

Nadia Bari

From: Jeremy McCabe <Jeremy.McCabe@mbie.govt.nz>
Sent: Monday, 1 May 2023 12:46 pm
To: Eric Janse van Rensburg

Hi Eric. It's probably safe to archive the COVID pages that refer to the Vaccination Assessment Tool and the wage subsidies/calculator all of which are no long operational. What do you think?

Released under the
Official Information Act 1982

From: [Jordan Hindley](#)
To: [Mary Direen](#); [Eric Janse van Rensburg](#); [Tom Frankish](#)
Subject: RE: Comms re: revocation of VAT [IF CONFIRMED] (IN-CONFIDENCE)
Date: Tuesday, 5 April 2022 9:59:05 am
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Hi Mary,

Had a quick chat with Eric and we are happy with the news story approach and we should be all good to get this live on Wednesday.

No dramas on minor changes to the VAT content. [@Tom Frankish](#) this will be something easy for Jeremy who is our new starter and yourself can work through after he settles in this morning. In regards to displaying once redundant, we will have a think about how that could happen and come back to you.

Thanks



From: Mary Direen <Mary.Direen@mbie.govt.nz>
Sent: Monday, 4 April 2022 4:55 pm
To: Jordan Hindley <Jordan.Hindley@mbie.govt.nz>; Eric Janse van Rensburg <Eric.JVR@business.govt.nz>
Cc: Tom Frankish <Tom.Frankish@mbie.govt.nz>
Subject: FW: Comms re: revocation of VAT [IF CONFIRMED] (IN-CONFIDENCE)

Kia ora Jordan and Eric

Cabinet have agreed today to revoke the regulations for the Vaccination Assessment Tool.

Given the tool lives on bus.govt we wondered if it would be ok to do the following on the site:

- News story on Business.govt to say it officially being revoked (mid-April) and to encourage businesses to follow the risk assessment process. Tom is drafting and we'll send it across for you to have a look at in draft form and again once it's been through the signoff.
- The Minister's Office have asked for this news item to be live on Wednesday – can you please let me know if this is ok?
- We will need to make some small tweaks to the copy on the Vaccination Assessment Tool page – Tom will draft tomorrow and send through once Shane and co. have approved.
- Once the regulations have been revoked (mid-April) we wanted to discuss where the Tool might live (for people that may need to reference it in future noting that it will no longer be valid but say an Employer has a PG raised against them they may need to refer to it. So we would want it to be searchable but not something we'd actively promote.

Happy to jump on a call in morning to discuss if easier

Ngā mihi nui

Mary

Mary Direen (she/her)

PRINCIPAL ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS ADVISOR (Labour, Science and Enterprise)

Engagement, Communications and Ministerial Services

Ngā Pou o te Taumarū

Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment

xxxx.xxxxxx@xxxx.xxxx.xx Mob: s 9(2)(a) . DDI: 04 901 1608. Level 4, 15 Stout Street, PO Box 6140, Wellington 6011, New Zealand.

Please note, I work Monday - Thursday.

From: Nicky Kingston <[.@..](mailto:..@..)>
Sent: Monday, 4 April 2022 4:06 pm
To: Shane Kinley <[.@..](mailto:..@..)>; Anna Clark (GM WRSP) <[.@..](mailto:..@..)>; Tracy Mears <[.@..](mailto:..@..)>
Cc: Mary Direen <[.@..](mailto:..@..)>; Lydia Jackson <[.@..](mailto:..@..)>
Subject: RE: Comms re: revocation of VAT [IF CONFIRMED] (IN-CONFIDENCE)

Hi all

Cabinet has agreed to revoke the VAT. Please start the revocation process with announcements on the MBIE website on Wednesday.

Ngā mihi,

Nicky

From: Mary Direen [<mailto:..@..>]
Sent: Monday, 4 April 2022 3:29 PM
To: Nicky Kingston <[.@..](mailto:..@..)>; Lydia Jackson <[.@..](mailto:..@..)>
Cc: Shane Kinley <[.@..](mailto:..@..)>; Anna Clark (GM WRSP) <[.@..](mailto:..@..)>; Tracy Mears <[.@..](mailto:..@..)>
Subject: RE: Comms re: revocation of VAT [IF CONFIRMED] (IN-CONFIDENCE)

Thanks Nicky, that's good to know.

We'll be in touch once we've drafted it and had it approved this end.

Ngā mihi nui

Mary

Mary Direen (she/her)

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Wellington 6011, New Zealand.

Please note, I work Monday - Thursday.

From: Nicky Kingston <@>
Sent: Monday, 4 April 2022 3:01 pm
To: Lydia Jackson <@>; Mary Direen <@>
Cc: Shane Kinley <@>; Anna Clark (GM WRSP) <@>; Tracy Mears <@>
Subject: Comms re: revocation of VAT [IF CONFIRMED]

Hi, I don't have a read-out from Cabinet yet but **if** the revocation of the VAT is confirmed at Cabinet today, the office are happy for an announcement to go up on the MBIE website on Wednesday. There's no need for a separate PR from the Minister.

Could you please run the announcement by me and Travis before it goes live?

Thanks,

Nicky Kingston | Private Secretary (Workplace Relations and Safety)
DDI +64 4 817 9810 | Mobile s 9(2)(a) | Email @>

Office of Hon Michael Wood

Minister of Transport | Minister for Workplace Relations and Safety | Deputy Leader of the House

Private Bag 18041 | Parliament Buildings | Wellington 6160 | New Zealand

Authorised by Hon Michael Wood, Parliament Buildings, Wellington.

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From: [Mary Direen](#)
To: [Service Centre QAA Team](#); [Service Centre Account Managers](#)
Cc: [Eric Janse van Rensburg](#); [Jordan Hindley](#); [Vinh Nguyen \(Employment Services\)](#); [Tom Frankish](#)
Subject: RE: Vaccination Assessment Tool - being removed
Date: Wednesday, 6 April 2022 9:48:06 am
Attachments: [Vaccination Assessment Tool being removed Service Centre Q+A \(1\).docx](#)

Kia ora again

Confirming no changes to the document supplied yesterday as draft – here's a clean copy for you.

Ngā mihi nui
Mary

Mary Direen (she/her)
PRINCIPAL ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS ADVISOR (Labour, Science and Enterprise)

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Wellington 6011, New Zealand.

Please note, I work Monday - Thursday.

From: Mary Direen
Sent: Tuesday, 5 April 2022 4:52 pm
To: Service Centre QAA Team <@.>; Service Centre Account Managers <@.>
Cc: Eric Janse van Rensburg <@.>; Jordan Hindley <@.>; Vinh Nguyen (Employment Services) <@.>; Tom Frankish <@.>
Subject: Vaccination Assessment Tool - being removed

Kia ora team

Cabinet decided yesterday to not revise the Vaccination Assessment tool but revoke it in the regulations. This will happen on 19th April but the Minister has asked that we publish a news story on bus.govt tomorrow and update the web content. This change has already been signalled to business so won't be a major hopefully.

This is being approved now so I can share the draft brief I am working on for you.

Sorry for the delay – we're trying to get Q+As approved

I'll send the final soon as soon as I can – may be in the morning but will be before the story is published.

Ngā mihi nui
Mary

Mary Direen (she/her)

PRINCIPAL ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS ADVISOR (Labour, Science and Enterprise)

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Wellington 6011, New Zealand.

Please note, I work Monday - Thursday.

From: Mary Direen

Sent: Wednesday, 30 March 2022 1:46 pm

To: Service Centre QAA Team <@..>; Service Centre Account

Managers <@..>

Cc: Eric Janse van Rensburg <@..>; Jordan Hindley

<@..>; Vinh Nguyen (Employment Services)

<@..>; Gina Jewell <@..>; 'Alastair Stewart'

<@..>; Lydia Jackson <@..nz>; Astrid Smelee

<@..>

Subject: RE: New guidance for employers - vaccination requirements [UNCLASSIFIED]

Kia ora team

Updated links are here:

Employment NZ: [Vaccines and the workplace » Employment New Zealand](#)

Worksafe: [COVID-19 controls at work – employer vaccination requirements and other measures | WorkSafe](#)

Business.govt: [Vaccination assessment tool – business.govt.nz](#) and

<https://www.business.govt.nz/covid-19/requiring-my-vaccine-passes-for-entry/>

Ngā mihi nui

Mary

Mary Direen (she/her)

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Wellington 6011, New Zealand.

Please note, I work Monday - Thursday.

From: Mary Direen

Sent: Tuesday, 29 March 2022 4:57 pm

To: Service Centre QAA Team <@..>; Service Centre Account

Managers <@..>

Cc: Eric Janse van Rensburg <@..>; Jordan Hindley

<@..>; Vinh Nguyen (Employment Services)
<@..>; Gina Jewell <@..>; Alastair Stewart
<@..>; Lydia Jackson <@..nz>; Astrid Smeele
<@..>

Subject: New guidance for employers - vaccination requirements [UNCLASSIFIED]

Kia ora team

Firstly congrats on your awards last week – so well-deserved!

I wanted to let you know that we have some new guidance hoping to go live tomorrow afternoon on the biz.govt and Employment NZ sites. This is currently being approved.

This is to support businesses in deciding if they want to add a vaccination requirement into their workplaces and the steps they need to follow.

Minister Wood is also looking to promote this tomorrow afternoon through a PR so there may be interest and we know businesses have been waiting for this guidance from government.

Attached is the PR and key messages and reactive Q+A. Once you've had a read let me know if there's anything additional that you need.

Ngā mihi nui

Mary

Mary Direen ([she/her](#))

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Information for the Service Centre: Changes to the Vaccination Assessment Tool (VAT)

5th April 2022

Following changes to public health advice, the Vaccination Assessment Tool will now be removed. Formally this involves revoking the COVID-19 Public Health Response (Vaccination Assessment Tool) Regulations 2021.

We will be publishing a news story on [business.govt](https://www.business.govt.nz/covid-19/vaccination-assessment-tool/) and making some copy changes to <https://www.business.govt.nz/covid-19/vaccination-assessment-tool/>

Key messages

- The Government has agreed to remove the Vaccination Assessment Tool (by revoking the COVID-19 Public Health Response (Vaccination Assessment Tool) Regulations 2021).
- The regulations are intended to be revoked on Tuesday 19th April which means businesses are recommended to no longer use it for health and safety risk assessments. The decision to revoke the tool is based on updated health advice.
- The Government introduced the Vaccination Assessment Tool as a simple and effective way for businesses to determine with certainty whether it was reasonable to require a vaccination in their workplace.
- Since then, the risks associated with COVID-19 have changed and updated public health advice is that vaccination requirements are now likely to be appropriate only where there is a greater risk of contracting and transmitting COVID-19 in the workplace than there is in the community.
- Employers may still be able to maintain vaccination requirements, however these requirements would need to be supported by a full work health and safety risk assessment. The circumstances where vaccination could be required are likely to be more limited than they have in the past.
- For businesses that have validly undertaken a health and safety risk assessment using the vaccination assessment tool, any employment decisions (such as terminating the employment of unvaccinated workers) that have already been made based on this assessment stands.
- Any employer currently involved in an employment process based on a vaccination requirement that was put in place using the vaccination assessment tool is recommended to pause that process. The employer should then undertake a full work health and safety risk assessment to take in to account the current public health advice before proceeding with any further employment processes.

Reactive Q+As

Is this an admission the Vaccination Assessment tool didn't work?

Workplaces wanted a simple and effective tool that gave them certainty around whether they could require a vaccination, and the tool delivered that. Since then, the risks associated with COVID-19 have changed and updated public health advice is that vaccination requirements are now likely to be appropriate only where there is a greater risk of contracting and transmitting COVID-19 in the workplace than there is in the community.

Does this mean decisions made previously to require vaccinations were done illegally?

Any decisions that were made using this tool still stand if they were made when the Vaccination Assessment Tool was valid. Business who used the tool will need to update their health and safety risk assessment reflecting the change in status to the tool.

Employees will still be able to bring a personal grievance if they feel they have been unjustifiably dismissed or disadvantaged as a result of a decision their employer has made about vaccination.

Why did it take so long to make a decision around the Vaccination Assessment Tool?

MBIE kept business up to date with the fact the Vaccination Assessment Tool was being reviewed following updated public health advice. It was made clear there would be some change and businesses were strongly encouraged to wait for the Tool to be updated before introducing a vaccination requirement in reliance on it.

Scrapping of the tool is sending a strong message that essentially there's very few grounds for vaccination mandates in the workplace?

The latest public health advice is that the public health justification for requiring vaccination is stronger when the risks of contracting and transmitting COVID-19 in the workplace is higher than it is in the community. Employers may still be able to maintain vaccination requirements, where these continue to be supported by a work health and safety risk assessment, but these circumstances are likely to be more limited than they have in the past.

Find more information here:

[Vaccination assessment tool — business.govt.nz](#)

[COVID-19 and the workplace » Employment New Zealand](#)

[Vaccines and the workplace » Employment New Zealand](#)

From: [Jordan Hindley](#)
To: [Eric Janse van Rensburg](#); [Jeremy McCabe](#)
Cc: [Mary Florence Bleasdale](#)
Subject: RE: Vaccination Assessment Tool [UNCLASSIFIED]
Date: Wednesday, 6 April 2022 9:19:43 am
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Thanks Eric, sounds like a plan to me.

Regards



From: Eric Janse van Rensburg <@..>
Sent: Wednesday, 6 April 2022 9:08 am
To: Jeremy McCabe <@..>
Cc: Jordan Hindley <@..>; Mary Florence Bleasdale <@..>
Subject: RE: Vaccination Assessment Tool [UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi Jeremy,

Happy for us to put something on the website (in the news section) to the effect that the vaccination tool will be revoked. I believe Mary is working on copy for that.

I also think we need to add a message on the vaccination assessment tool page, and then once the tool is revoked, remove the vaccination assessment tool page from the site. Having the news article will also be good if someone searches for the tool when we've removed the page.

Jordan, how does this all sound to you?

Cheers,
Eric

From: [Jeremy McCabe <@..>](#)
Sent: Wednesday, 6 April 2022 9:04 AM
To: [Eric Janse van Rensburg <@..>](#)
Subject: Vaccination Assessment Tool [UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi Eric

Jordan suggested I clear with you Mary's request for a news story about government's plan to revoke the vaccination assessment tool.

As you will probably have seen it is only happening on 19 April.

What are your thoughts?

Regards

Jeremy

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