland Outbreak</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The genomic data strongly suggests a single point introduction into New Zealand, via NSW, and subsequent onward transmission into the community. All community cases of COVID-19 sequenced to date are classified as the Delta variant.</li> <li>Despite significant investigations into potential epidemiological links, the exact chain of transmission from the Managed Isolation and Quarantine (MIQ) returnee is not able to be determined. It is likely that there was an unknown intermediary.</li> <li>As time passes since the outbreak was first detected, the ability to uncover any new relevant conclusive evidence related to the source reduces, so a missing link in the chain of transmission will likely remain.</li> <li>The formal source investigation is now closed, noting the likely hypothesis and lack of any new evidence.</li> </ul>
Place and conditions of stay	●	●	<p><i>Renewing Contracts</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>With the suspension of QFT with Australia, we had retained the Ramada on standby until 30 September 2021, and then monthly on a rolling basis thereafter. We are now in discussions to progress re-designating Ramada, to accept deportees from Australia. New Zealand Police are in ongoing discussion with the Australian Border Force to facilitate this re-designation.</li> <li>Extended terms and conditions have been agreed with 29 facilities. We have finalised commercial rates with Jet Park Auckland and Jet Park Hamilton. Final dates have been agreed with Bay Plaza Wellington, with an extension currently being drafted.</li> <li>We now have signed the legal contract for 26 facilities, with three further contracts currently out for signing.</li> <li>This indicator will remain amber while we finalise the extended terms and conditions with hotels.</li> </ul>

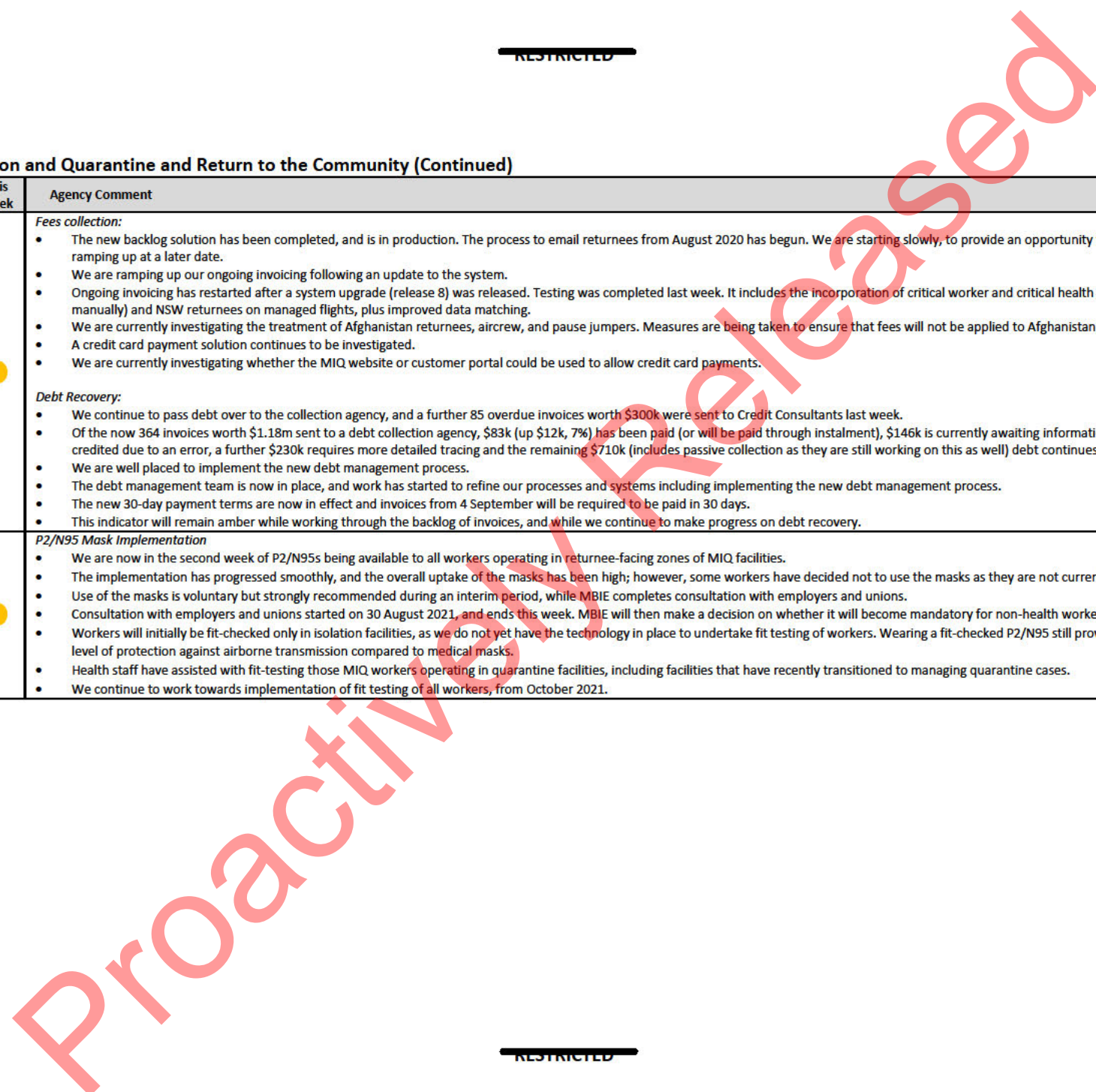


**Managed Isolation and Quarantine and Return to the Community (Continued)**

Agency	Last Week	This Week	Agency Comment
MBIE	●	●	<p><i>Fees collection:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The new backlog solution has been completed, and is in production. The process to email returnees from August 2020 has begun. We are starting slowly, to provide an opportunity to iron out any issues identified, before ramping up at a later date.</li> <li>We are ramping up our ongoing invoicing following an update to the system.</li> <li>Ongoing invoicing has restarted after a system upgrade (release 8) was released. Testing was completed last week. It includes the incorporation of critical worker and critical health worker data (currently identified manually) and NSW returnees on managed flights, plus improved data matching.</li> <li>We are currently investigating the treatment of Afghanistan returnees, aircrew, and pause jumpers. Measures are being taken to ensure that fees will not be applied to Afghanistan returnees.</li> <li>A credit card payment solution continues to be investigated.</li> <li>We are currently investigating whether the MIQ website or customer portal could be used to allow credit card payments.</li> </ul> <p><i>Debt Recovery:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We continue to pass debt over to the collection agency, and a further 85 overdue invoices worth \$300k were sent to Credit Consultants last week.</li> <li>Of the now 364 invoices worth \$1.18m sent to a debt collection agency, \$83k (up \$12k, 7%) has been paid (or will be paid through instalment), \$146k is currently awaiting information from customers or has been credited due to an error, a further \$230k requires more detailed tracing and the remaining \$710k (includes passive collection as they are still working on this as well) debt continues to be a work in progress.</li> <li>We are well placed to implement the new debt management process.</li> <li>The debt management team is now in place, and work has started to refine our processes and systems including implementing the new debt management process.</li> <li>The new 30-day payment terms are now in effect and invoices from 4 September will be required to be paid in 30 days.</li> <li>This indicator will remain amber while working through the backlog of invoices, and while we continue to make progress on debt recovery.</li> </ul>
MBIE	●	●	<p><i>P2/N95 Mask Implementation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We are now in the second week of P2/N95s being available to all workers operating in returnee-facing zones of MIQ facilities.</li> <li>The implementation has progressed smoothly, and the overall uptake of the masks has been high; however, some workers have decided not to use the masks as they are not currently mandatory.</li> <li>Use of the masks is voluntary but strongly recommended during an interim period, while MBIE completes consultation with employers and unions.</li> <li>Consultation with employers and unions started on 30 August 2021, and ends this week. MBIE will then make a decision on whether it will become mandatory for non-health workers to use P2/N95s.</li> <li>Workers will initially be fit-checked only in isolation facilities, as we do not yet have the technology in place to undertake fit testing of workers. Wearing a fit-checked P2/N95 still provides workers with a significantly higher level of protection against airborne transmission compared to medical masks.</li> <li>Health staff have assisted with fit-testing those MIQ workers operating in quarantine facilities, including facilities that have recently transitioned to managing quarantine cases.</li> <li>We continue to work towards implementation of fit testing of all workers, from October 2021.</li> </ul>

Post-managed isolation processes

PPE



### Community Protection

Case investigation, surveillance and testing	Agency	Last Week	→ This Week	
	MoH	●	●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As at 0900hrs 8 September 2021 there are 855 cases linked to this outbreak. Of these, there are 636 active cases (an increase of 15 since the day prior), 218 recovered cases and one death.</li> <li>There are currently 8 epidemiologically linked sub-clusters identified within this outbreak. The 2 largest clusters are the Birkdale Social Network cluster associated with Case A (76 confirmed cases), and a cluster associated with the Assembly of God church in Mangere (approximately 371 confirmed cases).</li> <li>WGS for all cases within the community cluster which have been sequenced so far, show all to be genomically linked with each other.</li> <li>As at 8 September 2021, there are 37 cases linked to the Delta community outbreak who are currently in hospital.</li> <li>As at 8:00pm 8 September 2021, there are 126 locations of interest (LoI) published on the Ministry of Health website. Of these, 10 were buses and the rest were in the Auckland Region.</li> <li>As at 9:00am 8 September 2021, 38,018 contacts have been identified. Of these, 33,549 are close contacts, 1,143 are close plus contacts, and 3,326 are casual plus contacts.</li> <li>As of 8 September 2021, the testing sites in operation are as below:                         <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In Auckland there are 21 testing sites for the public, 6 usual CTCs and 15 pop up sites.</li> <li>In Wellington there are 3 usual CTCs for public testing. There are no longer any pop-up sites in Wellington.</li> </ul> </li> <li>There continues to be no unexpected detections in wastewater collected across the country.</li> </ul> <p><u>Cross Boundary Surveillance Testing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From 11.59pm, Thursday 9 September 2021, permitted workers who need to cross alert level boundaries will be required to provide evidence of testing 7-days prior to when they cross the boundary. Businesses whose workers are permitted to travel across the alert level boundary have an obligation to enable their workers to get tested and carry evidence of their tests before travelling.</li> <li>To achieve this, an amendment to the Alert Level Order was made at 11.59pm, Tuesday 7 September 2021.</li> <li>This additional testing requirement is part of the Ministry of Health's surveillance strategy to ensure that the early detection measures in place for COVID-19 in the community are working and will provide an assurance that travel across the boundary is being done safely.</li> </ul>

### Vaccination

Implementation and operation	Agency	Last Week	→ This Week	Agency Comment on Status of Focus Area
	MoH	●	●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As of 7 September 2021, 4,032,710 vaccinations have been delivered, including 1,370,579 people who are fully vaccinated.</li> <li>As of 7 September 2021, 13,285 vaccinators have completed COVID-19 vaccinator training and 7641 vaccinators have actively vaccinated in the programme so far.</li> <li>As of 7 September 2021, Book My Vaccine holds 1,870,000 future bookings at 549 sites.</li> <li>The expected Pfizer delivery of 322,920 doses arrived as scheduled.</li> <li>Everyone aged 12 and over is eligible to book a vaccine since 1 September 2021.</li> <li>The Ministry continues to work with DHBs and the wider healthcare sector to vaccinate frontline essential services workers as a priority.</li> <li>Vaccination sites will be operating under Level 3 and 4 conditions. This means mask wearing and observing physical distancing is essential. People with appointments booked have been advised to attend their appointments unless they are contacted by their DHB.</li> </ul>

### Resurgence Planning and Response

	Agency	Last Week	This Week	Agency Comment on Status of Focus Area
Resurgence planning including review of the response	DPMC	●	●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Response plan Q4 has begun and is going through a review process before being finalised for a 1 October release.</li> <li>Lesson management processes are underway to capture lessons identified. A weekly hot debrief is occurring and planning for a wider system interim review has commenced.</li> </ul>
	MoH	●	●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cabinet reviewed the public health risk for Auckland on Monday 6 September 2021 and announced that all of New Zealand, except for Auckland, will move to Alert Level 2 from 11:59pm Tuesday 7 September 2021 for at least a week. Auckland will remain at Alert Level 4 for at least a week.</li> </ul>
Readiness planning	DPMC	●	●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work is continuing on a Readiness Framework, with the intent to amalgamate lessons identified from the current outbreak once the response is complete and debriefs have occurred.</li> <li>Niue Two Way QFT reporting has paused for a month</li> </ul>
	DPMC	●	●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key readiness planning activities have included the establishment of an AL4/2 boundary, development of surveillance testing (both within the Health workforce in Auckland for permitted travellers to cross the boundary) and preparation for receiving the Container Vessel Rio De La Plata back in the Port of Tauranga in the afternoon of 9 September 21.</li> </ul>
QFT response	MBIE	●	●	<p><i>MIQ's Response to the Delta Outbreak</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MIQ capacity and our workforce are being pushed to their limit, due to the combination of a need to quarantine community cases, the facilitation of Afghan refugees, along with ongoing border arrivals.</li> <li>The need to surge up our quarantine capacity so quickly - along with quarantining so many positive cases at one time - is putting stress on our system and staff.</li> <li>We are starting to see the pressure slightly ease from our quarantine, with the drop in requirement for additional quarantine facilities. We are not actively planning for a fourth quarantine facility in Auckland based on the modelling indicating that this is not required.</li> <li>We are undertaking a "lessons learned" exercise on the process of rapidly turning isolation facilities to quarantine facilities. This is alongside the support provided to community cases, as it has become very apparent that they have different requirements and expectations from general returnees from overseas.</li> <li>We remain very cognisant of the health, safety and wellbeing of our staff, especially those in our full quarantine facilities. This week a fourth staff member tested positive for COVID-19 during the time we have been managing the community cases.</li> <li>There remains pressure on our isolation capacity and a range of decisions are being taken in response, including changing group arrivals, deferring ventilation maintenance, and not releasing vouchers for the coming weeks (although a release is planned shortly). With the Crowne Plaza continuing as a MIF and the Bay Plaza reverting back to a general returnee MIF, this has eased the pressure on our isolation capacity.</li> </ul>
	MBIE	●	■	<p><i>QFT Travel Pause</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An Air New Zealand flight from Sydney arrived in Auckland on 5 September 21 carrying 95 passengers (91 emergency allocations, 4 time sensitive travel critical health workers).</li> <li>On 8 September 2021, we announced a further flight planned for 15 September 2021, which will be available to emergency allocations only.</li> </ul>

Proactively Released



## 2 COVID-19 Insights

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

#### 2.1.1 COVID-19 Tracer App – Active Users

Daily active users of the COVID-19 Tracer App increased over the course of the recent outbreak, peaking at over a million (1,154,732) between noon 8 September 2021 and noon 9 September 2021. The highest number of active devices recorded prior to this was 999,525, on 12 noon 4 September 2020 and 12 noon 5 September 2020, during which time Auckland was at alert level 2 with extra restrictions after a period of Alert Level 3 in August, and the rest of New Zealand was at alert level 2.<sup>1 2</sup> The following two charts show the number of daily active users over the past year and since the start of September 2021 respectively.

**Figure 1: COVID-19 Tracer App – Active Devices since 1 September 2020**



**Figure 2: COVID-19 Tracer App – Active Devices since 1 September 2021**



## 2.1.2 COVID-19 False Information

The Insights and Reporting Team in the COVID-19 Group have been analysing different countries' approaches to COVID-19 false information. This insight briefly covers some of the approaches used by different countries in their COVID-19 response, as well as the role of social media platforms in the response. A short case study on 'Voices for Freedom', a high-profile New Zealand group involved in spreading COVID-19 related false-information is also provided.

### Examples of Different Countries and their Approach to False Information

#### *Finland*

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Finland was considered a positive example of fighting against false information, giving it an advantage in responding to COVID-19 false information. In 2014, Finland's government introduced an anti-fake news initiative aimed at teaching residents, students, journalists and politicians how to counter false information in response to fake news and propaganda targeted at it from another country.<sup>3 4 5</sup> The move to combat false information came as concerted false information campaigns relating to issues such as immigration, the European Union and NATO membership became more prevalent in the country.<sup>6</sup> The approach of Finland's government extends across society and age groups with critical thinking and digital literacy making up part of the school curriculum for students at an early age.

Early in the COVID-19 pandemic, the government enlisted social media "influencers" to widen the reach of their communications, beyond traditional media. Finland recognised those in the social media space as "critical operators" or workers essential to society during a crisis,<sup>7</sup> alongside doctors, public transport operators, and supermarket workers.<sup>8</sup> The project is aimed at supporting social media influencers to share reliable information. Government announcements are edited by a social media consultancy into a social media friendly format and then sent out to a network of 1,500 influencers for further sharing.<sup>9</sup>

During the second COVID-19 'state of emergency' in Finland (1 March to 27 April 2021), powers were granted to authorities under the Emergency Powers Act,<sup>10</sup> which included the dissemination of information. This meant that all communications relating to COVID-19 from the Government, its ministries and central government agencies, were managed through the Communications Department of the Prime Minister's Office. The aim was to make communications easier to understand, particularly as a means of combatting false information that could threaten public health.<sup>11</sup>

#### *The United Kingdom*

The Cabinet Office of the United Kingdom government launched a Rapid Response Unit (RRU) in April 2018 in bid to support what it termed, "the reclaiming of fact-based public debate." The RRU was aimed specifically at monitoring news and information shared online in order to identify any emerging misinformation issues quickly, and to assess the effectiveness of government public information. The group was made up of analysts, data scientists, and media and digital experts.<sup>12</sup>

During the COVID-19 pandemic the RRU worked with social media firms to remove fake news and harmful content, including fake experts, false medical information and phishing scams.<sup>13</sup> The RRU is one of the groups that feeds into the Counter Disinformation Cell, led by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, which is made up of experts from across government and the technology sector. The Counter Disinformation Cell engages with social media platforms and outside experts to produce an overview of disinformation relating to COVID-19.<sup>14</sup> The United Kingdom government has also implemented schemes aimed at raising awareness of false information for both public and private institutions as well as for members of the public. Examples include the 'RESIST Toolkit', a guide for the public sector and private sector on dealing with false information,<sup>15</sup> and the 'SHARE checklist', a guide aimed at helping people decide whether to share media stories or not.<sup>16</sup> The government relaunched its "Don't Feed The Beast Campaign" in light of the COVID-19 outbreak,<sup>17</sup> with the aim of providing public information on how to identify false information.

### *The European Union*

In the European Union, countering false information is part of its European Democracy Action Plan. This plan will be implemented and reviewed before 2023 ahead of the next European elections. The plan is aimed at building more resilient democracies across Europe. The countering false information part of this plan includes strengthening tools to counter foreign interference in the European Union's information space including imposing cost on perpetrators and introducing an updated Code of Practice. The updated Code of Practice will look to gain more signatories, including private messaging service, greater regulation, and a more robust monitoring framework with performance indicators<sup>18</sup>

Exchanges with signatories to the current Code of Practice have become more regular during the COVID-19 pandemic. Communications with platforms include monthly reporting on how their actions promote accurate content, as well as identifying flows of advertising linked to COVID-19 false information.<sup>19</sup> Reporting has been received from Facebook, Google, Microsoft, TikTok, and Twitter, and includes the amount of content taken down, and number of accounts that have been suspended.<sup>20</sup>

### *Canada*

The government of Canada have made it a priority to equip its citizens with the means to critically assess online information through its Digital Citizen Initiative, which helps build resilience to online false information. The initiative also supports research to promote a healthy "information ecosystem", through understanding online false information and using this knowledge to identify action and develop future policy.<sup>21</sup> The initiative includes "Citizen-focused Activities" such as awareness sessions, workshops, and learning materials, covering news and digital news literacy which have reached a wide range of demographics across Canada.

During the COVID-19 pandemic \$3.5 million of funding was provided through the Digital Citizen program to support the efforts of 10 organisations, working to help citizens think critically about health information they read online, and identify false information. Funding will also be provided for new projects. The Digital Citizen Initiative is also looking to fund research projects that aim to understand the role of algorithms and artificial intelligence on the spread, uptake, and impact of false information across different platforms. Research projects that aim to evaluate existing research in this field as well as projects that investigate the impact of false information in diaspora, Indigenous, and non-English speaking communities are also invited to apply for funding.

### *Australia*

There is currently no government regulation in Australia requiring social media companies to remove false information from their platforms, however a voluntary code of practice has been developed by a digital industry advocacy group called Digi.<sup>22</sup> The code of conduct has been signed by Apple, eBay, Twitter, Google, Facebook, and Yahoo as founder members, with change.org, GoFundMe, Linktree, and Redbubble signed up as Associate Members.<sup>23</sup> Under the code, members are required to develop processes for identifying and removing false information from their platforms, as well as demonetising content and deprioritising content in algorithms. Signatories to the code are also required to report annually on how they are meeting the objectives of the code.<sup>24</sup> The first annual reports released by Digi in May 2021 noted that Tik Tok, for example, had removed 651 videos related to COVID-19 between October 2020 and March 2021 with a further 222 videos removed for posting medical false information. One such video included a claim that Prime Minister Scott Morrison had faked his Pfizer injection.<sup>25</sup> Twitter has also responded to the issue of false information by allowing users in Australia to flag content that they believe to be misleading. The move is part of a trial which is also underway in the United States and Korea, and will allow twitter to gather data and assess whether user reporting could be used to identify false information in real time.<sup>26</sup>

### **Social Media Platforms and their Response to COVID-19 False Information**

While social media platforms both in New Zealand and overseas do remove concerning items of content most of this is related to spam, sexual or violent content and hate speech.<sup>27</sup> It is only recently that some major social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) have begun to remove pages that were

responsible for mass proliferation of COVID-19 false information and provide guidelines regarding it.<sup>28 29 30</sup>

New Zealand,<sup>31</sup> and other countries,<sup>32 33</sup> have Online Safety Codes of Practice but these are either voluntary, general codes, or are not specific to false information. Countries also work with social media companies to remove false information content. This can happen when a government agency identifies content containing harmful or false information and seeks removal. This occurred when the Speaker of the House requested that Facebook remove a video posted by Advance New Zealand claiming the government were passing legislation requiring forced vaccinations.<sup>34</sup>

New Zealand has moved towards increased regulation of social media with its review of harmful content (which is aimed to create a modern, flexible and coherent regulatory framework)<sup>35</sup> led by the Department of Internal Affairs which includes false information;<sup>36</sup> and a 2020 National Security Group paper on strengthening New Zealand's resilience to false information recommended a coordinated framework and interagency approach.<sup>37</sup> Internationally, calls for regulation of social media have been growing<sup>38 39 40</sup> since 2016 and this has included a request by Facebook itself.<sup>41 42</sup>

Recently, The Forum for Information and Democracy has created The Partnership on Information and Democracy with 38 states<sup>43</sup> (including Australia, France, Germany, India, and the United Kingdom, amongst others) to develop an international forum to deal with false information on social media. This has set out 12 recommendations across four areas for regulating social media, including public regulation; meta regulation of content; new approaches to design of social media platforms; and safeguards for closed messages entering the public space).<sup>44</sup> New Zealand is not a signatory to this.

Other international efforts at combating false information include the proposed Digital Services Act in the European Union (EU) which would provide a single set of rules for a safer and more open digital space<sup>45</sup> and the Coronavirus Facts Alliance database which brings together fact checkers from more than 70 countries in one space for gathering articles and information on false information related to COVID-19.<sup>47</sup>

#### Case Study - Voices for Freedom and New Zealand False Information

Voices for Freedom ('VFF') are a New Zealand based group, s9(2)(g)(i)

VFF have been covered in our previous report titled *COVID-19 related reports of false information to CERT NZ* (11 August) and in our weekly reporting (29 July).

CERT NZ has been collecting reports of COVID-19 related false information in New Zealand since early 2021 from members of the public through its website. Based on reports for the first six months of 2021 VFF are the main distributor of publicly reported COVID-19 related false information in New Zealand with over 70% of reports to CERT NZ attributed to them.<sup>48</sup>

VFF was formed by s9(2)(a) in early 2021.<sup>49</sup> s9(2)(a)

VFF are responsible for the nationwide distribution of 1.7 million flyers and pamphlets in mid-2021 titled '*Covid Vaccine Facts Reference List*', '*Are You Fed Up With Covid Yet?*', and '*What's All The Fuss About Masks?*'<sup>51</sup>. One of these flyers was subject to a ruling by the Advertising Standards Authority which found six of its eight claims were unsubstantiated.<sup>52</sup>

Members of VFF have been attending school board meetings and handing out flyers alleging that vaccines for COVID-19 are dangerous<sup>53</sup> and may be responsible for COVID-19 disinformation targeting truck drivers<sup>54</sup> and port workers<sup>55</sup> in New Zealand. Targeting school boards, and transport workers<sup>56 57</sup> are approaches which have been noted internationally, and indicate that VFF may be learning from overseas practices.

The VFF Facebook page was taken down by Facebook in late July 2021.<sup>58</sup> However, VFF's main webpage<sup>59</sup> is still up and VFF has a presence on other media platforms such as twitter,<sup>60</sup> Instagram,<sup>61</sup> Gab,<sup>62</sup> and Telegram.<sup>63</sup>

After the group lost its Facebook page, VFF encouraged its followers to move to Telegram, another online social network popular with far-right groups and conspiracy theory believers.<sup>64</sup> Additionally, on the Monday following the shutdown of the Facebook page, the group paid for several large billboards, costing

\$70,000,<sup>65</sup> around Auckland which were promoting free speech.<sup>66 67</sup> All of the billboards were taken down by the end of the day after complaints to the advertisers.

The funds required to pay for its nationwide distribution of flyers and large billboards show significant funding. VFF have claimed that funds for the billboards were raised by public donations in a period of less than a week.<sup>68</sup> The known associations, links, common messages and themes, between VFF, the Advance NZ political party, and Full Court Press (the New Zealand publishing company that prints the Conspiracy magazine *The Real News*)<sup>69</sup> indicate a shared purpose and they may have provided VFF with extra sources of funding for their activities. VFF also has a store page on its website and previously planned to sell natural health products there,<sup>70</sup> and it is unknown whether they are selling products through other avenues.

s9(2)(a)

*Thank you to the following teams that assisted with these insights: the Ministry of Health, the National Security Group, the Department of Internal Affairs, the New Zealand Police, and CERT NZ.*

Proactively Released

## 3 Ministry of Health



### 3.1 Insights of Note Written by the Ministry of Health

#### 3.1.1 Moving health and disability workforce to Auckland

This item informs you of the work the Ministry is doing to move workforce to Auckland to support the COVID-19 response.

The Ministry is actively working on supporting the health and disability workforce to access government funded temporary accommodation for those front-line workers who need to stay away from their homes during COVID-19.

In April 2020, \$10 million was ring-fenced to fund temporary accommodation for health and disability workers living with a vulnerable person or who have been asked to relocate to support the COVID-19 response. This scheme covers all workers undertaking essential health and disability services during the COVID-19 response in roles where they may have close contact with patients, including those employed by a DHB and those who are funded, or employed by an organisation that is being funded, to provide services by DHBs or the Ministry.

The original scheme saw DHBs processing applications from all workers in their area, and accommodation procured and managed by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment's Temporary Accommodation Service. When this service wound down as we moved down alert levels, DHBs took on the procurement of accommodation through their travel providers.

The Ministry is funding temporary accommodation as a component of the initiative to rapidly redeploy employees from across the country to provide support for the Auckland DHBs – primarily in managed isolation and quarantine facilities and intensive care units. Auckland DHBs are also able to access this funding for Auckland-based employees who may require it.

Additionally, the Ministry is currently managing requests from Auckland non-DHB providers for access to temporary accommodation support. Demand continues to be very low from non-DHB providers within and outside the Auckland region. Only one request was received and approved over the past week. Requests for access to this funding for DHBs and non-DHB providers continue to be managed by local DHBs outside of Auckland.

#### **Next steps**

We will keep you updated as this initiative progresses.

### 3.2 Policy/Programme Updates

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

As at 11.59 pm on 7 September 2021, 4,032,710 vaccinations have been delivered, including 1,370,579 people who are fully vaccinated. Of those fully vaccinated, nine percent are Māori, six percent are Pasifika, and 16 percent are Asian.

The Programme reached the milestone of administering 4 million doses on 7 September 2021.

245,139 Māori have received their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, which represents nine percent of the total population who have received their first dose as of 7 September 2021.

572 sites were active on 7 September 2021.

#### **Vaccinations under Alert Level 3 and 4**

Vaccination sites continue to operate under Level 3 and 4 conditions. This means mask wearing and observing physical distancing is required. DHBs are continuing to work to ensure there is enough capacity

for people to book their appointments. Some people may not be able to book at certain sites if the sites are smaller or popular, but there are other sites with capacity within each district.

People are encouraged to attend their booking unless contacted by their DHB.

#### **Group 4 rollout**

Everyone aged 12 and over is now eligible to book a vaccination appointment as of 1 September 2021.

#### **Vaccinations of essential workers**

The Ministry of Health has contacted all the groups and organisations supporting essential workers in businesses/services with clients and customers in the workplace under Alert Level 4. Priority vaccinations for these groups is well underway. Between 20 August 2021 and 2 September 2021, more than 23,000 people have been vaccinated who have been identified in the COVID Immunisation Register as essential workers.

We are actively engaging with additional businesses or services permitted to operate under Alert Level 4, in accordance with Order No. 10. We are prioritising key infrastructure services, and those who are permitted to have customers/clients on their physical premises, such as: funeral directors, NZ Post and union representatives.

#### **Workplace vaccinations**

The Ministry of Health continues to work with businesses through the Expression of Interest process to provide workplace vaccinations. This work will recommence rolling out as soon as alert level requirements permit. DHBs will also continue to work with local communities and businesses to support vaccination to all groups with a strong focus on equity. For example, Capital and Coast DHB engaged with Preston Taylor meat works to vaccinate its workforce.

#### **Workforce**

As of 7 September 2021, 13,285 vaccinators have completed COVID-19 vaccinator training and 7,641 vaccinators have actively vaccinated in the programme so far.

#### **Mass vaccination events**

The 10 to 12 September 2021 'dose 2' mass vaccination event, originally planned for the Vodafone Events Centre, will now take place at the Auckland Airport Park and Ride drive-through vaccination centre. The drive-through model has proven successful and will enable greater throughput under Alert Level 4 restrictions than the original venue.

#### **Book My Vaccine**

As of 7 September 2021, Book My Vaccine holds 1,870,000 future bookings at 549 sites.

#### **Supply**

The expected Pfizer delivery of 322,920 doses arrived as scheduled.

We are in discussion with a number of countries to secure more doses to enable the Programme to maintain current vaccine uptake.

The Ministry of Health is also working closely with DHBs to manage the existing stock on hand and the distribution of weekly deliveries from Pfizer.

## Equity

Drive-through clinics are being successfully used to increase the uptake of vaccine during the current community COVID-19 outbreaks. The drive-through clinic in Māngere is working well for both Māori and Pacific, with strong support from community leaders. The drive-through is heavily promoting a whānau approach to vaccination and aims to administer between 4,000 to 5,000 doses per day.

The Samoan community is working with the Northern Regional Health Co-ordination Centre to have pop-up clinics at the Assembly of God church and Samoan Congregation church in Māngere.

DHBs and Māori health providers are acting to rapidly increase vaccine uptake for Māori in all communities and especially in regions of elevated risk. The programme is working closely with all DHBs and Māori health providers with re-planning of strategy, and increased demand for vaccinations.

To deliver on disability production plans, DHBs continue to deliver smaller scale outreach, including home and residential visits where people are comfortable to have vaccination teams enter their “bubble”.

## New Zealand support for vaccine roll-out in the Pacific

Tokelau, Niue and the Cook Islands have completed their vaccination rollout to their eligible populations, with strong levels of coverage (99 percent and 97 percent respectively).

Following Cabinet’s decision, Tokelau, Niue and the Cook Islands have confirmed they would like to commence vaccinating their 12 to 15-year-old cohort. Planning has commenced to prepare for rolling out the Pfizer vaccine to their younger populations, likely in Quarter 4.

New Zealand is working closely with Samoa, Tonga and Fiji on their plans to vaccinate their 12 to 17-year-old cohort using the Pfizer vaccine. Weekly planning meetings with officials from Samoa, Tonga, and Fiji continue as we make progress against the respective countries’ joint plans. Subject to the availability of vaccines, we are likely to commence vaccine rollout in quarter four.

New Zealand will continue to work closely with other donors in the region to provide a joined-up approach across key components of the Pfizer vaccine rollout in the Pacific, such as vaccinator training, cold chain, and pharmacovigilance. This includes the Australian Therapeutic Goods Administration, UNICEF, and the WHO.

## 3.3 Technical Advisory Group: Update

The COVID-19 Vaccine Technical Advisory Group (CVTAG) met on 31 August 2021 and discussed:

- Myocarditis
- MMR/Influenza co-administration
- Other COVID-19 vaccines that NZ could recognise for border workers
- Extension dose protocol for missed vaccination events
- Third dose for immunocompromised.

CVTAG is next meeting on 7 September 2021 and an update will be provided in a future Weekly Report.

The COVID-19 Technical Advisory Group (TAG) did not meet in the week commencing 30 August 2021. The next TAG meeting is scheduled for 17 September 2021 and an update will be provided in a future Weekly Report.



### 3.4 Communications Issues and Activities

As of 7 September 2021

Date	Activity	Lead agency	Comms material	Ministerial Involvement
07 Sept 21	Auckland outbreak: daily communications and support for the health sector and public. Locations of interest and updated health advice. Outreach to specific communities.	Ministry of Health	Communications, key messages, website, stakeholder engagement	Optional
07 Sept 21	Alert Level 2 (NZ except Auckland) - new requirements for face coverings and gathering sizes will come into place at 11.59pm 7 September 2021. Messaging and advice prepared.	Ministry of Health /MBIE	Website content, questions and answers	Optional
07 Sept 21	Infection Prevention and Control audits of managed isolation and quarantine facilities to be published.	Ministry of Health	Website, talking points	Yes
07 Sept 21	Mandatory record keeping communications underway – Ministry emailing all QR code poster holders this week with messaging about mandatory record keeping, new poster designs and request to check poster details to ensure quality data is available to contact tracers; alignment of content across multiple websites – United Against COVID, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment, OPC.	DPMC	Stakeholder engagement, web updates, messages for poster holders	No
08 Sept 21	Alert Level 4 and Alert Level 2 boundary: Exemptions update and clarifying new guidance for testing of workers crossing the Auckland boundary. Work with employers and agencies underway to implement.	Ministry of Health	Messaging, stakeholder engagement	Optional

### 3.5 Upcoming Publications

Title	Date	Context	ELT contact
Publication: Getting through Together	TBC	The National Ethics Advisory Committee's publication Getting Through Together considers the ethical issues that may arise during any pandemic. The emphasis is on using shared ethical principles so people can care for themselves, their whānau and their neighbours, and make decisions. This is updated from the 2007 version.	Clare Perry, Deputy Director-General, Health System Improvement and Innovation, s9(2)(a)

## 4 Managed Isolation and Quarantine Weekly Report

### 4.1 Top Items to Note

#### 4.1.1 MIQ's response to the Delta outbreak

MIQ is continuing to actively support the response to the community outbreak whenever we can.

Three quarantine facilities are now in place in Auckland and based on our modelling indicating that there is no need for a fourth facility in Auckland at this time, we have ceased active work on this. We are undertaking a "lessons learned" exercise on the process for turning an isolation facility to a quarantine facility rapidly. While overall the response from staff and the facilities has been impressive, there are likely some things we would do differently if we are required to do this again. This includes the support provided to community cases as it has become very apparent that they have different requirements and expectations from general returnees from overseas.

Managing the cumulative events of the community outbreak, Afghanistan arrivals and general returnees is pushing our system and our staff.

As a result, the health, wellbeing and safety of our staff is front-of-mind, and we know that staff are worried about working in these new environments. Four staff, all fully vaccinated, have tested positive for COVID-19 during the period we have been managing community cases, and 101 staff are currently unavailable to work in our facilities as they have been required to isolate as close contacts.

Isolation capacity is stretched due to these cumulative events we are managing. However, the decision to continue operating the Crowne Plaza and to revert the Bay Plaza back to a facility for general returnees, and not community close contacts, has helped. We are also finalising advice on a general voucher release for September, October and November.

We continue to make operational decisions to respond to this situation and are keeping your Office updated on these changes as they occur.

#### 4.1.2 Support for Pacific communities in MIQ

The COVID-19 community outbreak has meant many people from the Pacific community have suddenly found themselves in quarantine unexpectedly. We are doing our best to make these peoples' stays as safe and comfortable as possible. This includes catering for different needs or cultural requirements at short notice. We will continue to adjust how we support all returnees and community cases in our facilities during these stressful times.

MIQ is working in partnership with Pasifika Futures Limited (PFL) – the Whānau Ora commissioning agency for Pacific families, to help Pacific individuals and families who require support in MIQ. This partnership will help mobilise support, and streamline a process for Pasifika Futures as an umbrella organisation to co-ordinate with other Pacific providers who are willing to assist. This partnership also helps our frontline staff to make Pacific people in MIQ aware of points of contact outside of MIQ, who can help with their requests.

We have provided information sheets on our website about what people can expect when they enter MIQ facilities. These information sheets have been translated into ten Pacific languages. They provide useful information for people on what to do and not to do and when they can leave MIQ.

This will also be circulated to Pacific media and community organisations. We are also working closely with the Ministry for Pacific Peoples to use their existing channels, for the messages to reach grassroots Pacific families.

There have been some concerns raised by Pacific providers on the challenges individuals and family members are experiencing in MIQ. They relate to a range of concerns like food, essential items, and divisions of large families in our facilities. There are also reports of families with increased medical issues while in MIQ. We are actively addressing these.

#### 4.1.3 MIQ's role in Afghan repatriation

MIQ remains closely engaged with the AOG response to the evacuation of New Zealanders and refugees from Afghanistan. The only AOG staff still in UAE are a 10 person NZDF 'theatre extraction team' who are cleaning and preparing remaining NZ equipment for return to NZ. They are expected to depart for NZ on or about 8 September 2021.

The table below shows the current MIQ commitment to the Afghan repatriation programme:

Place	Category	Number	Notes
Naumi MIF	Evacuees	369 (-2)	
Waipuna MIF	NZDF	71	
	MBIE	6	
	MFAT	1	
Holiday Inn MIF	Evacuees	4	s9(2)(a)
Jet Park QF	Evacuees	16	s9(2)(a)
Hospital	Evacuees	1	s9(2)(a)
TOTAL Returnees in MIQ		468	

Following the terrorist incident of 4 September 2021, additional NZ Police resources were provided at the Naumi MIF, as a contingency against reprisal action.

MIQ are closely engaged with Refugee and Migrant Services (RMS), MSD and the Ministry of Health to facilitate the transition of Afghan evacuees from the MIF to either the community, or to RMS care. With the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre unable to cope with the number of Afghan evacuees, the Nesuto Hotel has been contracted to provide temporary transition accommodation.

Small groups of evacuees are expected to arrive from evacuation points over coming weeks. The next such group of six is due to arrive from s6(a), s6(b)(i) on 10 September 2021. MFAT are aware of at least 16 other evacuees awaiting travel to NZ. These groups will be processed the same as the larger groups, completing managed isolation in the Naumi MIF.

#### 4.1.4 Returnee experience survey

MIQ has published key findings from the first three months of the MIQ returnee experience survey. Since May, everyone going through MIQ has been invited to take part in this survey around the end of their stay. The survey had 5,703 responses over the last 90 days.

Key data from the returnee experience survey:

- 88% found their stay at MIQ a positive experience.
- Over 90% said they were treated fairly and with respect.
- 94% said they felt safe.

For some people, it can be difficult to spend 14 days in a room with limited outdoor access. The comments, however, tell a story of friendly and caring staff working hard to make everyone staying at MIQ as comfortable as possible.

The survey data also shows some weaknesses which need to be addressed and are being actively worked on. These centre on the booking system, and the difficulty in obtaining a booking in the first place. The booking system is currently closed and will reopen with changes, and we are looking at ways to increase MIQ capacity.

Key data on the booking system:

- 54% said they were able to book their MIQ voucher close to the time they wanted to travel.
- 63% stated that they found the booking system easy to use.

## 4.2 Operational Update

### 4.2.1 Capacity Update

We will provide you with advice on a voucher release for late September, October and November. This will include the numbers we believe we can safely release, and how it will work alongside the lobby.

As of 7 September 2021, a total of 31,207 rooms since early March have been released for the period of June through to the end of November 2021.

From early March 2021 to present, 111,610 returnees have secured a date to return home during the period of March through to the end of November 2021.

Returnees from over 180 countries have successfully secured a voucher to travel during this period.

As at 4pm on 7 September 2021, there is currently no availability on MIAS.

### 4.2.2 Ventilation Update

Ventilation remediation work continues with urgency for the remaining facilities, in parallel with the deployment of air filtration units for the remaining eight facilities' common spaces and quarantine rooms.

The ventilation remediation at Four Points will go ahead, but from a revised start date of 29 September 2021 (this has been pushed back from 13 September 2021). The work will take approximately 10 days.

The installation of air filtration units into quarantine rooms at Novotel IBIS Ellerslie and Holiday Inn, and the common spaces for four of the remaining eight facilities, has been completed.

Delivery of air filtration units to Jet Park Quarantine Facility for quarantine rooms has commenced, and the installation of the units will occur as rooms are vacated.

Jet Park Quarantine Facility has completed their remediation work and re-testing. Following confirmation from our independent HVAC engineer that MIQ preferred conditions had been met, the final test results we presented to the Ventilation Remediation Advisory Group (VRAG), who endorsed the remediation work being fully complete. Final signoff for the site is expected to be obtained this week.

The VRAG's endorsement for the completion of the remediation work for SO and M Social is in progress. Final signoff for the two facilities will then be completed which, along with the final signoff for Jet Park, will take the number of completed and signed off facilities to six (approx. 24% of rooms across the entire portfolio)

Remediation work has now been completed for IBIS Rotorua, Jet Park Hamilton and Holiday Inn, and preliminary feedback received from our independent HVAC engineer analysing the final test results, is that two of the facilities have definitely achieved MIQ preferred conditions.

Remediation work for Grand Mercure (Wellington) is on track to be completed in early October.

### 4.2.3 Vaccination of frontline staff update

For workers on site for the week 30 August – 5 September 2021, BWTR shows that 95.3% had two doses of the vaccine, 1.9% had one dose and the remaining 2.8% (129 workers) had vaccine status 'unknown'.

Of the 129 workers with an 'unknown' vaccination status, 52 still require an NHI match. The Workforce Testing team is investigating the remaining 77 workers to confirm vaccination status.

Vaccination assurance follow-ups for those with an 'unknown' status in BWTR in the previous week did not find any instances of breaches of the vaccination order.

Of the 34 workers who were NHI-matched but showing vaccination status 'unknown' in the 23-29 August 2021 weekly report:

- 16 have been confirmed as being compliant with the vaccine order
- 14 are compliant, but have been passed to MoH for investigation as potential NHI issues
- 3 have been contacted and we are awaiting a response

- 1 was an incorrect sign-in.

Vaccination assurance follow-ups for those with an 'unknown' status in BWTR in the previous week did not find any incidents of breaches of the vaccination order.

#### 4.2.4 Staff testing update

Reporting from BWTR shows that 4,627 people undertook work in our facilities last week, and the table below shows how many of those workers were compliant with the Testing Order, were overdue for a test or still needed to be NHI-matched.

This week we saw a continued high level of compliance at 99% of staff.

Workers on site 23 –29 August 2021	Total	Percentage of total NHI-matched workers on site
Compliant NHI-matched workers	4,507	99%
Overdue NHI-matched workers	68	1%
Need NHI-match	52	
Workers on site	4,627	

Of the 68 overdue, 36 of those are less than 4 days overdue, 19 are 4-10 days overdue and 8 are 11+ days overdue. The Workforce Testing and Vaccination team will be following up with these workers to make sure they get tested as required.

Of the 52 that still need an NHI-match, 29 were created in BWTR in the last 7 days.

11 workers were previously reported as '11+ days overdue' in the report for the week 23-29 August 2021. We have confirmed 7 of them have been swabbed, three others are compliant but have been referred to MOH due to a possible NHI-matching issue, 1 has been contacted and we're awaiting a response.

#### 4.2.5 Saliva Testing Update

MIQ workers at the three Auckland quarantine facilities have been invited to opt-in to the saliva testing regime. Following advice from Ministry of Health, we are strongly encouraging these workers to opt-in and provide daily saliva samples while at work during this current outbreak.

MIQ workers at the remaining Auckland facilities will be progressively invited to opt-in to the saliva testing regime from this week. We expect saliva testing to become operational in these sites over a three-week period later this month, while managing against other operational pressures.

MIQ workers at the Wellington and Rotorua facilities are now able to do saliva testing.

MIQ workers at two of the three Hamilton facilities are now able to do saliva testing. Workers at the remaining facility (Distinction Hamilton) will be invited to opt-in once the facility is re-designated as an MIQ facility later this month.

MIQ workers at three of the six Christchurch facilities are now able to do saliva testing. Workers at the remaining three facilities will be able to start providing saliva samples from next week.

We are working closely with the Ministry of Health on potential changes to the Required Testing Order in line with your expectations, and how these can be successfully rolled out, and when they can happen.

As at 8 September 2021, 104 MIQ workers are opted-in across the 11 sites that are currently operational at the time of reporting (Wellington, Rotorua, Hamilton, Christchurch and Jet Park Auckland).

#### 4.2.6 Ombudsman Update

We received six Ombudsman notifications this week:

- One concerning an emergency allocation decline decision.
- Five fee waiver investigations.

As of 6 September 2021, we have five open cases, and nine cases were closed this week. We are now caught up, and are back on track for responses.

We received one new OPCAT notification this week. Our response to the Distinction Hamilton final report is due on 10 September 2021. We received the provisional report for the Bay Plaza Wellington on 3 September 2021, with our response due on 17 September 2021.

### 4.3 Large Group Arrivals Update

#### 4.3.1 Summary of approved group arrivals as at 7 September 2021 (to December 2021):

Group	Date of Arrival	Allocation Approved	Final number of rooms allocated	Comments
RSE	10 Sept 2021 (Flight 5)	150	0	RSE flight five and six have been deferred with the understanding that these flights will now become a QFT flight at a later date. RSE flight seven will be from the Solomon Islands. Clarification being sought on if this is the final RSE flight or if there will be further RSE flights from the Solomon Islands.
	27 Sept 2021 (Flight 6)	150	0	
	4 Nov 2021 (Flight 7)	150	116 (150pax) TBC	
Construction Accord	Sept 2021	60	40 (45 pax)	Arrivals are spread across the whole month. An additional 7 pax were scheduled to travel from Australia – while they were offered priority for flights and vouchers they have all subsequently pulled out.
	Oct 2021	60	TBC	
	Nov 2021	60	TBC	
	Dec 2021	60	TBC	
Netball – English Roses	27 Aug 2021	30	22	The team have been well behaved. MIQ staff have worked with IPC and the Medical Officer of Health to provide light exercise to mitigate the health and safety risk of athletes exiting MIQ with two weeks of no “time on legs”. On-site training options as permitted by the exemption will be provided with the move to Alert Level 2.
Refugee intakes	10 Sept 2021	1	1 (1 pax)	Timing of future refugee intakes is being reviewed in light of lockdown and Afghanistan evacuees. In the meantime, two emergency cases have been approved to come through Group Allocations. s9(2)(a)
	Late Sept 2021	8	2 (8 pax)	
Afghanistan evacuees	23 Aug 2021	-	36	To date, a total of 393 pax have arrived in New Zealand as a part of Afghan Evacuee Operations. 1 is in hospital, and 19 are in a quarantine unit. The first two groups are due to depart to temporary housing. More individuals and families are being identified with a family of 6 due to arrive on 10 September.
	24 Aug 2021	-	3	
	26 Aug 2021	-	45	
	28 Aug 2021	-	146	
	01 Sept 2021	-	159	
	02 Sept 2021	-	3	
10 Sept 2021	-	6		
Paralympic athletes	Sep 2021	100	2	The final returnees (out of 73 total returnees) arrived into MIQ on 07 September. To date feedback has been positive.
Cricket - White Ferns	30 Sep 2021	30	25 TBC	Standard returnees – not requiring training exemption.
International Mariners	14 Sep 2021	450	60	Detailed planning is underway for 450 fishers arriving Sept to Nov under the border exception, along with up to 105 fishers under a Critical Worker Visa via MIAS. Planning is ensuring that they are in MIFs that can accommodate their complex needs. All will be single occupancy and they will have interpreter support during their stay.
	21 Sep 2021		100	
	4 Oct 2021		62	
	5 Oct 2021		30	
	6 Oct 2021		30	
	26 Oct 2021		100	
	9 Nov 2021		67	
	22 Nov 2021		1	
NZTE administered allocation	Early Nov	25	TBC	Trial monthly allocation for exporter, administered by NZTE.
	Early Dec	25	TBC	
EXPO	7 Oct	72	22	
	25 Oct		20	
	22 Nov		80	
Mountain biking - Crankworx	October	70	50 TBC	

Rugby - All Blacks	Late Nov	65	TBC	Standard returnees – not requiring training exemption.
Rugby - Black Ferns	Late Nov	65	TBC	
Cricket - Black Caps	7 Oct 2021	24	24	
	16 Nov 2021	20	20	
	9 Dec 2021	33	33	This cohort of BlackCaps will be seeking a training exemption.
NZDF	4 Oct	5	5	
	11 Oct	15	12	
	20 Oct	15	15	
	23 Oct	50	50	
	Early Dec	76	TBC	
Cricket - Bangladesh	Early Dec	68	TBC	Bangladesh will be seeking a training exemption.
Antarctic Programme	17 Sep	200	200	These arrivals are for the combined US Antarctic Programme (USAP) as well as the Italian, French, German and Korean programme.

#### 4.3.2 Time Sensitive Travel

The Time Sensitive Travel window for arrivals in Nov/Dec 2021 opened to applications on 17 August 2021. To date, 103 applications have been received for 186 allocations. Demand is expected to be higher than the allocation, in part due to the limited release of vouchers for November, and no release of vouchers for December.

### 4.1 Upcoming Communications Issues and Activities

#### 4.1.1 As at 8 September 2021

Date	Activity	Lead Agency	Comms Material	Ministerial Involvement Y/N
Daily 11am	Daily update on quarantine capacity numbers and facilities	MIQ	Uploaded to media centre on MIQ website at 1pm.	N
9 September	Information for the Pacific community about entering MIQ	MIQ	PR on the 9 <sup>th</sup> and follow up interviews with Pacific media, information materials in Pacific languages for community cases	N
10 September	Group allocations from 2021-2022 on website	MIQ	New webpage listing the Groups signed off by Ministers that have/will arrive in 2021, to Feb 2022	Y
14-16 September TBC	IPC audits of MIQ facilities released	MoH	IPC audits from recent months released on MOH website	N
14-20 September	End of temporary voucher pause, lobby	MIQ	PR and interviews. Announcement date tbc	Y
Late September - TBC	Maori King opens ISO Accor paintings exhibition in Hamilton	MIQ	Proactive communications.	N

## 4.2 Fees

### 4.2.1 Invoicing

The table below shows the number of invoices issued up to 5 September 2021. Invoices have various repayment terms depending on whether they are a sports group (10 days), critical worker (30 days), or standard returnee/maritime crew/aircrew (90 days).

Grouping	Invoices issued (net of credit notes)	Paid	Issued not due	Issued over due	Invoices issued (\$)	Paid (\$)	Issued not due (\$)	Issued overdue (\$)	90+ days overdue	90+ days overdue (\$)
Groups/ Temp Visa	3,534	1,225	2,205	104	\$39,312,918	\$24,702,576	\$13,230,442	\$1,379,900	1	\$7,056
Maritime	443	281	127	35	\$2,219,569	\$1,358,856	\$763,154	\$97,559	15	\$37,965
Aircrew	204	145	0	59	\$1,088,205	\$818,039	\$0	\$270,166	53	\$231,637
Other	22,147	12,306	5,941	3901	\$75,759,553	\$44,799,045	\$18,732,690	\$12,227,817	1,576	\$5,152,589
<b>Total</b>	<b>26,328</b>	<b>13,957</b>	<b>8,723</b>	<b>4,099</b>	<b>\$118,380,245</b>	<b>\$71,678,516</b>	<b>\$32,726,286</b>	<b>\$13,975,442</b>	<b>1,645</b>	<b>\$5,429,247</b>

\*Groups has only previously included sports groups, critical workers and critical Health Workers. However, going forward this now includes temporary visa holders as this aligns more to the categorisation of Critical workers - i.e. they use the same fee charging structure.

Note: the '90+ days Overdue' column represents the number of invoices from the 'Issued overdue' column that have been outstanding for 90+ days.

### 4.2.2 Weekly Average Invoicing and Debt Recovery %

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

Recent Weeks	Average invoicing per week (\$)
Past week	1,362,052
2-4 weeks	3,002,044
5-8 weeks	2,195,477
9+ weeks	1,862,228

### 4.2.3 Waivers

The table below breaks down the waiver application information between 11 August 2020 and 5 September 2021. The numbers below relate to all waiver applications; waivers can be applied for before, during and after an individual has stayed in managed isolation.

Waiver applications received	In progress	Total completed	Total financial hardship applications	Total special circumstances applications	Approved waiver applications		Declined waiver applications	
					Financial Hardship	Special Circumstances	Financial Hardship	Special Circumstances
9475	3024	6451	831	5620	87	4814	744	806

## 4.3 Emergency Allocation Applications

5,159 applications have been processed since 30 October 2020. 477 applications were received in the week ending 5 September 2021, and 241 applications were processed.

From the applications processed in the week ending 5 September 2021, 49% were approved.

Emergency Allocation Applications	Weekly Totals	Year to Date Totals
	30 August 2021 – 5 September 2021	30 October 2020 - 5 September 2021
Approved	117	2782
Declined	124	2377
Applications processed	241	5159

\* These figures only include completed applications, with all supporting evidence, which were received within the required timeframes, which have been decided by a decision marker.

Total Rooms Approved Under Emergency Allocation		127
Rooms allocated in MIAS		110
Awaiting flight details or MIAS registrations from the applicants to complete the room allocation process		17



#### 4.4 Resolutions Update

Data from the Complaints and Feedback Customer Management System for the week 31 August to 6 September 2021 is as follows:

<b>Week 31 August to 6 August</b>	<b>Received</b>	<b>Active Cases</b>	<b>Resolved</b>
Complaints	181	40	187
Improvements	5	0	5
Compliments	11	0	11
Queries	9	0	9
Ombudsman	7	7	10
Parliamentary/OIA	1	0	1
Other	0	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>223</b>

The average number of complaints received each week since the start of MIQ is 130. For the last four weeks, the average is 204 per week.

This week we have received 214 new cases, and have resolved 223 cases.

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## 5 Border Executive Board Report



### 5.1 Key Issues Being Considered

#### 5.1.1 Border Executive Board Meeting

The Board met on 8 September 2021 online in recognition of the COVID-19 Alert Levels.

Kirstie Hewlett from Maritime New Zealand joined to prepare for the 9 September 2021 Chief Executives and Ports Meeting which is to discuss a range of issues raised by Ports. The key issues expected to be discussed are: PPE for mariner pilots, particularly eye protection; procedures for dealing with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection on a ship; measures to prevent COVID-19 transmission on ships and ports; and communication and engagement between agencies and the sector. The meeting will be chaired by Maritime New Zealand with Customs, Health and Transport to attend.

The Board endorsed the findings of the Customs and Ministry of Health reviews of the August 2021 Rio De La Plata Tauranga mariner case. The reviews on the other three cases (fishing Vessel Playa Zahara, fishing vessel Viking Bay, container ship MS Mattina) will be conducted by Customs and Health, and will seek input from the Ports. While opportunities for improvements have already been identified, throughout all four maritime cases there was no transmission of COVID-19 to the community. The Board will see the findings from the other three reviews once they are ready.

DPMC provided an update on elements of the Reconnecting New Zealanders programme.

- Trans-Tasman quarantine-free travel - the Board suggested seeking Cabinet approval for any continuation of the suspension of QFT as soon as practical. This will enable airlines, MIQ and travellers to make any necessary arrangements.
- Self-isolation pilot – the Board recommended that the Future Border sprint work feed into this pilot as it is also considering isolation options.

Vaccination of non-citizen arrivals in New Zealand – the Board discussed the proposal and challenges with implementation by 1 November 2021. The Board supported providing advice that was clear on the impact of implementation including what other activity will need to stop or slow down as a consequence.

The Board agreed Customs will seek s9(2)(f)(iv) in funding for the Border Executive Board secretariat function for 2022/23 from the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund. Funding for the secretariat ceases 30 June 2022.

The border continues to be represented at various COVID-19 resurgence meetings including the National Response Leadership Team.

#### 5.1.2 Future Borders Sprint process

This week, the second “showcase” for the Chief Executive Sponsor Group was held.

The focus of the showcase and the discussion was the approach to an operational trial for the medium risk pathway, and how that might be advanced as a phased, progressive approach.

Modified isolation is one of the features of the new medium risk pathway, as outlined in the Prime Minister’s next steps for Reconnecting New Zealanders to the world.

## 6 New Zealand Customs Service Weekly Report



### 6.1 Items to Note

#### 6.1.1 Maritime

##### *Vessel Rio de la Plata*

On its previous voyage to New Zealand, the Rio de la Plata arrived in Tauranga on 3 August 2021 where it discharged cargo. Its next port of call was to be Napier on 9 August 2021 but the Port of Napier had requested testing of crew before vessel's arrival in that port. Testing was undertaken and the results showed 11 of the 21 crew testing positive for COVID-19. The vessel had remained anchored off the Port of Tauranga while awaiting the test results but after consulting with its owners, the vessel departed New Zealand on 10 August 2021 without making any further NZ port calls.

For this latest voyage, the vessel departed Singapore on 26 August 2021 with its last overseas port of call being Sydney, Australia where it departed on 7 September 2021. The Australian Border Force has advised that it had nil COVID-19 health concerns with the vessel.

The vessel has declared that all crew are asymptomatic as at 0700hrs on 6 September 2021. It has only had one crew member change since its last visit to New Zealand. This change occurred in Malaysia and the crew member observed a 14-day quarantine period in Malaysia and was tested before boarding vessel.

The vessel is expected to arrive into New Zealand territorial waters on 10 September 2021 and arrive at its first port, Tauranga, the following day at 1600hrs. Other ports of call include Napier, Lyttleton, and Port Chalmers.

The Port of Tauranga has advised the Ministry of Health that the port is happy to receive the vessel on arrival and support the necessary arrangements for testing of the crew. This may take up to two days, and the vessel's owner, Maersk, understands that this may be the case.

The Ministry of Health remains in regular contact with Maersk regarding the vessel's arrival. Toi Te Ora (Tauranga DHB) has also reached out to the Port of Tauranga in relation to health requirements for the vessel. The Ministry of Health and the local medical officer of health are currently planning the testing regime for the arriving crew.

The Port of Napier has advised the Ministry of Health that it will not accept the vessel into Napier port until all crew return a negative test for COVID.

##### *Small Craft*

Customs continues with its multi-agency planning for the small craft season.

There are currently fifty small craft that are either in Fiji or have indicated that they will be departing from Fiji and coming to New Zealand this season. Of these, eight are highly likely to return as they have already provided estimated times of arrival. A further 28 have been assessed as likely to return (based on flag and crew composition) while 14 have applied for an exemption from the Director-General of Health to be allowed to sail here.

These 50 small craft have a combined crew of 184 people on board.

### 6.1.2 Pre-Departure Testing

For the period 30 August 2021 to 5 September 2021, there was one warning issued.

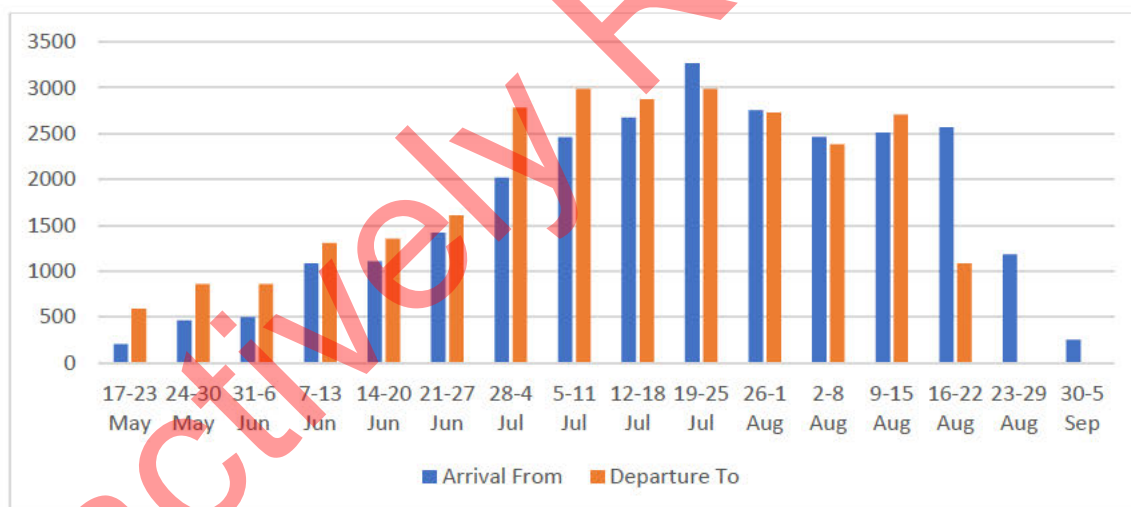
- 30 Aug 2021 – passenger warned as only had a text message and no physical PDT documentation.

#### Red flights

	Date	30 Aug	31 Aug	1 Sep	2 Sep	3 Sep	4 Sep	5 Sep	Week Total	%
	Passengers subject to PDT	268	180	230	319	276	297	239	1809	
Primary Actions (Passport Control)	Test Certificate Verified	251	172	213	287	266	282	231	1702	94.0%
	Exemption verified	14	7	10	24	8	13	6	82	4.5%
	Referred to Secondary Area	3	1	7	8	2	2	2	25	1.5%
Secondary Area Actions	Compliant	2	1	7	8	2	2	2	24	96.0%
	Warned	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4.0%
	Infringement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Prosecution	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

### 6.1.3 Passenger Numbers – Cook Islands

The Cooks Islands Government’s suspension of inbound passenger travel from New Zealand remains in effect until 13 September 2021.



## 7 COVID-19 Chief Executives Board

### 7.1 Items to Note/Updates

The COVID-19 Chief Executives' Board (CCB) did not meet this week. The next meeting for the CCB will be on 14 September, 2021.

## 8 COVID-19 Independent Continuous Review, Improvement and Advice Group

### 8.1 Items to Note/Updates

The COVID-19 Independent Continuous Review, Improvement and Advice Group met this week on 7 September. The conversation primarily focussed on continuing the conversation on real-time observations from the current outbreak. In particular, how these observations are shaping what improvements are needed with pace and urgency to be better prepared for any further incursions of Delta, and to meet the preconditions needed to inform Reconnecting New Zealanders decision-making early in 2022. A continuous improvement advice letter from the Chair, Sir Brian Roche is being prepared and will be sent to you mid-next week.

Members of the Ministry of Health's Science and Insights team also attended part of the meeting to discuss the Surveillance Strategy and Testing Plan with the Group. The Group expressed their interest in continuing to be involved with further iterations of these nationally important documents.

## 9 Strategic COVID-19 Public Health Advisory Group

### 9.1 Items to Note/Updates

The Strategic COVID-19 Public Health Advisory Group met on 8 September, 2021. Discussions foregrounded testing, modelling, and emerging lessons from the national experience with the Delta variant. Representatives from the Ministry of Health updated the group on key activities undertaken in the current response, health system capacity to manage and adapt to future outbreaks, and how recent experiences are shaping the Reconnecting New Zealanders initiative. Special Advisor Shaun Hendy provided an overview of how various modelling approaches can support understanding of border settings, domestic controls, contact tracing, vaccination rates and the distribution of COVID-19 impacts by region and demographic.

## 10 Business Leaders Forum

### 10.1 Items to Note/Updates

The Business Leaders' Forum met on 3 September, 2021. The discussion centred around management of the current COVID-19 outbreak and issues facing businesses amid the outbreak. Forum members were encouraging of Government using the Forum for consultation where needed and that further collaboration between the public and private sectors is needed to streamline systems and processes. Sir David Skegg provided an update to the Forum on the current discussions from the Strategic COVID-19 Public Health Advisory Group and the Forum discussed the importance of vaccinations over the next few months.

## 11 Community Panel

### 11.1 Items to Note/Updates

The Community Panel did not meet this week. The Panel will be giving feedback on the Reconnecting New Zealanders programme over the next week and the next meeting for the Panel will be in October

## 12 Government Modelling Group

### 12.1 Items to Note/Updates

We have continued to receive regular outputs from Te Punaha Matatini model teams relating to the current outbreak. This week, discussion has looked at scenarios for Auckland moving to Alert Level 3.

It is worth noting that as daily case numbers fall to very low numbers, case-specific intelligence should carry much greater weight for decision-making than modelling outputs. However, modelling can help explore the consequences of community transmission in an Alert Level 3 (or lower) environment.

We are expecting a final draft of the TPM modelling study on traveller entry pathways in the near future. This will give an indication of the relative risk reduction associated with different entry regimes (testing, isolation, etc). This will feed into *Reconnecting New Zealanders* workstreams on effectiveness of different entry regimes. We will share a final product with Ministers as soon as is possible.

We are currently scoping the next significant piece of work that modellers will be undertaking, which will explore different COVID-19 management strategies (at the border and in the community) at high rates of vaccination, drawing inspiration from the Doherty Institute and Blakely modelling outputs in Australia (as well as other international equivalents). We will update you as this progresses.

### 13 Appendix

	Audit summary	Incidents/Reviews	IPC Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), Operations Frameworks and guidance documents
<b>Managed Isolation and Quarantine Facilities (MIQFs)</b>	Scheduled IPC audit for six Auckland MIQFs postponed. IPC support provided to Auckland MIQFs, which included N95 train the trainer model for N95 mask fit checking, supporting the IPC requirements for set up of Novotel Ellerslie MIF to quarantine and assisting with IPC concerns and/or issues within Auckland MIQFs. Quarterly IPC MIQF audit schedule paused while Alert Levels 4 and 3. To recommence at Alert Level 2.	MIQF practice of accommodating live-in New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) staff on returnee room floors escalated to Ministry of Health IPC team. Interim guidance for requirement for surveillance COVID-19 testing of returnees located on same floor as a day 0/1 or day 3 positive returnee does not include a requirement for NZDF live-in staff accommodated on the same floor. Escalated to Ministry of Health IPC team. MIQF practice of barista and beverage service resulting in multiple daily deliveries to returnee corridors escalated to Ministry of Health IPC team.	-
<b>Airports</b>	No new update	-	The Ministry of Health IPC team has been revising version 1.3 (currently in draft) of the air border IPC guidance for both green and red zones. This review has included feedback from sector stakeholders. The revised changes were approved by the IPC sub-Technical Advisory Group and were signed off by the Clinical Oversight Group on 25 August 2021 per usual IPC governance process. The final draft is now being readied for sign-off by GM Border Operations, aiming for publication early next week. Drafted version 1.3. includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• a revision of PPE requirements for airport staff to ensure clarity for the variety of staff roles and tasks and risk mitigations within the airport setting; and</li><li>• a review of use of physical barriers such as rigid Perspex / sneeze guard screen to protect staff as part of infection prevention measures.</li></ul>

	Audit summary	Incidents/Reviews	IPC Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), Operations Frameworks and guidance documents
Maritime/Ports	No new updates	-	<p>Maritime NZ has confirmed that the guidance for pilots and other workers boarding an affected ship has been published on its website.</p> <p>As the industry regulator, Maritime NZ is leading the engagement with the sector to support the recommendations put forward, as below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• pilots aboard an affected ship are now to wear a N2 / P95 particulate respirator and eye protection, in lieu of medical masks, as previous recommended; and</li><li>• medical masks for all other workers aboard an affected ship, in lieu of non-medical masks / face coverings.</li></ul> <p>Ministry of Health IPC and Border Operations teams have been providing support to Maritime NZ to address feedback received in response to the proposed changes and will continue to offer support as needed.</p>

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