



Government Digital Services briefing

Hon Kris Faafoi
Minister for Government Digital Services

Title: **Information Briefing – Joint Ministry of Health and Government Digital Services Cabinet Paper on COVID-19 technology solutions**

Date: 9 May 2020

Key issues
<p>The Ministry of Health are leading a programme to investigate technology solutions to compliment manual contact tracing. This briefing provides you with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a summary of the joint Ministry of Health and 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; and • a brief update on the Bluetooth-enabled card assessment.

Action sought	Timeframe
Note that the joint Cabinet paper will be considered at Cabinet on Monday 11 May 2020.	By Monday 11 May 2020

Contact for telephone discussions (if required)

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Purpose

1. This briefing provides you with information on your joint Cabinet paper with the Minister of Health: *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.

Background

2. 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 on implementing technology responses. It was also noted that officials would assess the option of a Bluetooth-enabled card and report back to the Minister of Finance, Minister of Internal Affairs, Minister of Health, and Minister for Government Digital Services.
3. We have not been able to identify a specific Cabinet directive, but the Ministry of Health (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.
4. From a GCDO perspective we are also working on a separate report back to Cabinet 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]. We are aiming to get a draft of this Cabinet paper to you in the next week.
5. We will work to ensure the COVID-19 Technology Response Plan and MoH's COVID-19 Technology and Data Plan remain aligned as they develop, as well as the broader COVID-19 response work being undertaken by MoH.

Joint Health and Government Digital Services Cabinet paper: *Technology Solutions for Addressing COVID-19 and Enabling Health and Disability System Transformation*

6. 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.
7. The Cabinet paper will be considered by Cabinet on Monday 11 May 2020. It seeks decisions on options for the delivery of technology solutions to augment existing contact tracing processes, if consumer application functions should be released and associated timing.

Technology options being proposed in the Cabinet Paper

8. The paper proposes several technology solutions for effective contact tracing including: a web app; phone app; a Quick Response (QR) code location sign in; and Bluetooth-enabled solutions.
9. The two Bluetooth options currently being assessed are:
 - 9.1 Mobile Bluetooth contact tracing – it is proposed that this will be part of a phone application that MoH are developing. It would enable detection and recording of close contacts who also have the app; and

9.2 Bluetooth-enabled card – it is proposed the card would record when a cardholder has come into close contact with another cardholder, with each card having a unique identifier.

10. At this stage both options are intended to be opt-in and people would also need to provide consent for government to acquire and use the data for manual contact tracing.
11. 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. This is also proposed to be opt-in and only shared with government agencies upon consent.
12. The Cabinet paper proposes that Cabinet direct MoH and GCDO officials to prepare a single report back to Ministers (Finance, Internal Affairs, Health, and Government Digital Services) with assessments of both the mobile-phone based and card-based Bluetooth options. This would include: technical feasibility; privacy; how the solutions would complement each other / interoperate (as well as with the Australian Bluetooth solution); costs; timeframes; and options for implementation.
13. Recommendations on options for implementation of one, or both, of the Bluetooth options would be made to Cabinet on 15 June 2020. Ministers can then make the decision on whether to implement these options.
14. Officials would also report on the privacy and security of these options. The Privacy Commissioner and Government Chief Privacy Officer (GCPO) would be involved in this process.

9(2)(f)(iv)

Summary of our views on the Cabinet paper

17. 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.
18. Therefore, an assessment is critical to ensuring that technology solutions will be effective in supporting manual contact tracing. We have not seen detail of such an assessment from MoH but would note that in some other jurisdictions although there has been a significant number of contact tracing app downloads, there has been very limited manual contact tracing occurring in relation to these apps.
19. Further to this, our view is that New Zealanders will only use digital tools such as a contact tracing app if the government can clearly demonstrate that its intentions, and the technologies, are trustworthy. Protecting privacy is a key part of this. This needs to be done by setting out clear rules about what data is collected, how it is used, who has access to it, and when it is deleted. 9(2)(g)(i)

9(2)(g)(i)

20. 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 GCPO are also engaged in this work.

9(2)(g)(i)

Bluetooth Enabled Card update

22. As you are aware a full assessment is currently underway, coordinated by GCDO and involving the MoH and PPP teams, to assess the technical feasibility, privacy, interoperability, costs, timeframes and options for implementation of a Bluetooth-enabled card.
23. Alongside MoH officials, we will report back to the Ministers of Finance, Health, Internal Affairs and yourself with the results of the Bluetooth-enabled card proof of concept assessment. Ahead of providing recommendations on options to Cabinet on 15 June 2020.
24. As mentioned, the attached Cabinet paper proposes that Cabinet direct MoH officials and the Department to prepare a single report back to Ministers on both the mobile-phone based and card-based Bluetooth options.

Next Steps

25. You will receive a copy of a briefing on 12 May 2020 for consideration in relation to the Bluetooth-enabled card assessment. This briefing will seek feedback on policy direction to inform the assessment and advice being prepared.

Recommendations

26. 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** the attached talking points (**Appendix B**) have been developed to support you at Cabinet

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Appendix A: Ministry of Health Cabinet paper: Technology Solutions for Addressing COVID-19 and Enabling Health and Disability System Transformation.

