

## IN-CONFIDENCE

### National Response Leadership Team meeting

Date: 29 December 2021, 1500hrs

Member attendance: Una Jagose (NRLT Chair), Ashley Bloomfield, Carolyn Tremain, Christine Stevenson, Caralee McLiesh, Dave Gawn, Debbie Power, Lil Anderson, Andrew Crisp, Dave Samuels.

Other attendance: Martin Rodgers (NRLT Secretariat), Glenn Dunbier (for Andrew Coster), Bronwyn Turley (for Peter Mersi), Deborah Geels (for Chris Seed), Tania Ott (for Peter Hughes), Mac Leauanae, Darryn Webb, Amber Bill (for Cheryl Barnes), Aaron Wright, Bridget White, Sacha O'Dea, Liam McNamara, Ben White, Carl Crafar.

### Purpose

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This briefing records the discussion at the National Response Leadership Team meeting regarding two cases in the community of the Omicron variant of COVID-19.

### Next steps

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1. NRLT will provide advice to (Duty) Minister Hipkins on an approach to communication and the circumstances under which decisions may need to be made on the COVID-19 Protection Framework settings.

### Minutes

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2. Una Jagose, (Acting) Chair of the National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) opened the meeting.
3. The Chair invited Ashley Bloomfield to provide a situation update.
  - 3.1. s9(2)(a) [REDACTED]
  - 3.2. Members were also informed about an s9(2)(a) [REDACTED] who has also tested positive with the Omicron variant, but who had limited exposure events, and whose close contacts have currently returned negative tests.
4. Aaron Wright informed the meeting that the Ministry of Health has not provided any advice that would necessitate a revisiting of the decision to shift the COVID-19 Protection Framework settings for Auckland, Taupō, Rotorua Lakes, Kawerau, Whakatane, Ōpōtiki, Gisborne, Wairoa, Rangitikei, Whanganui and Ruapehu districts, which is due to take place on 30 December 2021.
5. It was noted that both cases are believed to be from the border and are currently back in isolation. There is no evidence of transmission in the community as yet, with close contacts currently returning negative test results. Contact tracing and testing is being undertaken as priority.

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6. Members discussed the communications approach in relation to these cases. It was agreed that Health and DPMC officials would provide advice on an approach following this meeting, taking into account the latest information in relation to the cases.
7. It is noted that there was insufficient information about the close contacts of the [REDACTED] <sup>s9(2)(a)</sup> case, and their movements, to determine further steps.
8. It was agreed that Ashley Bloomfield would provide NRLT with updates and the group may need to meet again later in the day or tomorrow.
9. Members agreed that Ashley Bloomfield will brief Minister Hipkins, as Duty Minister, following this call.
10. The Chair closed the meeting.

Signed

Una Jagose  
National Response Leadership Team

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## IN-CONFIDENCE

### National Response Leadership Team meeting

Date: 7 Jan 2022, 1100hrs

Member attendance: Peter Mersi (NRLT Chair), Una Jagose, Carolyn Tremain, Christine Stevenson, Caralee McLiesh, Dave Gawn, Lil Anderson, Andrew Crisp, Dave Samuels, Mac Leauanae,

Other attendance: Natasha Dcosta (NRLT Secretariat), Vik Rickard, Glenn Dunbier, Ben King, Tania Ott, Grace Smit, Lisa McPhail, Stephen Harris, Robyn Shearer, Caroline McElnay, Hayden Glass, Darryn Webb, Katrina Casey, Bridget White, Liam McNamara, Ben White, Carl Crafar.

### Purpose

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This briefing records the discussion at the National Response Leadership Team meeting regarding Managed Isolation and Quarantine (MIQ) capacity challenges and work being carried out to prepare for OMICRON cases in the community.

### Next steps

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NRLT secretariat worked with the Chair, DPMC and MoH to draw a note together to inform Ministers Robertson and Verrall of the current MIQ challenges, contingency planning for community cases of OMICRON. The memo signalled the intention to bring to Ministers in the week of 10 January a proposal around the high-level messaging to signal to the AoG system and the wider public the shift from management of the Delta variant to that of OMICRON.

### Minutes

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1. Peter Mersi, (Acting) Chair of the National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) opened the meeting.
2. The Chair invited Carolyn Tremain to provide a situation update in MIQ.
  - 2.1. Carolyn Tremain briefed members on the ongoing pressure on the MIQ system as a result of OMICRON, and if positive cases at the border continue at similar rates as currently and or increase further, additional measures will be needed for quarantine
  - 2.2. Members were informed that MIQ is investigating additional measures to shore up the quarantine capacity of MIQ. Other measures under consideration include allocating isolation space based on arrival of high-risk flights, feasibility of dual use facilities for both isolation and quarantine and considering other isolation options for several large groups due into the country, for example Defence personnel, sports teams, Antarctic workers, and refugees that are travelling as cohorts.
  - 2.3. While these measures will provide temporary capacity to manage cases at the border, the stress on the system will remain significant as does the inevitable leaking of OMICRON into the community at some point.

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3. The chair noted that any contingency plan would be based upon a broad set of options that included a plan of action for cases, a revised definition of MIQ and an understanding of the risk appetite with regard to OMICRON.
4. Representatives from the Ministry of Health provided an update on contingency planning for OMICRON in the community
  - 4.1. Robyn Shearer informed the meeting that a Public Health Risk assessment has been conducted that suggests delaying the relaxation of isolation requirements for air crew due to the risk of rising border cases. Another public health risk assessment is scheduled for 27 January 2022 to align with the review of Reconnecting New Zealanders settings by the end of February.
  - 4.2. Bridget White noted that The Ministry of Health is currently progressing work on managing OMICRON in the community. The current Omicron strategy is to keep it at the border, detect and rapidly respond to any Omicron cases in the community, strengthen protection through vaccination with a focus on vulnerable populations. However once Omicron is seeded in the community it is likely the strategy will become one of protecting the most vulnerable from severe disease and / or death, ensuring equity, and limiting the impact on society through the protection of critical infrastructure and workforces.
  - 4.3. The Ministry of Health is reviewing the testing, tracing, isolation and quarantine paradigm (TTIQ) in light of Omicron. They are using three scenarios to develop the proposed TTIQ model, based on international evidence and experience to date. The scenarios are:
    - a. Low-incidence (current state): up to 1,000 cases per day
    - b. Medium-incidence: 1,000-5,000 cases per day
    - c. High-incidence: 5,000-50,000+ cases per day
  - 4.4. Draft planning assumptions based on international evidence include factors such as
    - a. Incubation period for Omicron is on average 3- 4 days but can vary with some reports up to 8 days
    - b. Omicron case numbers will grow rapidly, and the variant will be predominant in New Zealand with 2-4 weeks of being seeded in the community. A 10-case outbreak would reach 1000 new cases per day in 6-12 days.
    - c. The need for hospitalisation as a proportion of Omicron cases might be lower than for Delta but in absolute terms, due to increased numbers of cases, there could be similar or more daily hospitalisations and deaths.
    - d. Vaccine effectiveness can be assumed to still offer some protection but is expected to be lower than compared with Delta. A booster shot restores protection against hospitalisation and symptom severity, but it is unclear for how long.
  - 4.5 The meeting was informed that The TTIQ model for Omicron will be provided to Minister Verrall and the Director-General of Health mid-late next week for feedback and discussion. Once approved, the TTIQ model will be shared across agencies and inform agencies planning, and communications.
5. The chair agreed that there is a need to understand the implication of OMICRON on the system at large and what a corresponding response would look like.

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6. Katrina Casey informed the meeting that DPMC will lead the development of all-of-Government communications post the approval of the TTIQ model to ensure the public and businesses understand what to expect at the medium and high incidence levels where a higher degree of self-management is required in response to an outbreak. A proposal on high level messaging will be presented to duty ministers by 13 January.
7. It was agreed that the Chair, DPMC and MoH officials would draft an aide memoire on behalf of NRLT for a 4PM meeting on 7 January to duty Ministers on the key issues of MIQ capacity, contingency planning and indicate the development of high level messaging based on a “no regrets” approach.
8. This approach would include booster vaccinations, vaccinations for 5-11-year olds and acknowledgement that OMICRON is very different from Delta as well as signalling the work underway.
9. It was agreed that it would be desirable to have specific messaging available for businesses and industries within the fortnight. It will be important to learn from the experience of other countries where critical services (such as health, food supply and essential services) have been disrupted because the systems didn't respond fast enough to the fact Omicron works differently. However, this will depend on decisions and when these are made. It should still be possible to at least provide some form of messaging prior to that which would give business and industries a basis for their own preparations and planning.
10. The Chair closed the meeting.



Signed

Peter Mersi  
National Response Leadership Team

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## IN-CONFIDENCE

### National Response Leadership Team meeting

Date: 16 January 2022, 1430hrs

Member attendance: Carolyn Tremain (acting NRLT Chair), Robyn Shearer (for Ashley Bloomfield), Katrina Casey (for Cheryl Barnes), Zoe Juniper (for Aaron Wright), Caralee McLiesh, Andrew Coster, Christine Stevenson, Peter Mersi, Chris Seed, Una Jagose, Dave Gawn, Viv Rickard (for Debbie Power), Lil Anderson, Grace Smit (for Dave Samuels), Andy Coster, Caralee McLiesh, Darryn Webb (for Air Marshal Kevin Short), Rebecca Kitteridge, Anne Shaw (for Andrew Crisp)

Other attendance: Rae Nathan (NRLT Secretariat), Chloe Thompson, Tania Ott, Mac Leauanae, Richard Schmidt, Bryan Dunne, Liam McNamara, Ruth Fairhall



### Purpose

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This briefing records the discussion at the National Response Leadership Team meeting regarding an intra-managed isolation facility transmission of the Omicron variant, preparedness more generally, the tsunami in Tonga, and updates from parts of the response system (eg managed isolation and quarantine capacity, Care in the Community, rapid antigen testing).

### Minutes

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1. The Chair of the National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) opened the meeting.
2. The Chair invited Robyn Shearer to provide a situational update:
  - 2.1. s9(2)(a)  
  
And the locations of interest in Auckland have been published. At this stage the close contacts have returned negative tests. s9(2)(a)  

3. The Chair invited Zoe Juniper, Acting Chair of the National Response Group (NRG) to provide an update on what the NRG discussed earlier today.
  - 3.1. Zoe acknowledged the hard work of agency representatives on the NRG as this preparation work across the system this previous week prepared the response system well in this circumstance.
  - 3.2. Zoe reported that the NRG discussed concurrent events, domestically and internationally, and the upcoming papers to Ministers this week.
4. The Chair debriefed the Ministers meeting that was held this morning, noting the Prime Minister will do a stand-up today at 3pm. The Chair debriefed that the areas of focus during the meeting were on the current situation, booster vaccinations, and availability of rapid antigen tests.

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5. The Chair invited Robyn Shearer to update the NRLT on rapid antigen test (RATs) availability. Robyn noted that there will be prioritisation of RATs to critical and essential workers. Robyn noted that New Zealand, like many other countries, is facing supply chain issues to import RATs. Robyn noted that orders of RATs are being continually reviewed and the Ministry of Health will develop a central distribution model.
6. The Chair invited Katrina Casey to debrief on the public messaging and communications approach for the upcoming week.
  - 6.1. Katrina reported that the communications messaging will be a continuation of what we currently have in place (eg mask, scan, pass) and to encourage people to be prepared for Omicron. This upcoming week there will be an increase in communications around booster vaccines and paediatric vaccines. Katrina reported some recent public sentiment themes that are emerging across Unite Against COVID-19 social media channels.
  - 6.2. Katrina noted the upcoming papers due to Ministers this week on the COVID-19 Protection Framework settings across the country and on Reconnecting New Zealanders.
7. The Chair asked a few questions on the work within the Ministry of Health regarding the interval between the second vaccine dose and booster vaccine and the availability of the paediatric vaccines across the country for the upcoming rollout.
8. The Chair provided an update on managed isolation and quarantine (MIQ) capacity. The Chair noted that there will be further quarantine rooms available soon and that the MIQ system is feeling pressure due to the higher number of positive cases within facilities. The Chair discussed that there may be a review of, and changes to, the testing approach for MIQ workers.
9. The Chair invited Viv Rickard to update the NRLT on the Care in the Community supports for individuals isolating in the community. Viv noted that the demand for the Care in the Community supports is relatively low at the moment. Viv noted that most of the individuals that the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) is supporting through the Care in the Community work is a similar population group that MSD typically interact with and a common support needed is around food access.
10. The Chair invited Dave Gawn and Chris Seed to update the NRLT on the tsunami in Tonga and associated response.
  - 10.1. Dave reported that the volcanic eruption occurred yesterday around 5pm. The disrupted communication, particularly to the outer islands, is making it difficult to discern the damage so far. A flyover is likely to occur tomorrow, provided the conditions allow, which will help ascertain the scale and nature of the damage. There are some effects from the tsunami observed on the coast of Northland and an advisory will remain in place until at least tonight.
  - 10.2. Chris reported that the undersea cable that links Tonga to the world was damaged during the tsunami and other critical infrastructure has been damaged, including some access to drinking water. Chris reported that the Emergency Coordination Centre at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade has been stood up to organise the response effort.

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10.3. Darryn Webb noted that the New Zealand Defence Force is working closely with Australia, and is preparing to be ready to dispatch support and supplies, depending on how the situation evolves.

11. The Chair noted that no further NRLT will be called today and the next acting Chair of the NRLT is Christine Stevenson.

12. The Chair closed the meeting.

Signed

Carolyn Tremain  
Acting Chair, National Response Leadership Team

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## IN-CONFIDENCE

### National Response Leadership Team meeting

Date: 22 Jan 2022, 21:00 hrs

Member attendance: Christine Stevenson (Chair), Peter Mersi, Carolyn Tremain, Caralee McLiesh, Dave Gawn, Lil Anderson, Mac Leauanae, Chris Seed, Andrew Coster, Andrew Crisp

Other attendance: Natasha Dcosta (NRLT Secretariat), Viv Rickard, Karl Woodhead, Geoff Short, Sacha ODea, Anna Cassie, Richard Schmidt, Aaron Wright, Katrina Casey, Liam McNamara, Ruth Fairhall, Hamish Rogers.

### Purpose

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This briefing records the discussion at the National Response Leadership Team meeting regarding an emerging incident of secondary transmission of the OMICRON variant in the community.

### Next steps

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DPMC Policy will send through a briefing which, aligned with the public health risk assessment, will support and advise a shift to the Red setting with additional measures and tightened restrictions under the COVID-19 Protection Framework. Feedback is sought from members of the NRLT by no later than 08:30 AM on Sunday 23 January 2022. The briefing will be then be submitted to Ministers at 09:00 AM.

Acknowledging the importance of business continuity in an outbreak, DPMC Planning, Readiness and Response will work with agencies to finalise critical workers across the public sector.

Embargoed briefings will be provided to key sectors between ahead of the 11:00AM media standup on Sunday 23 January 2022 to inform the move to red settings in the CPF framework

### Minutes

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1. Christine Stevenson, (Acting) Chair of the National Response Leadership Team (NRLT) opened the meeting.
2. The Chair invited Ashley Bloomfield to provide a situation update.
  - 2.1. Ashley briefed members on an emerging situation where following whole genome sequencing, 10 cases of the OMICRON variant of COVID-19 have been detected in a family in the Nelson Motueka. These cases have no known link to the border or border-workers.
  - 2.2. s9(2)(a) [REDACTED]
  - 2.3. s9(2)(a) [REDACTED]

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- 2.4. Early stages of contact tracing have indicated that contacts are located across the country.
- 2.5. Considering the known virulence of Omicron, it is expected that the number of confirmed cases will grow over the coming days.
- 2.6. A public health risk assessment has been held and it recommends New Zealand move to the red setting under the COVID-19 Protection Framework.
3. Aaron Wright, Head of Planning, Readiness and Response at DPMC then provided a system update.
  - 3.1. Aaron informed members a written brief on the movement of the country to the red setting in the COVID protection framework along with tightened public health measures will be provided to Ministers at 09:00 AM on 23 January 2022 with an official zoom meeting at 10:00AM before the media stand up at 11:00AM on the same day.
  - 3.2. The legal implementation of this setting once approved can be implemented by midnight 23 January 2022
  - 3.3. National Response Group has agreed that work would be prioritised in terms of what needed to be done in the next 24 hours. The group has recommended that in the window post the 10:00AM officials meeting embargoed briefings are provided to key stakeholders likely to be affected. These stakeholders were identified as the National Iwi Chairs, Regional public service commissioners, the Fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector and potentially road transport operators.
4. Ruth Fairhall added that DPMC Policy is producing a briefing paper which, aligned with the public health risk assessment, will support and advise a shift to the Red setting with additional measures and tightened restrictions under the COVID-19 Protection Framework.
  - 4.1. The briefing will seek approval to reduce capacity requirements in indoor and outdoor settings and the use of medical grade masks for those under the mandatory vaccination order
  - 4.2. The draft of this paper will be distributed to attendees in the evening of 22 January 2022 and, after feedback is incorporated, will be submitted to Ministers tomorrow at 09.00am 23 January 2022.
5. Members of the group discussed critical workers and agreed that more work was needed across the public sector to ascertain numbers It was agreed that agencies would respond to Aaron Wright to collate numbers at a system level.
6. Members questions if there would need to be changes to isolation requirements and vaccination sequence,
  - 6.1. Ashley Bloomfield clarified that isolation periods would be longer at 10 days for cases and 7 for contacts in the manage phase of the outbreak. As the outbreak grows the focus would shift to enabling the critical workforces to function.

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- 6.2. He also clarified that currently the booster vaccination sequence was fit for purpose given the supply in the country.
- 6.3. The sequence for tamariki vaccinations will be reviewed by the Health Vaccines technical advisory group in early February.
7. The group then discussed the current Tongan mission and agreed that Tonga would be informed on Sunday 23 January and could adjust their posture accordingly.
8. The chair acknowledged that across the system Business continuity plans were being updated and reviewed. It was discussed that further guidance would be forthcoming once the scale of community transmission was confirmed.
9. The chair then thanked members and requested the CE of the Ministry of Transport, the CE of Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Director General of Health to stay on to discuss responsibilities to the Cook Islands travel bubble and the sequence of informing them of the outbreak.
  - 9.1. Members discussed that Air New Zealand had a flight due to depart at 10:30AM on Sunday 23 January and it would need to be indicated to the government of the Cook Islands and the airline of the potential risk of infection via passengers given the outbreak.
  - 9.2. Ashley Bloomfield agreed to speak to the Prime Minister at 09:00AM on 23 January and post her approval provide an update to Air New Zealand and the Cook Island government
10. The Chair closed the meeting.

Signed



Christine Stevenson  
National Response Leadership Team

## IN-CONFIDENCE

### National Response Leadership Team meeting

Date: 2 February 2022, 1000hrs

Member attendance: Christine Stevenson (acting NRLT Chair), Ashley Bloomfield, Cheryl Barnes, Aaron Wright, Caralee McLiesh, Glenn Dunbier (for Andrew Coster), Peter Mersi, Chris Seed, Una Jagose, Dave Gawn, Debbie Power, Lil Anderson, Dave Samuels, Paul Stocks (for Carolyn Tremain), Andrew Crisp, Bill Perry (acting for Christine Stevenson as Chief Executive of New Zealand Customs Service)

Other attendance: Rae Nathan (NRLT Secretariat), Peter Hughes, Hamish Rogers, Ruth Fairhall, Mac Leauanae, Paul Stocks, Glenn Dunbier, Liam McNamara

### Purpose

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This briefing records the discussion at the National Response Leadership Team meeting regarding the phased approach to managing Omicron in the community (system readiness for phase 2), an operational roundtable related to Omicron approach and response planning, and to hear a situational update.

### Minutes

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1. Christine Stevenson, acting Chair of the National Response Leadership Team (NRLT), opened the meeting.
2. The Chair invited Ashley Bloomfield to provide a situational update:
  - 2.1. Ashley reported that case numbers are increasing and similar with previous outbreaks, Auckland is most-affected. Ashley reported that there are many cases in South Auckland.
  - 2.2. Ashley reported that the outbreak has grown but not at a significantly high rate of increase in comparison to previous outbreaks. Ashley noted that the protections we have in place under the Red setting of the COVID-19 Protection Framework is likely the reason for the slower rate of increase we are observing.
  - 2.3. Ashley summarised the advice that he provided to Ministers yesterday:
    - 2.3.1. Advised that New Zealand remain at the Red setting of the COVID-19 Protection Framework (CPF).
    - 2.3.2. Advised that at this stage there is not a need to move to Phase 2 of the Omicron approach.
    - 2.3.3. Advised that at this stage there is not a need to change the settings of the Red colour of the CPF beyond the advice provided around mask-use, but that if the outbreak outlook changes materially then the Ministry of Health would reconsider and advise accordingly.
  - 2.4. Ashley noted that with the reported hospitalisation rate of Omicron internationally, we anticipate not seeing cases appearing unexpectedly at the hospital like we observed in other outbreaks.

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- 2.5. Ashley noted that on Friday 4 February the Ministry will conduct a readiness assessment workshop across the health system.
- 2.6. Ashley noted that while we have the CPF in place and the Omicron phased plan, Phase 3 is not inevitable and we are trying to flatten the curve. At this stage, the Red settings of the CPF, and the vaccination rate and progress with boosters, puts us in the best-possible position to keep Omicron case numbers as low as possible which is critical for protecting our vulnerable populations, protecting the health system and critical infrastructure.
3. The Chair opened for a roundtable discussion.
4. Ashley discussed that some of the modelling available looks at what has occurred overseas and applies that to the New Zealand population, but the current case numbers we are observing now are not as large, or increasing at the same rate, as what was predicted by some modelling.
5. Peter Hughes noted that he released public service workforce guidance recently that stated that while we are in Phase 1 staff in the Public Service should work as normal (eg normal operating rhythm predominantly in-offices or including flexible working arrangements). Peter noted that the caveat applies that if the public health measures around distancing prevents the office from operating as normal then offices should work from home to follow public health advice. Peter noted that on moving to Phase 2, when that occurs, he would provide guidance to the public service that they should work from home, barring the approach for critical workforces. Peter noted that the Public Service Commissioner has draft guidance ready for consultation with Chief Executives at the Public Service Leadership Team (PSLT) advance tomorrow 3 February.
  - 5.1. Members noted that some Chief Executives are considering 'bubbles' under Phase 2 and 3 and queried if that is a reasonable approach. Peter Hughes noted that this will be discussed at the PSLT advance tomorrow.
6. Caralee McLiesh queried how Omicron may impact health care capacity and how the Omicron phases may impact on planned surgeries or procedures. Ashley noted that contrary to the Alert Level framework approach to hospitals, the approach under the CPF is that hospitals maintain business as usual practice, but as Omicron cases increase they may reduce planned care. Ashley noted that considerations like this are monitored closely and regularly. Ashley noted that if case numbers increase significantly, there would be about a two-week delay before we observe how that impacts on the health care system capacity and this delay gives the hospitals time to prepare for changes needed in advance.
7. The Chair invited Paul Stocks to debrief on the Test to Return scheme and the critical workforce approach.
  - 7.1. Paul noted that businesses are thinking about Test to Return as if it were a license to operate (eg similar to the Alert Level Framework essential services approach) which it is not, and that the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) is leading this work between businesses and Ministers to design the scheme and understand its implications.



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- 7.2. Paul Stocks noted to the NRLT that for MBIE to process the distribution of RATs to critical workforces a self-registered approach (by businesses) under the Test to Return scheme is most viable.
- 7.3. Paul noted that Health and Safety at Work Act would still apply in employer obligations in the Test to Return approach.
- 7.4. Paul noted that engagement with business on this approach has been productive.
- 7.5. Paul noted that for business readiness itself there are some concerns around absenteeism in distribution centres (eg supermarkets) that may not be alleviated by the Test to Return approach.
- 7.6. Debbie Power noted that the Ministry of Social Development has staff that could be redeployed to support supermarket infrastructure to help keep the supermarkets running and that existing policy settings could possibly be applied to this approach (eg supporting local people to support supermarkets). Debbie noted that this will need to be discussed and considered by Ministers. Debbie noted that they would also need to consider how the funding to support this possible solution might work.
8. The Chair invited Peter Mersi to provide an update on critical areas of risk in the transport-space.
  - 8.1. Peter Mersi debriefed that there will be pinch points in some sectors (eg aviation refuelers who have the technical ability to refuel a plane). Peter noted that the Ministry of Transport will host a workshop this week to understand the vulnerabilities in some sectors. Peter noted this work with sectors will be based on public health advice and focus predominantly on the critical workforces in the sector where staff is limited.
9. The Chair invited Debbie Power to provide an update on Caring the Community.
  - 9.1. Debbie noted that the model put in place between health care and welfare before Christmas has embedded further over this period.
  - 9.2. Debbie noted that the three-phase approach to Omicron will change some of the settings of the Caring in the Community model.
  - 9.3. Debbie and the Caring in the Community governance group will look to provide a paper to Ministers possibly next week to give Ministers choices around the supports available within the Caring in the Community model and how that might look under the Omicron phased approach.
10. The Chair noted that the Unite Against COVID-19 communications will need to be tailored and ready for subsequent Omicron phases.
  - 10.1. Cheryl Barnes confirmed that the COVID-19 Group communications team are well-prepared and engaging across agencies to prepare for this. Cheryl invited Aaron Wright to provide anything further updates on readiness and planning for Omicron phases.

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- 10.2. Aaron Wright noted that agencies are working closely together to understand what phase 2 and 3 will look like across agencies, and noted the communications plan is a critical piece to this.
11. Paul Stocks noted that MBIE is working with the Treasury, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Social Development on how the individual and business support schemes will apply in the Omicron phases.
12. The Chair invited Lil Anderson, Dave Samuels, and Mac Leauanae to debrief to the NRLT on what they are hearing from communities.
- 12.1. Lil Anderson noted that there was an Iwi Chairs Forum call yesterday hosted by Minister Davis. Lil noted that Te Arawhiti is drawing engagements together around the COVID-19 response to allow for more-efficient engagements between multiple departments and Iwi into one forum. Lil Anderson expressed the importance of public messages that reaffirm the public health measures in place are critical to a slower increase in case numbers.
- 12.2. s9(2)(g)(i) [REDACTED] Dave Samuels noted that next week Te Puni Kōkiri will provide a paper to Ministers on funding supports needed to mitigate impacts of Omicron on Māori who are disproportionately at risk of both infection and severe health outcomes from COVID-19.
- 12.3. Mac Leauanae noted that consistent messaging that is accessible to Pacific peoples will remain important to communities. Mac Leauanae noted that Pacific providers are stretched, similar to Māori providers, in providing COVID-19 related supports to communities (eg support with kai, self-isolation, and support to communities to comply with the public health requirements). Mac Leauanae noted that there is also a mindset shift that possibly has not yet occurred in communities (eg from the Alert Level framework to the CPF approach) which makes it critical that clear communications are provided to ensure people understand why government is making certain choices and what the impacts of those choices are.
13. The Chair noted that our systems need to remain prepared to pivot if needed.
14. The Chair invited any closing comments for the meeting.
- 14.1. Una Jagose noted that with the impending order announcements and changes to border settings will impact significantly on the self-isolation model and supports and that the communications around border changes should anticipate this.
15. The Chair closed the meeting.

Signed

Christine Stevenson  
Acting Chair, National Response Leadership Team