Te Tari Taiwhenua
Internal Affairs

Internal Affairs briefing

Hon Tracey Martin
Minister of Internal Affairs

Title: **Update on technology solutions to assist with COVID-19 Contact Tracing**

Date: 8 May 2020

Key issues
The Ministry of Health are leading a programme of work to investigate technology solutions to compliment manual contact tracing. This briefing provides you with: - background information on this work to date;   - a summary of the joint Minister of Health and Minister for Government Digital Services Cabinet paper: *Technology Solutions for Addressing COVID-19 and enabling Health and Disability System Transformation* (Appendix A) and talking points (Appendix B) to support you at Cabinet on Monday 11 May 2020 where the paper will be considered;   - update on the Bluetooth-enabled card assessment; and   - information on your role in relation to this work.

Action sought	Timeframe
Note that the Cabinet paper: *Technology Solutions for Addressing COVID-19 and enabling Health and Disability System Transformation* will be considered at Cabinet on Monday 11 May 2020; and **Note** both GCDO and Ministry of Health officials are available to discuss this work with you further if needed.	Before Monday 11 May 2020

Contact for telephone discussions

Name	Position	Direct phone line	After hours phone	Suggested 1st contact
Sela Finau	Policy Manager	9(2)(a)	9(2)(a)	
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Cohesion reference	4UAZY7VS6QRJ-168030080-505
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Purpose

1. This briefing provides you with background information on the joint Minister of Health and Minister for Government Digital Services Cabinet paper: *Technology Solutions for Addressing COVID-19 and enabling Health and Disability System Transformation,* and an update on technology solutions to assist with COVID-19 Contact tracing.

Background

2. The Department first became involved in the COVID-19 Ministry of Health (MoH) COVID-19 contract tracing technology response following a meeting of COVID-19 Ministers on 9 April 2020.

3. At this meeting, COVID-19 Ministers directed the Minister for Government Digital Services and the Minister of Health to report back with an update on progress with implementing technology options to respond to COVID-19 [CAB-20-MIN-0130 refers]. COVID-19 Ministers also agreed that priority should be given to technological enhancements to support contact tracing.

4. On 16 April 2020 the Minister for Government Digital Services met with the Minister of Health and agreed that the report back on technology options would be provided as part of a MoH Cabinet paper on contact tracing.

5. On 20 April 2020 Cabinet noted that effective contact tracing is a vital part of the COVID-19 response [CAB-20-MIN-0175] and invited officials to report back with an update with implementing technology responses. It was also noted that officials would assess the feasibility of a Bluetooth-enabled card that would allow for contact tracing at scale and report back to the Ministers of Finance, Internal Affairs, Health, and Government Digital Services.

6. We have not been able to determine a specific Cabinet directive, but MoH appear to have taken the initiative and been progressing development of several technology solutions to assist with COVID-19 contact tracing, such as the development of an app. With the GCDO providing some advice on the various technical options.

7. Department officials are currently working on a separate Cabinet paper report back with an analysis of the COVID-19 technology response oversight requirements from an all of government perspective, a proposed governance structure, and a COVID-19 Technology Response Plan [CAB-20-MIN-0175 refers]. The aim is for this broader response plan to align with MoH's COVID-19 Technology and Data Plan.

Joint Minister of Health and Minister for Government Digital Services Cabinet Paper: *Technology solutions for addressing COVID-19 and enabling health and disability system transformation*

8. The Technology solutions for addressing COVID-19 and enabling health and disability system transformation Cabinet paper (the Cabinet paper) provides an update on the Health System COVID-19 Technology and Data approach to support New Zealand's response to COVID-19, with a focus on timely and effective contact tracing.

9. The Cabinet paper will go direct to Cabinet on Monday 11 May 2020. It seeks Cabinet decisions on options for delivering technology solutions to support contact tracing processes, if consumer application functions should be released, and when.

10.   The following section provides the Department's views on the Cabinet paper, ahead of providing a summary of the key components of the paper.

Summary of our feedback on the Cabinet Paper

11.   Overall, the GCDO and Government Chief Privacy Officer (GCPO) have indicated support of technology solutions that bolster the manual contact tracing process, rather than replace it. Technology solutions can help improve contact tracing by increasing the speed of the process and its accuracy.

12.   9(2)(g)(i)

13.   The Department is working with the Ministry of Justice to ensure these privacy and data questions are answered for the Bluetooth-enabled Card assessment. The Privacy Commissioner and the Government Chief Privacy Officer are also engaged in this work.

14.   9(2)(g)(i)

      14.1   6(a) and 9(2)(g)(i)

      14.2   9(2)(g)(i)

      14.3   9(2)(g)(i)

      14.4   9(2)(g)(i)

Technology options being assessed in the Cabinet Paper

15.   The paper proposes several technology solutions for effective contact tracing including: a web app; phone app; Quick Response (QR) code location signing in; and Bluetooth-enabled solutions.

16.   The two Bluetooth options currently being assessed are:

      16.1   Mobile Bluetooth contact tracing: it is proposed that this will be part of a phone app that MoH are developing. It would log close contacts with people who also carry a smartphone with the app; and

      16.2   Bluetooth-enabled card: it is proposed that the card would record when a cardholder has come into close contact with another cardholder. The card would

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only record a personal identity number and time of contact, not other personal information or location data.

17. At this stage it is anticipated both options would be voluntary. If approved, the government would only be able to access and use contact data if people give their consent.

18. MoH are also proposing a QR code system for their phone app to assist with contact tracing. This would enable a person to record locations they have visited and display it in the app. This would also be voluntary and only shared with the government upon consent.

19. The paper proposes that Cabinet directs MoH and GCDO to prepare a single report back to Ministers (Finance, Internal Affairs, Health, and Government Digital Services) on the mobile-phone based and card-based Bluetooth options. This would include: technical feasibility; privacy; how the solutions would complement each other or interoperate including with the Australian Bluetooth solution; costs; timeframes; and options for implementation.

20. Recommendations on options for implementation of one or other, or both, of the Bluetooth options would then be made to Cabinet on 15 June 2020. Officials would also report on the privacy and security of these options, with the Privacy Commissioner and GCPO involved in this process.

Financial implications of the Paper

21. MoH have suggested that approximately $15 million in 2020/21 would be required to support the implementation of their COVID-19 Technology and Data Plan, excluding GCDO and MBIE costs, and including their consumer app.

22. Should approval from Cabinet be received MoH has indicated that funding is sufficient to support their delivery in 2019/20, but that options are being explored for funding in 2020/21, including reviewing baseline funding. MoH officials plan to make recommendations to the Ministers of Finance, Health, Internal Affairs, and Government Digital Services on the 2020/21 funding options for the Health system COVID-19 Technology and Data Plan, ahead of a report back to Cabinet by 31 May 2020.

Bluetooth-enabled Card update

23. On 20 April 2020 Cabinet noted that officials are assessing the option of a Bluetooth-enabled card to support contact tracing and will report back to the Ministers of Finance, Internal Affairs, Health, and Government Digital Services [CAB-20-MIN-0175 refers].

24. The card would enable contact tracing at scale by recording when a card comes into close contact with other cards. The cards would store serial numbers rather than personal details. Card contact information would be stored in a central database that would only be accessed if a cardholder tests positive and close contacts need to be notified.

25. The work to assess the viability of issuing a Bluetooth-enabled card to all New Zealanders complements existing and planned contact tracing activities led by MoH. The concept of a card came from the COVID-19 Response Public Private Partnership (PPP) team. The GCDO is leading coordination of the work with the PPP team on the proof of concept for the card. The Ministry of Justice is considering the policy and regulatory framework, with a briefing coming to you next week on policy direction.

26. A full assessment is currently underway and GCDO, MoH and the PPP team are assessing the technical feasibility, privacy, interoperability, costs, timeframes and options for implementation of the Bluetooth-enabled cards.

27. Ministry of Health and GCDO officials are to report back to the Ministers of Finance, Health, Government Digital Services and yourself with the results of the Bluetooth enabled card proof of concept. Recommendations on options for implementation are then planned to be made to Cabinet on 15 June 2020.

28. The attached Cabinet paper proposes that Cabinet direct MoH and GCDO to prepare a single report back to Ministers on both the mobile-phone based and card-based Bluetooth options. This will include: technical feasibility; privacy; how the solutions would complement each other or interoperate including with the Australian Bluetooth solution; costs; timeframes; and options for implementation.

29. Recommendations on options for implementation of one or other, or both, of the Bluetooth options would be made to Cabinet at the 15 June 2020 meeting.

Your role

30. In the Cabinet minute of 20 April 2020, you were identified as one of four Ministers responsible for the oversight of the Bluetooth-enabled Card assessment.

31. In the attached Cabinet paper, it is proposed that you also have a role in relation to decisions on funding of the Health System COVID-19 Technology and Data Plan. MoH officials will make recommendations to you and the other three Ministers responsible to support a report back to Cabinet by 31 May 2020.

Next steps

32. You will receive a copy of the policy briefing with options for the direction of the Bluetooth-enabled card assessment on 12 May 2020. This briefing will cover in detail what is being considered in the assessment of the card and will seek policy directions for the possibility of a Bluetooth-enabled contact tracing card.

33. We will continue to keep you updated on this work as it progresses and can arrange for Ministry of Health officials to brief you if needed.

Recommendations

34.   We recommend that you:

a)   **note** that the Cabinet paper: *Technology Solutions for Addressing COVID-19 and enabling Health and Disability System Transformation* will be considered at Cabinet on Monday 11 May 2020; and

b)   **note** that both GCDO and Ministry of Health officials are available to discuss this work with you further if needed.

Michael Woodside
Director, Policy

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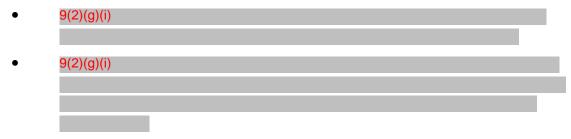**Minister of Internal Affairs**

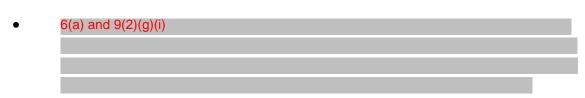_____/_____/_____

Appendix A: Cabinet Paper

Appendix B

Talking Points

- Agree with the approach that technology should support contact tracing and not replace it.

- How do the contact tracing solutions presented link with and compliment manual processes?

- Privacy is key to the success of any technology solution and it is good to see that Health have engaged with the Privacy Commissioner and GCPO on this work.

Authority and Mandate

- 9(2)(g)(i)

- 9(2)(g)(i)

Data and Privacy

- 6(a) and 9(2)(g)(i)

Consultation

- How much consultation has there been from a technical assurance perspective and relating to those that are digitally excluded (i.e. Seniors and Maori)?

Role of GCDO

- There needs to be a broader focus (beyond public health outcomes) on the wider view of the technology landscape that is critical to facilitate economic and social recovery from COVID-19.

- I am supportive of the GCDO playing an oversight role in terms of COVID-19 technology solutions and understand a further paper is being developed to provide a framework for this.