

26 July 2021

Harold

By email: fyi-request-15528-1d5ecfab@requests.fyi.org.nz
Ref: H202106270

Tēnā koe Harold

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) on 21 May 2021.
You requested:

“Documents relating to a stress test of the Ministry of Health’s response to a potential COVID-19 outbreak that was due to be conducted earlier this year. I request a copy of the debriefing/evaluation of this stress test, including a copy of all resulting recommendations. I request copies of the debriefings/evaluations of any scenario-based response exercises conducted by the Ministry, and their resulting recommendations, since the beginning of this year.”

Please note at the time of your request on 21 May 2021, there were no documents within scope as the stress tests had not begun. The Ministry of Health (the Ministry) made the decision to extend the amount of time to respond to your request. This time allowed the Ministry to research, collate and consult on the following documents that we have identified to be within scope of your request. These documents are itemised in Appendix 1 and outlines the grounds under which I have decided to withhold information. Where information is withheld, this is noted in the document itself. These include two Ministry scenario-based response exercises and the Southern region outcomes from the exercises run at the beginning of June 2021. Additional exercises are planned for further district health board locations in the coming weeks and the resulting recommendation documents have not yet been finalised. Therefore, this part of your request is refused under section 9(2)(f)(iv) of the Act as they remain under active consideration.

Under section 28(3) of the Act you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request. The Ombudsman may be contacted by email at: info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or by calling 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā



Chris Scahill
Group Manager COVID-19 Response
COVID-19 Response

Appendix 1: List of documents for release

#	Date	Document details	Decision on release
1	21 June 2021	Exercise Horapa - Hamilton Summary	Released with some information withheld under section 9(2)(g)(i) of the Act to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions by or between or to Ministers and officers and employees of any public service agency.
2	22 June 2021	COVID Preparedness – Southern DHB V1	Released in full.
3	20 June 2021	Exercise Horapa v1.0	Released in full.

Exercise Horapa (Widespread)

- Currently the PHU are at Day 36 post the security incident that has crippled the IT network
- The DHB have now moved into recovery mode. They report that the majority of the COVID Systems are back up and working albeit not integrated to Health systems / functions.
- They have recently set up CAPS – COVID Advisory Preparation Support team to look at scenario, resurgence, planning for future outbreaks.
- Hamilton have 3 MIF within their jurisdiction and 2 in Rotorua

s 9(2)(g)(i)

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s 9(2)(g)(i)

Wrap Up – thoughts on the day

- Standardisation across the PHU network in response to outbreaks
- Leadership – is key
- Flexibility of the lens on an outbreak
- Didn't see Police as being a good resource
- The PHU's know their people in the regions and what works and what doesn't
- They are not testing scenarios (offer to provide them with scenarios, for running with support agencies and led by MOH IMT if it helps)
 - Would like to have one or two Pacifika scenarios
 - Seasonal Workers
- Great to have the team come up and visit face to face
- Community groups are asking for literature /talks on the response to COVID
 - Vaccinations
- Communications – greater co-ordination with MOH Wellington
- Felt the day was worthwhile – we have a lot in common
 - Greater focus on the commonalities not the differences across the various regions

- The question was posed what we look like in the new Health System in the response to COVID – not answered today
- Information relevant to the Regional PHU – how do we assess risk
 - Ran through the PHRA document – team could see immense value in this being shared and utilised
- Getting together around the table has been invaluable
- Dedicated MIF facilities
 - Hotels are not fit for purpose

Actions out of the day:

1. What is happening with compensation in an outbreak (MOH team)
2. What have MSD been doing to respond in an outbreak to compensation needs (MOH team)

1&2. Response

 - Short Term Absence Payment - \$350 for staying at home; Leave Support Scheme \$1200 for quarantine/isolation
 - <https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/covid-19/short-term-absence-payment/index.html>
 - <https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/covid-19/leave-support-scheme/index.html>
3. Have the Welfare pathways been developed (MOH Team)
 - a. If so can they be shared

3.Response
Following up on this
4. Question: has a review of the Ethics been completed in relation to asking people to continue with the vaccination programme

4.Response
Following up on this
5. Has a decision been made around whether or not if someone is vaccinated is their risk profile lower?

5.Response
Currently an active question from ODPH and NITC. Once we have an answer and interrogation, we will communicate with PHUs
6. Provide the blank PHRA for the team to incorporate into their tool kit

6.Response: Attached to this email

COVID Preparedness

— Southern Region



**Southern
Health**

He hauora, he kuru pounamu



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About Southern DHB

- Southern DHB is based in Dunedin, and covers the bottom of the South Island, including Fiordland, Queenstown, Oamaru and Invercargill.
- It has a population of 344,900 people (2020/21 projection).
- There are multiple locations for people to get a test, and the Southern DHB have set up a 0800 VIRUS19 line that people can call to find out where to get a test in the region. Public Messaging: “To arrange a test in the Southern district, please call your GP or the WellSouth Call Centre on 0800 VIRUS19 (0800 847 8719)
- Queenstown is the southern most International airport in New Zealand – with approx. 4 flights a day as part of Quarantine Free Travel
 - **This will be increased to up to 14 flights a day from July 1**
 - NZ Winter School holidays run from 9-24 July 2021
 - Australia Winter School holidays run from 28 June to 19 July 2021
- Southern DHB have managed positive cases before :
 - The Bluff Wedding
 - The Hereford Conference

Observations and Issues Raised

Observations:

- Low Threshold
- High Sensitivity
- Rapid Tests
- Waste-water testing
- High level of arrival screening

Issues:

- Capacity
- No Managed Isolation Facility (MIF)
- Multi Agency Approach

What has
been done to
mitigate
identified
risks!

Outputs:

- 0800 GET MOH (1) (0800 438 664)
- SPOC – Single Point of Contact
- Interim Transport Solution
- Accommodation
- NORT – National Outbreak Response Team

Any regional PHU that does not have an Managed isolation facility within their catchment will potentially identify with the concerns raised by Southern

Table top exercises will be carried out across all regions with The Lakes region to be exercised next (Taupo/Rotorua etc)

They have been identified as likely to have an influx of visitors both within and outside our border in early July.



Exercise Horapa

An TTX/discussion tool to assess readiness for cases and outbreaks of COVID-19

Presented by COVID-19 Response Team, MOH

SITUATION 1

- A case is notified in your region of a 55 year old Māori woman who has tested positive for COVID-19 with a Ct of 21.

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It is a Tuesday afternoon

Discussion

- How does your region stand up an IMT?
- Who do you contact at MOH?
- What is your process for contacting and isolating the case?
- What is your battle rhythm?
- Other

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SITUATION 2

- You have undertaken initial contact tracing activities with the case.
- The case is Moana, a 55 year old Māori woman who is a mother of three. Her household close contacts include:
 - Her husband John (Māori, 60 years old)
 - Her children Richard, John Jr and Aroha, aged 21, 20 and 18.
- Moana works as an in home carer for an elderly lady
- John works at a large freezing works
- Richard is a personal trainer, John Jr is studying by correspondence, and Aroha is in year 13 at a local high school.

It is Tuesday evening

SITUATION 3

- Moana began to feel ill on Sunday morning and was tested on Monday morning at a GP clinic. Her symptoms are fever, anosmia, muscle aches and sore throat.
- She worked on Saturday providing in-home care for an elderly woman. She went to church on Sunday morning and Countdown on Sunday afternoon.
- She did not leave the house on Monday or Tuesday as she felt ill.

It is a Tuesday evening

Discussion

- What does your after-hours team look like?
- How do you engage with the NCTS?
- What testing activities would be undertaken and how?
- What would the development of a surveillance plan for your area look like?
- If you required support, how would you go about getting it?
- Other

SITUATION 4

- John, Moana's husband, has tested positive with a Ct of 29.
- John is asymptomatic.
- John worked on Saturday and Sunday at the freezing works, from 8am – 6pm.
- John is a supervisor and his job involves significant movement around the facility.
- There are approximately 300 people work at this facility at any one time

It is Wednesday morning

Discussion

- How would you deal with the freezing works?
- What are your considerations around mass gatherings in your area?
- What would you do around isolating cases and contacts?
- Other

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SITUATION 5

- Both John and Moana have returned genome sequences showing they are infected with the delta variant of COVID-19, linked to a returnee who was in an Auckland isolation facility over two weeks ago.
- The Government will, as of 11.59pm tonight, move the whole of the North Island into AL3 and the South Island into AL2.

It is Wednesday evening

Discussion

- Would you approach anything differently given the genome sequencing information?
- How does the Alert Level shift impact your work?
- What would you do re. source investigation?
- Other

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Wrap up

- Lessons
- Actions
- Next steps

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