



Building confidence in the Trans -Tasman Quarantine Free Travel Zone

16 April 2021

We have built a robust domestic COVID-19 response system but changes are needed to enable QFT

Purpose of this document

This provides the system operational readiness for a Quarantine Free Travel (QFT) Zone with Australia and New Zealand including processes for pausing and suspending travel. It also proposes ongoing review and continuous refinement activities for the system.

What it's not

- Decision-making framework for making decisions around the QFT including any conditions that may be attached to statuses.
- A detailed playbook for every part of the system.
- A complete view- the document is based on two workshops, additional actions may be identified as the QFT opens, plus review and continuous refinement processes are implemented.

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We have built a robust domestic COVID-19 response system but changes are needed to enable confidence in QFT

Background

Over the past year we have established systems and structures that are well placed to support and coordinate a domestic response to COVID-19 in New Zealand. We have learnt from each response and continued to refine our approach to provide the best response to COVID-19.

The system that we have developed is versatile and able to adapt to the public health considerations presented. This system has been assessed as being 'gold standard' and has seen New Zealand as a world leader in the fight against COVID-19. This system has been tested robustly as we have shifted alert levels.

Concurrently, Australia has also had a strong response to COVID-19 and managed the virus with a system that we trust have confidence in. This has allowed us to progress a QFT with Australia so that New Zealanders and Australians are able to travel freely between the two countries without the need to enter a Managed Isolation or Quarantine (MIQ) facility.

On 6 April, Cabinet agreed to establish a QFT with Australia. The QFT will commence on 18 April 2021 at 11.59pm. The New Zealand Government will work with the Australian Federal Government to manage any potential COVID-19 response, including a pause or suspend of the QFT.

The process for determining QFT readiness

This document reflects many weeks of planning. However, this readiness checklist has been drawn together rapidly. We followed a four stage process to do this:



We expect a maximum of 100,000 visitors to New Zealand before 30 April rising to a maximum of 300,000 by July



Maximum of ~100,000 passengers arriving prior to 30 April (subject to change)

Scaling to ~250,000 passengers in May and June, and ~300,000 in July



Maximum ~100,000 passengers could also fly to Australia in April

This is expected to increase in line with scaling of incoming flights



Maximum of 460 scheduled flights arriving prior to 30 April (subject to change)

Scaling to 1,200 flights in May and June, and 1,400 in July



Flights arriving to Auckland, Christchurch, Wellington and Queenstown (and later, potentially Dunedin)



It appears that there will be high demand for at least the first three months. Based on the current schedule, a maximum of ~900,000 passengers could arrive

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Source: Ministry of Transport flight schedules. Estimate of ~100,000 outbound passengers in April is based on scheduled inbound flights.

Cabinet approval of the QFT was conditional on a scenario stress test to determine system state of readiness

Cabinet directed a QFT stress test to ensure confidence in readiness conditions for QFT

Current readiness of these conditions

As we approach commencement of the QFT, these settings have been assessed and risks have been identified.

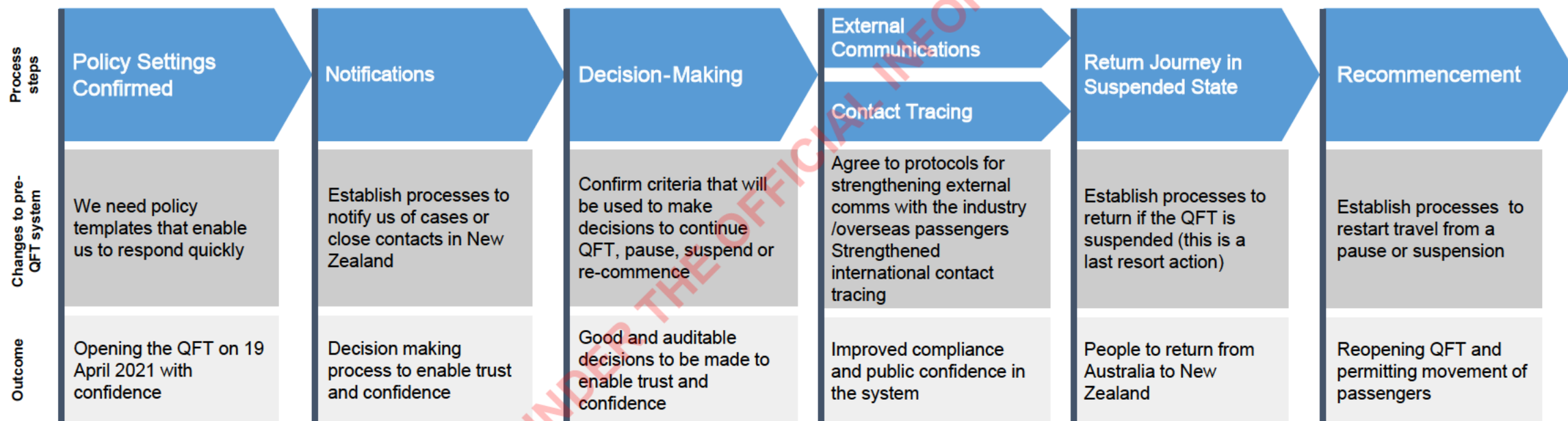
New Zealand contact tracing capability can support Quarantine Free Travellers	Nau Mai Ra (electronic travel declaration form) to support contact tracing is operational
COVID-19 testing and MIQ capacity can support contingency demand from Quarantine Free Travellers	Under action - will be developed through scenario testing following 19/04
QFT Air crew and frontline airport staff will have received both doses of the COVID-19 vaccine	Neither Industry nor MoH can provide this information. Industry believe that most of the workforce has received a vaccine but numbers are not known
Forecast Quarantine Free Traveller numbers who will be entering New Zealand to inform demand planning	Update provided in this deck. Expected ~100,000 visitors by 30 April 2020
Air Border to be finalised and in place before travel commences	Air Border Order confirmed, and templates are under development

Key	Action complete	Action in progress and on track	Action delayed or additional action required
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While our operating model is appropriate for a domestic response, the systems are not optimised for Australia

To date, New Zealand's response to COVID-19 has only needed to consider the impact on our domestic settings. Opening a QFT with Australia presents considerable complexity to the current system as we must account for Quarantine Free Travellers that may be stranded in New Zealand should an outbreak in the community occur.

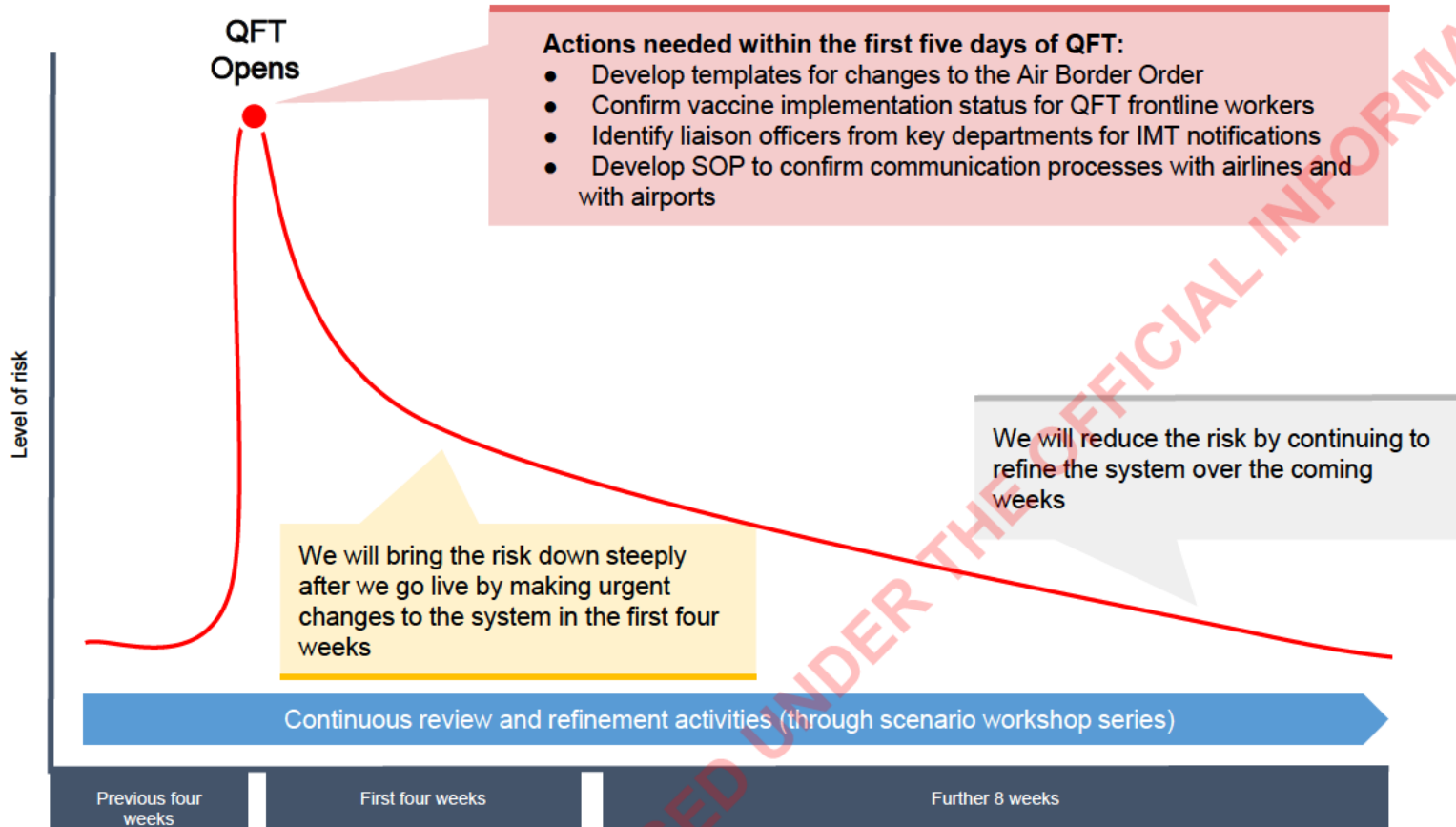
There are several process steps that must occur for a QFT to operate effectively and are outlined below.



We are incorporating identified refinements to our domestic response which would be needed regardless of whether the QFT was opening (e.g. earlier engagement with government and parts of industry when a case emerges, external communications processes, scale up our contact tracing capacity, closer partnerships with whānau, hāpu and iwi)

As QFT opens, the risk profile will increase but our work programme will mitigate much of the risk

Illustrative risk profile for the coming weeks



In the short term, we accept this level of risk

- Immediate changes to the system to mitigate the most impactful risks are either actioned or will be well-advanced by 19 April
- We have assumed that demand in the first few weeks will be low and that many people are travelling are for reunification purposes (as opposed to tourism). This means they will be less likely to travel around New Zealand and will have concrete accommodation plans
- We expect tourism to scale up drastically over the next 6-8 weeks, particularly in time for the ski season. This will allow a small window where the risk is lower and where system improvements can be made before the risk increase
- As the QFT opens, compliance is likely to be high as people feel privileged to be able to travel again

NB: QFT risk profile may change as new geographies are brought onboard in the QFT and as countries within the QFT open to new countries

We have completed key steps but work is still needed to mitigate the risk

	Policy Settings Confirmed	Notifications	Decision- Making	External Communications	Contact Tracing (CT)	Return Journey in Suspended State	Recommence
Already complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Agree high level policy with Australia ✓ Agree high level system protocols with Australia ✓ Gain Cabinet approval ✓ Air Border Order finalised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Agree Australia to NZ notification process 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Develop initial QFT communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Review existing CT processes around international notifications for use for the QFT ✓ Launch online tool to collect contact tracing information on a traveller declaration form for travellers prior to travel from Australia to New Zealand (Nau Mai Ra) ✓ Understand and provide clear comms on the impact of making a false statement on the declaration form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Develop self-isolation SOP 	
Must within five days of QFT opening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop templates for changes to the Air Border Order • Confirm vaccine implementation status for QFT frontline workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify liaison officers from key departments for IMT notifications 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop SOP to confirm communication processes with airlines and with airports 			
Within first four weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testing of scenarios - end to end- government and industry stakeholders • Understand the existing capacity of the system and any bottlenecks • Confirm MIQ slot cancellation policy 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop QFT decision-making framework • Identify workstream leads for NRLT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements to Australian media scanning • Improvements to deconflict messaging with airlines from NZ and Australian governments • Implement improvements to cross agency COVID comms e.g. colocation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a plan to scale each part of the contact tracing system • Make key improvements to the traveller declaration form including offline capability, language options and further health questions • Consider a backup for Nau Mai Ra if the system fails 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model demand scenarios for MIQ if suspension to QFT occurs and MIQ required for returnees • Confirm SOPs for health checks on arrival and amber flights in green zones • Airlines to confirm a 'return home' policy if 'amber' flights are required and air crew process if a pause or suspension occurs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify process to restart travel from a pause or suspension
Within first eight weeks		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider establishing a cross-government Intel Hub and P.M Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how airlines and airports can support decision-making by feeding in information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how airlines can support communications insights • Launch revived comms campaign for the contact tracing app 			

NB: Additional actions may be identified through continuous refinement activities

Government can further decrease the risk by considering the policy settings

Ministerial direction and Government agreement will be required across the COVID-19 response system to ensure the policy settings are well placed to account for a QFT with Australia in the immediate term, and any other potential jurisdictions in the medium to long term.

Using different policy levers may also be required should a QFT be paused or suspended and eventually reopened. The industry is expecting that additional measures or conditions could be put in place to manage the risk if a QFT reopens after being closed.

For example, pre-departure testing is a possible lever that may be employed and could be easily implemented for the Trans Tasman.

Potential mechanisms

Additional airport screening measures including pre-departure testing, in person health questionnaires etc. (both at departure and on arrival).	Random follow up calls/ visits for returnees for health questioning.	Increasing contact tracing capacity and infrastructure.
Reconsider bluetooth policy for contact tracing.	Improvement to data and information flows to increase the speed of contact tracing.	Building in additional resilience to the existing New Zealand response system including surveillance, testing capacity etc.
	Additional Unite against COVID campaigns to promote use of NZ COVID Tracer app.	

Moving forward, we must continue the journey to reconnect New Zealand

Next steps for the Trans Tasman QFT

- Officials will undertake scenario planning at all levels to improve confidence in the system and respond to ongoing risks.
- A review will be undertaken by assurance and continuous improvement, COVID-19 Group (DPMC)
- We will establish planning for small crafts

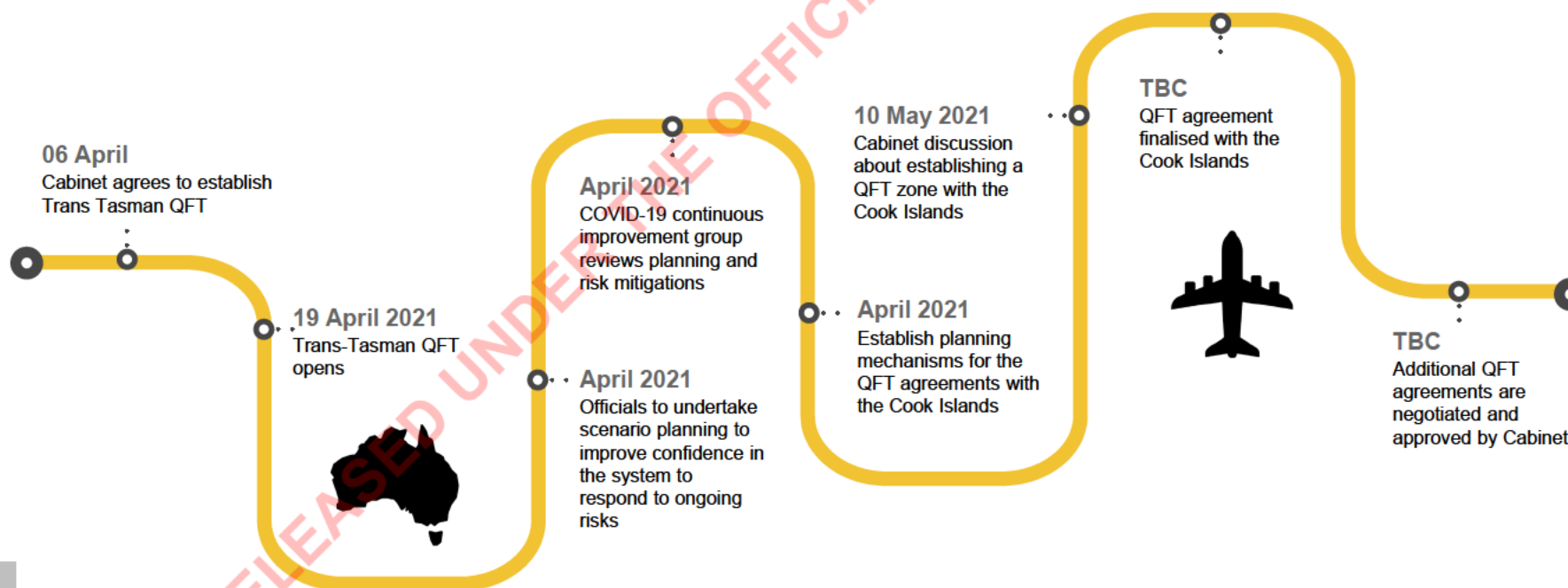
Future planning for additional QFT agreements

- Step up two-way QFT planning for the Cook Islands and other jurisdictions
- Agree the next QFT country to plan for (for New Zealand and countries with which we have QFT)
- Establish process for when QFT countries seek to extend their QFT agreements with other countries

Outcomes we are trying to achieve

- Deliver a safe and protective environment to gradually reopen the border
- Establish public confidence in the process and wider system
- Share clear communications about future travel agreements

Timeline





Appendices

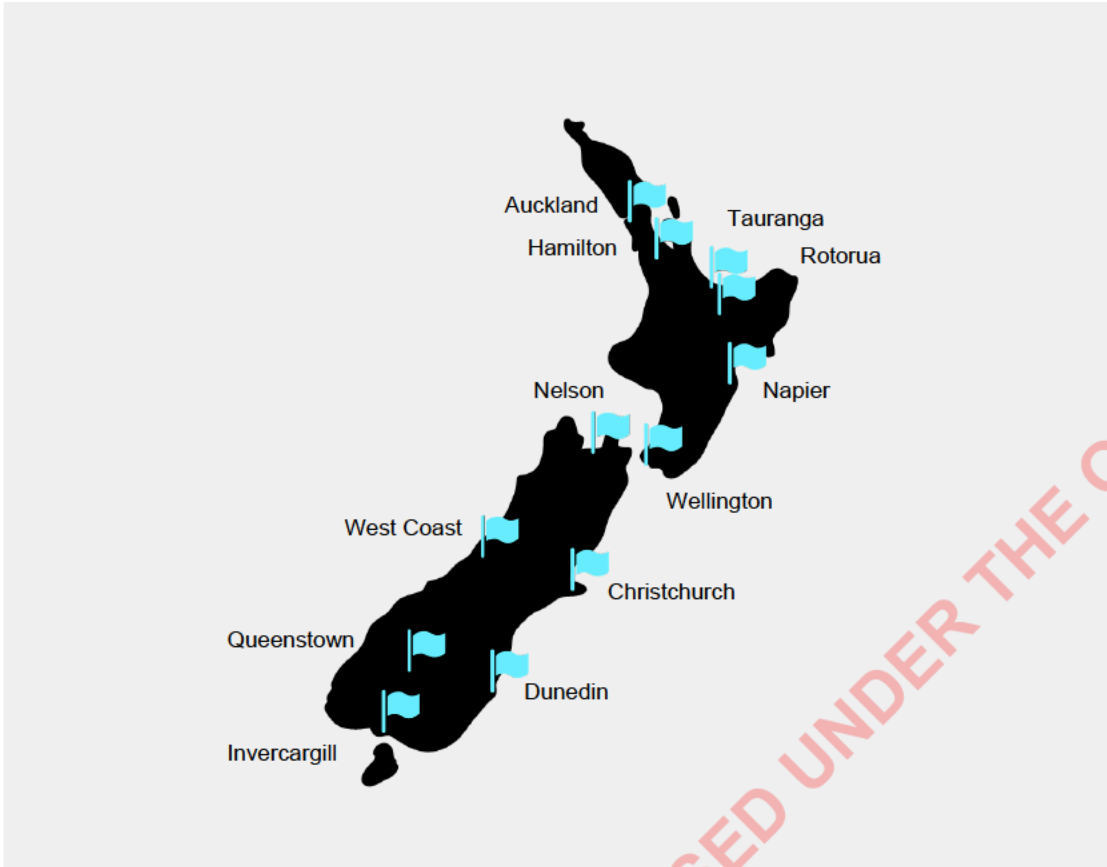
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Appendix 1

Further context and additional detail

Further information

We expect there to be several key tourist hotspots once the QFT is well established



Source: DPMC analysis

Industry have indicated a preference for operational considerations to inform decision making

At a wider industry discussion both airlines and airports indicated a preference for several factors to be considered front of mind when Ministers are making decisions about a pause or suspension.

Key factors to be aware of include:

- Where possible, a decision should be made to pause or suspend QFT that does not affect flights en route. Specifically, boarded flights that are in the air should be exempt from a change, ie. do not move from green to red once boarded
- Should passengers need to be supported on a return flight if the QFT has been suspended, any flights that return to NZ should do so overnight while the general public are not in the airport

We have a process to pause, suspend and recommence flights

QFT PAUSE *No QFT flights from affected state or states*

At any stage where there is a COVID-19 outbreak, a pause might be put in place until more information is available to decide next steps.

What to expect:

- The Ministry of Transport will inform airlines of a pause decision as soon as information is available.
- Customs will inform airports of a pause decision as soon as information is available.
- QFT flights may continue from non-affected states.
- We expect air crew will be allowed to reposition.
- Following a pause, QFT flights might be allowed to recommence (potentially with additional measures) or there might be a longer-term suspension.

QFT RECOMMENCE *QFT flights operating*

In a controlled COVID-19 outbreak, QFT might be allowed to continue.

What to expect:

- Ministers may put in place additional measures for a period, e.g. when travel recommences following a pause or suspension.
- The aim of additional measures is to be confident passengers are low risk before travel, to avoid spreading the risk. Measures might include pre-departure testing and additional screening questions (e.g. to determine passengers had not been in a higher-risk area).

QFT with additional requirements for a period

What does this mean in practice?

- The primary onus will be on the passenger to comply with requirements.
- Airlines will communicate information on additional requirements to passengers, linking to government communications (Unite against COVID-19 site).
- Airlines might be asked to update the pre-departure health and eligibility questions where possible (recognising constraints for updating electronic kiosks).
- Passengers may be subject to random compliance checks throughout the journey:
 - by New Zealand Customs officials on arrival. Passengers not complying may be subject to penalties.
 - by New Zealand airport liaison officers on departure. Passengers not complying would be unable to board.
 - Airlines might be asked to do "spot checks" on departure. Passengers not complying would be denied boarding.
- The baseline measures for QFT (enhanced cleaning, PPE) already account for heightened risk. These might be reviewed to check they are working as intended.

QFT SUSPEND *No QFT flights from affected state or states*

If a COVID-19 outbreak is uncontrolled, QFT might be suspended for an extended period.

What to expect:

- QFT flights may continue from non-affected states.
- The default position is for people to shelter in place until QFT recommences. In most cases, we expect an outbreak will be brought under control within a reasonable period.
- Immigration requirements may change restricting entry to New Zealand.

Managed returns in exceptional circumstances

What we expect returns during a suspension would involve:

- Manual verification of passenger eligibility would likely be required at check-in.
- Passengers would likely need to be separated from green zone passengers (to avoid spreading the risk) and red zone passengers (to avoid exposing them to greater risk).
- Travel might be restricted to e.g. valid visa holders who left for Australia on a QFT flight.
- Passengers might be required to enter self-isolation (or managed isolation) on return.

What does this mean in practice?

- Managing returns in this scenario would involve identifying slots where passengers could be processed separately through the airport, with deep cleaning in between.
- Clear information on flight arrangements and additional eligibility requirements would be provided to travellers (Unite against Covid-19 website).
- The requirement for slot separation would limit the number of flights arriving per day.
- Lead time would be required to prepare.
- Officials would work closely with airlines and airports throughout the process.

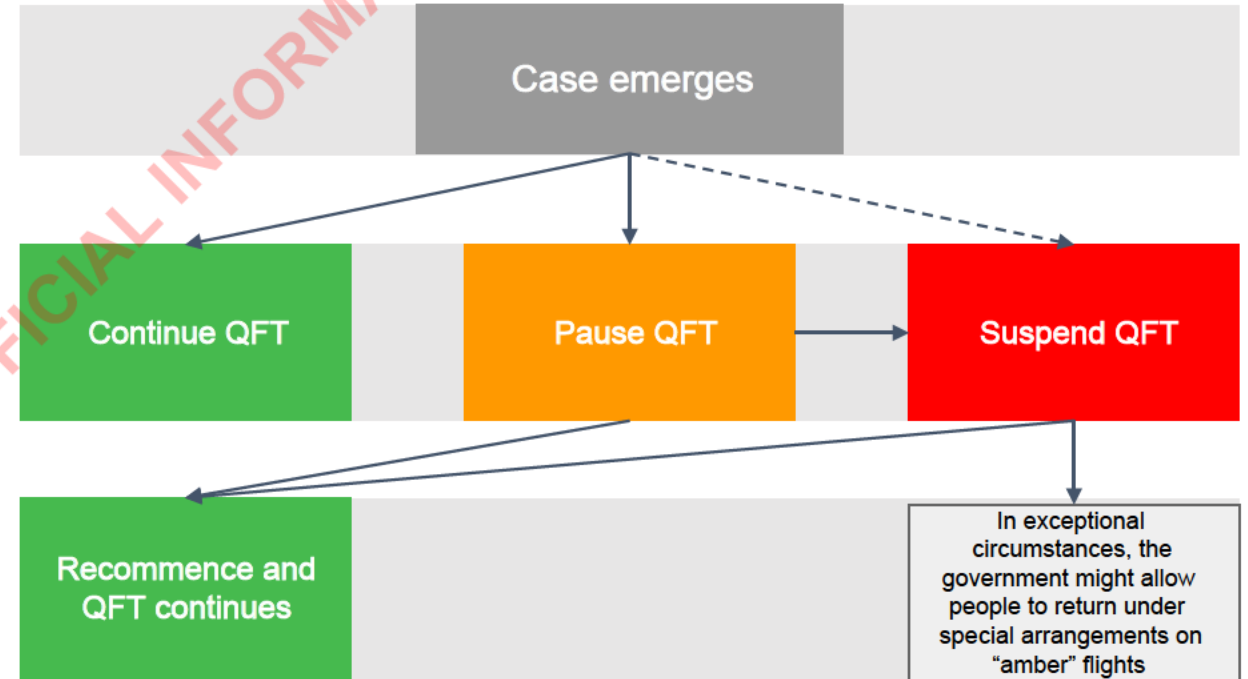
Framing: High level decisions

The high level framework that we're working to has three key statuses:

- Continue QFT
- Pause QFT
- Suspend QFT

We assume that following a pause or suspension, a decision may be taken to extend the pause or suspension or to recommence QFT.

In exceptional circumstances, the government might allow people to return to New Zealand under special arrangements on "Amber" flights.



Appendix 2

Building the system process using the scenario

Reports 1 and 2 - Consider a suspension

s(6)(b)(i)

Key

Process step **part**
of this phase of
the scenario

Process step **not**
part of this phase
of the scenario

Reports 3, 4 and 5 - Consider a suspension

s(6)(b)(i)

Key

of this phase of
the scenario

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Report 6 - Consider Removing recommencement

Scenario

Process steps to enable the scenario

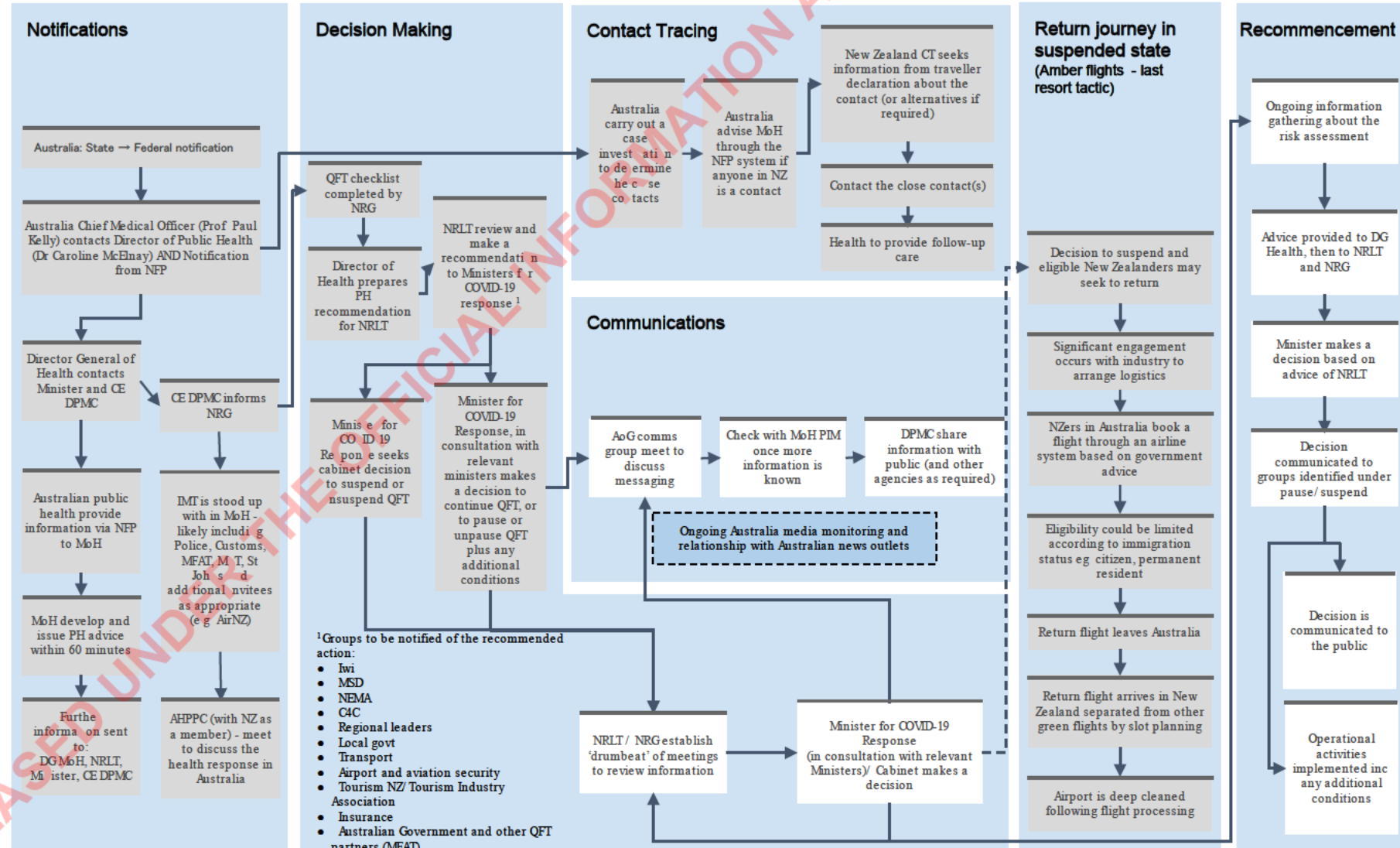
It is 1200hrs on Thursday 27 May.

Situation in Australia

- The initial lockdown was extended for three weeks and is due to end today
- There have been no new cases in the community in Sydney
- Over 80% of close contacts in Sydney have now been contacted and all have been subject to the agreed regime
- Borders with all Australian states are due to reopen from 23:59hrs on 27 May

Situation in New Zealand

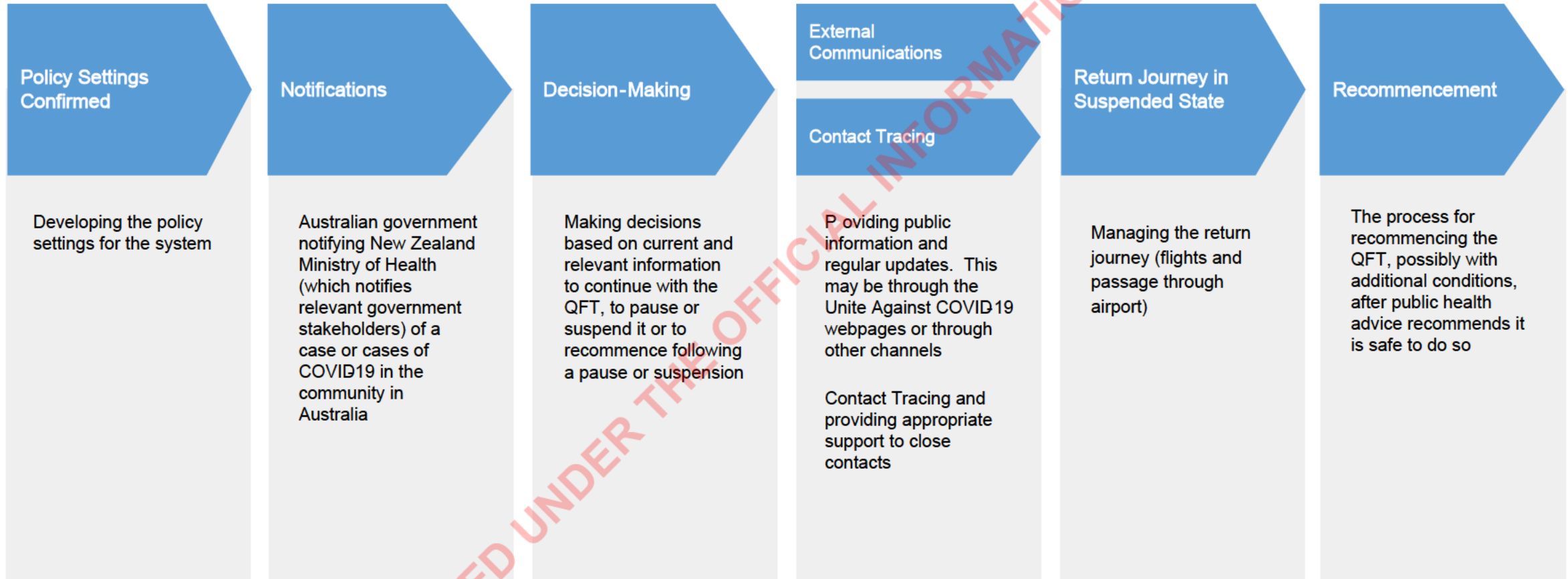
- Despite the large number of close contacts, there has been no community transmission in New Zealand
- The close contacts in Taupō and Queenstown were identified, contacted tested according to the agreed regime and returned negative results - they have self-isolated for the remainder of the 14 days
- Waste water testing in Taupō and Queenstown over the past 14 days indicate no traces of COVID-19
- Travel to NSW from New Zealand is suspended and travel to the remaining states is permitted



Appendix 3

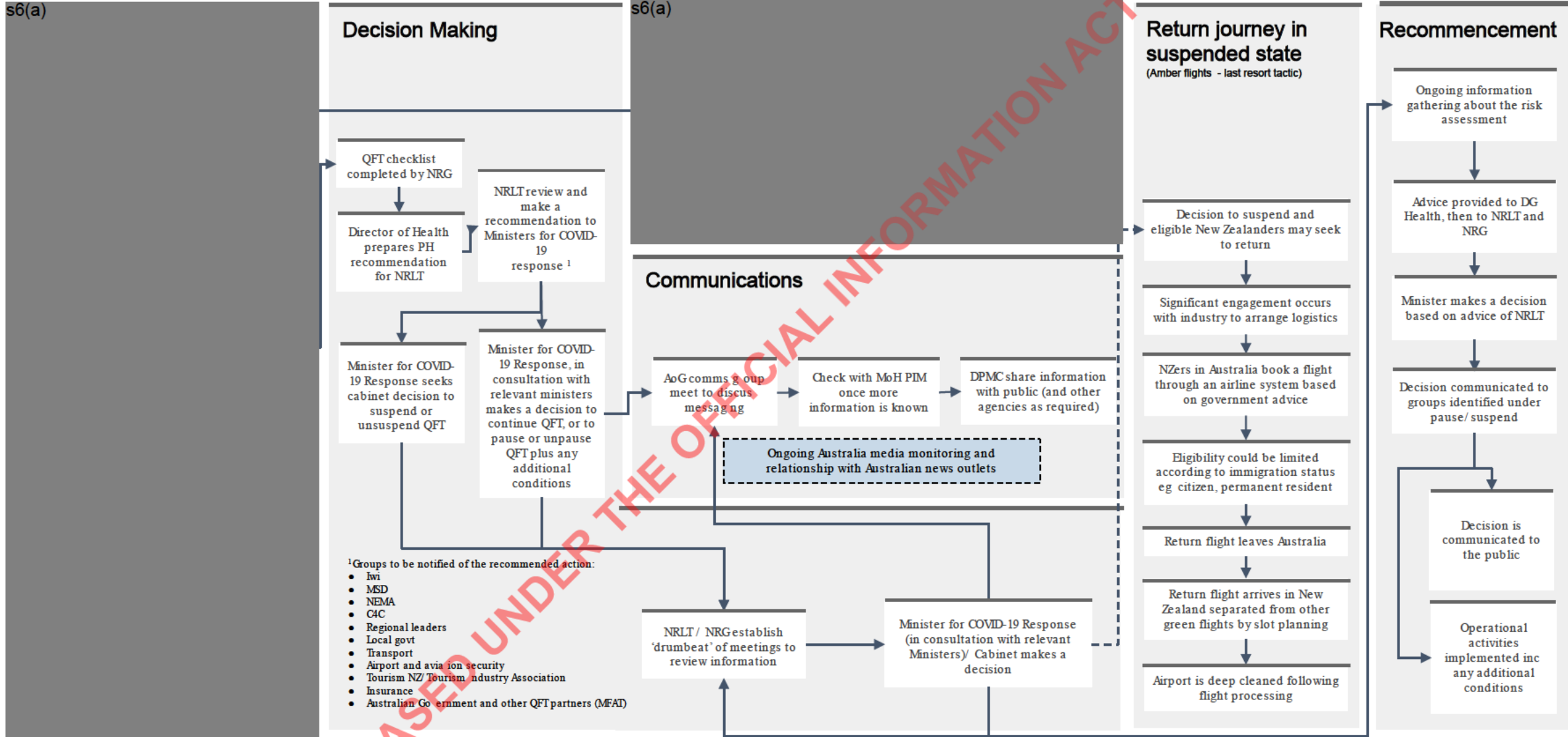
The system process and outstanding actions

Process summary

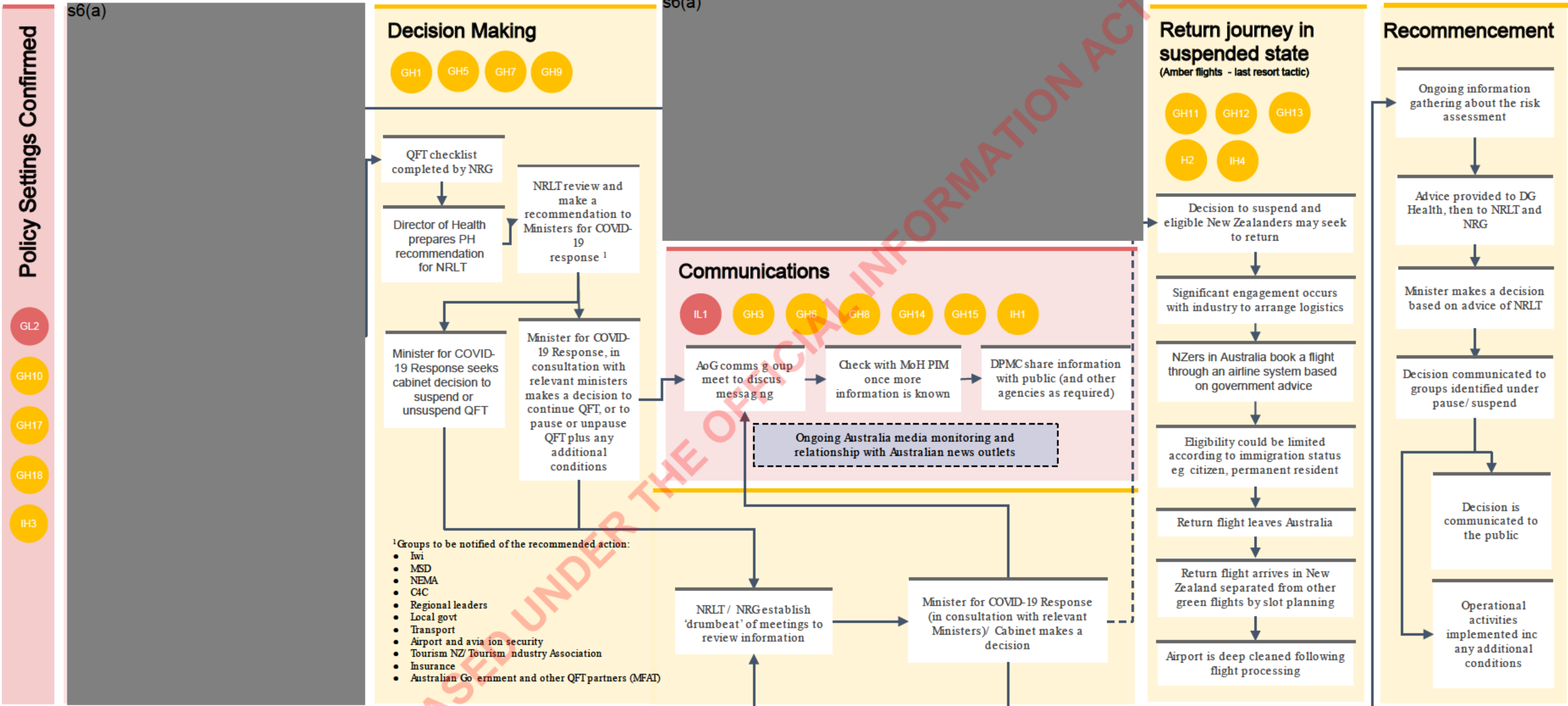


System Process Map

Policy Settings Confirmed



System Process Map with Risk Assessment



Key

Full confidence
No improvements identified

Moderate to high levels of confidence
Long term improvements identified and possible but current level of risk is manageable and acceptable

Low confidence
Immediate improvements needed within 5 days of QFT opening

Activity to increase confidence (see next slides for codes)

Government activities to increase confidence in the system

Ref.	Name	Description	Action owner	Due date
Government system readiness - actions to improve confidence				
GL1	IMT Liaison Officers	Confirm IMT Liaison Officers for initial IMT notification ahead of NRLT/ NRG notifications	MoH	14/04/21-17/04/21
GL2	QFT vaccinations policy	Confirm vaccinations policy for QFT border workers	DPMC	18/04/21
GH1	QFT checklist	Create a decision making checklist specific to QFT	DPMC	TBC
GH2	Scale contact tracing	Understand process to scale contact tracing capacity rapidly (and which capabilities are required to scale)	MoH	TBC
GH3	Australia media insight	Gain analyst support for Australia media monitoring and situational assessment	DPMC	TBC
GH4	Future traveller declaration form (Nau Mai Ra) capability	Enhance traveller declaration form (Nau Mai Ra) accessibility to enable translation services and paper based forms for people without internet access (and additional of wider health questions in the form)	MBIE	TBC
GH5	x-Gov't intel hub and PIM Group	Establish a cross-government intelligence hub and associated PIM group (including understanding what information has been collected and for which purpose)	DPMC	TBC
GH6	Messaging deconfliction	Develop SOP (or refine existing SOP) to deconflict messaging with airlines to avoid conflicting messages from New Zealand and Australian governments	MoT/ DPMC	TBC
GH7	Workstream leads for NRLT	Identify workstream leads for NRLT updates	DPMC	TBC
GH8	DMPC C19 Group MoT comms team	Consider closer working between DMPC COVID19 Group and MoT external comms team (tbc - should they colocate?)	MoT/ DPMC	TBC
GH9	Airline support for decision-making	Develop SOP for airlines to confirm how they can support initial advice and decision-making	MoT?	TBC
GH10	Cancelling MIQ vouchers	Confirm if MIQ vouchers are being cancelled for QFT travellers to New Zealand	MBIE	TBC
GH12	MIQ demand planning	Confirm MIQ can cope with demand if a suspend occurs and passengers immediately seek MIQ vouchers (to avoid a surge on airlines)	MBIE	TBC
GH13	Customs arrival processes	Confirm Customs arrival process for travellers that require additional measures once measures are confirmed (e.g. if they are required following a pause event)	Customs	TBC
GH14	Amber flights in green zones	Understand how to move 'Amber' flights through the green zone of the airport and identify options that could be applied and associated protocols to use etc.	MoT	TBC
GH15	Contract tracking app campaign	Hold further contact tracing apps to drive uptake, targeting parts of the country where Australian tourists are likely to travel to	DPMC	TBC
GH16	System capacity and bottlenecks	Understand the existing capacity of the system and key bottlenecks, overlaying demand scenarios for the QFT		TBC
GH17	Scenario testing	Develop testing of scenarios - end to end - government and industry stakeholders		TBC
GH18	Airport audits	Reconfirm processes and audit schedule for airport compliance with requirements and regulation	MoH	TBC
GH19	Nau Mai Ra backup	Consider a backup for Nau Mai Ra delays using landing cards		

Industry activities to increase confidence in the system

Ref.	Name	Description	Action owner	Due date
Industry system readiness - actions to improve confidence				
IL1	Comms SOP	Develop an SOP to confirm communication processes with airlines and airports. This SOP needs to set expectations and mechanisms for information exchange, and align to the agreed protocols between New Zealand airport and airlines and the Australian government. Including gathering of comms people	Airlines/ DPMC	18/04/21
IH1	Comms insights	Agree how to share communications insights with the DPMC communications team. Option available for a secondment to DPMC to provide analytical / insight support if there is appetite from industry	Airlines/ Airports / DPMC	TBC
IH2	Airlines - Return home policy	Airlines to confirm whether they would intend to provide flights to return New Zealanders home if a long-term suspension occurs and flights home were permitted. Airlines to consider associated refund / change policy, and the process for booking amber flights including eligibility checks	Airlines/ MoT	TBC
IH3	Scenario testing	Formulate a joint working group to test scenarios (including for a suspension including designing SOPs, communications and possibilities, and for amber flights designing SOPs, communications and possibilities (including slot connections))	MoT/ Airlines/ Airports	TBC
IH4	Air crew return	Airlines to establish air crew process to return New Zealand resident air crew if a pause occurs at short notice or overnight	Airlines	TBC

Glossary of terms used in the system process diagram

Acronym	Definition
CE	Chief Executive
AHPPC	Australian Health Protection Principal Committee
AirNZ	Air New Zealand
C4C	Caring for Communities
CT	Contact Tracing
DPMC	Department for the Prime Minister and Cabinet
IMT	Incident Management Group
MFAT	Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Trade
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoT	Ministry of Transport
MSD	Ministry for Social Development
NEMA	National Emergency Management Agency
NFP	National Focal Point
NRG	National Resilience Group
NRLT	National Resilience Leadership Team
NZers	New Zealanders
QFT	Quarantine Free Travel zone

Appendix 4

The full scenario that the team used to develop the system model

Appendix 4 has been withheld in full under section 6(a), 6(b)(i) and 9(2)(c) of the Act



Building confidence in two -way Quarantine Free Travel between New Zealand and the Cook Islands

14 May 2021

Executive Summary

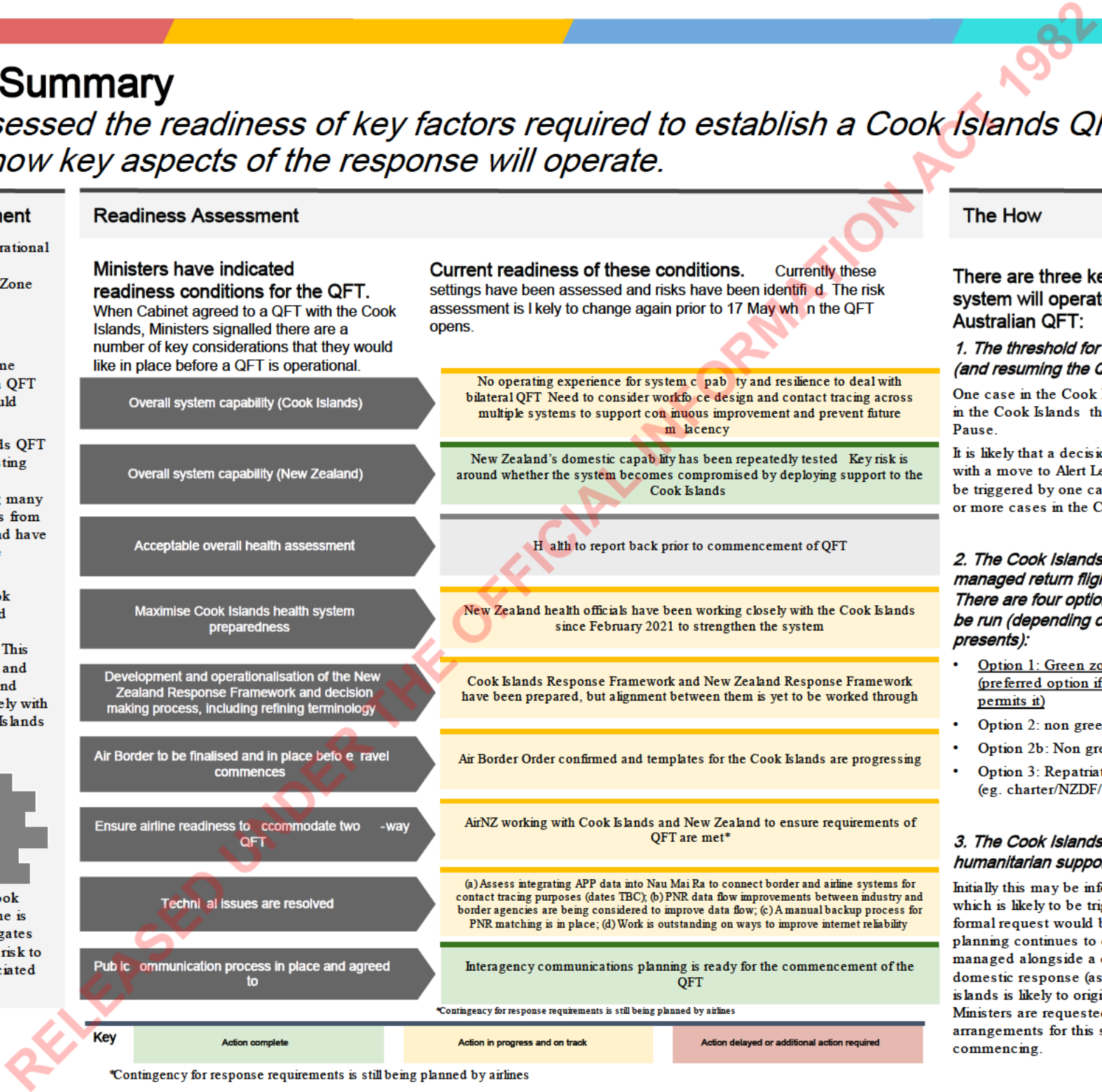


We have assessed the readiness of key factors required to establish a Cook Islands QFT and understood how key aspects of the response will operate.

Purpose of this document	Readiness Assessment	The How																		
<p>This provides the system operational readiness for extending the Quarantine Free Travel (QFT) Zone with the Cook Islands.</p>	<p>Ministers have indicated readiness conditions for the QFT. When Cabinet agreed to a QFT with the Cook Islands, Ministers signalled there are a number of key considerations that they would like in place before a QFT is operational.</p>	<p>There are three key parts to how the system will operate that differ from the Australian QFT:</p>																		
<p>Context</p>	<p>Current readiness of these conditions. Currently these settings have been assessed and risks have been identified. The risk assessment is likely to change again prior to 17 May when the QFT opens.</p>	<p>1. The threshold for pausing/suspending (and resuming the QFT) will be different</p>																		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 03 May 2021, The Prime Minister announced that a QFT with the Cook Islands would commence on 17 May. Planning for a Cook Islands QFT response is based on existing and tested systems and frameworks. We are using many of the proven mechanisms from our domestic response and have applied learnings from the Australian QFT. New Zealand and the Cook Islands have both invested significant effort in their readiness to open a QFT. This has spanned government and has included a New Zealand Health team working closely with counterparts in the Cook Islands to strengthen their health response. s9(2)(ba)(i) As flights ramp up, the Cook Islands vaccine programme is being rolled out. This mitigates some of the public health risk to the local population associated with opening a QFT. 	<table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="425 510 952 606">Overall system capability (Cook Islands)</td> <td data-bbox="952 510 1668 606">No operating experience for system capability and resilience to deal with bilateral QFT. Need to consider workforce design and contact tracing across multiple systems to support continuous improvement and prevent future inefficiency.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="425 606 952 702">Overall system capability (New Zealand)</td> <td data-bbox="952 606 1668 702">New Zealand's domestic capability has been repeatedly tested. Key risk is around whether the system becomes compromised by deploying support to the Cook Islands.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="425 702 952 798">Acceptable overall health assessment</td> <td data-bbox="952 702 1668 798">Health to report back prior to commencement of QFT.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="425 798 952 893">Maximise Cook Islands health system preparedness</td> <td data-bbox="952 798 1668 893">New Zealand health officials have been working closely with the Cook Islands since February 2021 to strengthen the system.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="425 893 952 989">Development and operationalisation of the New Zealand Response Framework and decision making process, including refining terminology</td> <td data-bbox="952 893 1668 989">Cook Islands Response Framework and New Zealand Response Framework have been prepared, but alignment between them is yet to be worked through.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="425 989 952 1085">Air Border to be finalised and in place before travel commences</td> <td data-bbox="952 989 1668 1085">Air Border Order confirmed and templates for the Cook Islands are progressing.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="425 1085 952 1181">Ensure airline readiness to accommodate two-way QFT</td> <td data-bbox="952 1085 1668 1181">AirNZ working with Cook Islands and New Zealand to ensure requirements of QFT are met*.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="425 1181 952 1276">Technical issues are resolved</td> <td data-bbox="952 1181 1668 1276">(a) Assess integrating APP data into Nau Mai Ra to connect border and airline systems for contact tracing purposes (dates TBC); (b) PNR data flow improvements between industry and border agencies are being considered to improve data flow; (c) A manual backup process for PNR matching is in place; (d) Work is outstanding on ways to improve internet reliability.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="425 1276 952 1452">Public communication process in place and agreed to</td> <td data-bbox="952 1276 1668 1452">Interagency communications planning is ready for the commencement of the QFT.</td> </tr> </table>	Overall system capability (Cook Islands)	No operating experience for system capability and resilience to deal with bilateral QFT. Need to consider workforce design and contact tracing across multiple systems to support continuous improvement and prevent future inefficiency.	Overall system capability (New Zealand)	New Zealand's domestic capability has been repeatedly tested. Key risk is around whether the system becomes compromised by deploying support to the Cook Islands.	Acceptable overall health assessment	Health to report back prior to commencement of QFT.	Maximise Cook Islands health system preparedness	New Zealand health officials have been working closely with the Cook Islands since February 2021 to strengthen the system.	Development and operationalisation of the New Zealand Response Framework and decision making process, including refining terminology	Cook Islands Response Framework and New Zealand Response Framework have been prepared, but alignment between them is yet to be worked through.	Air Border to be finalised and in place before travel commences	Air Border Order confirmed and templates for the Cook Islands are progressing.	Ensure airline readiness to accommodate two-way QFT	AirNZ working with Cook Islands and New Zealand to ensure requirements of QFT are met*.	Technical issues are resolved	(a) Assess integrating APP data into Nau Mai Ra to connect border and airline systems for contact tracing purposes (dates TBC); (b) PNR data flow improvements between industry and border agencies are being considered to improve data flow; (c) A manual backup process for PNR matching is in place; (d) Work is outstanding on ways to improve internet reliability.	Public communication process in place and agreed to	Interagency communications planning is ready for the commencement of the QFT.	<p>2. The Cook Islands QFT may support managed return flights to New Zealand. There are four options for how these could be run (depending on the situation that presents):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Option 1: Green zone arrival scheduled flight (preferred option if the public health situation permits it) Option 2: non green managed return - self isolate Option 2b: Non green managed return - MIQ Option 3: Repatriation - NZ Govt funded travel (eg. charter/NZDF/Medevac) (last resort option) <p>3. The Cook Islands may request humanitarian support from New Zealand.</p> <p>Initially this may be informal (remote) health support which is likely to be triggered by a suspected case. A formal request would be made through MFAT and planning continues to outline how this would be managed alongside a concurrent New Zealand domestic response (as any outbreak in the Cook Islands is likely to originate in New Zealand). Ministers are requested to agree governance arrangements for this support prior to QFT commencing.</p>
Overall system capability (Cook Islands)	No operating experience for system capability and resilience to deal with bilateral QFT. Need to consider workforce design and contact tracing across multiple systems to support continuous improvement and prevent future inefficiency.																			
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<p>New Zealand Government Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa</p>	<p>Key</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="425 1452 952 1540">Action complete</td> <td data-bbox="952 1452 1288 1540">Action in progress and on track</td> <td data-bbox="1288 1452 1668 1540">Action delayed or additional action required</td> </tr> </table>	Action complete	Action in progress and on track	Action delayed or additional action required																
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*Contingency for response requirements is still being planned by airlines

*Contingency for response requirements is still being planned by airlines



Introduction



We have built a robust domestic COVID-19 response system but changes are needed to enable confidence in two-way QFT between NZ and the Cook Islands

Purpose of this document

This provides the system operational readiness for extending the Quarantine Free Travel (QFT) Zone with the Cook Islands including processes for pausing and suspending travel. It also proposes ongoing review and continuous refinement activities for the system.

What it's not

- Decision-making framework for making decisions around the QFT including any conditions that may be attached to statuses.
- A detailed playbook for every part of the system.
- A complete view - the document is based on three workshops, additional actions may be identified as the QFT opens, plus as system reviews and continuous refinement processes are implemented.

This document is structured into four sections:

1. Context
2. System readiness
3. How the Cook Islands QFT will operate
4. Next steps

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How risk in the QFT system is being managed	Page 8
Actions required to improve QFT	Page 9
How the QFT will work: QFT Decisions	Page 11
How the QFT will work: Managed Return Journey Options	Page 12
How the QFT will work: Humanitarian Assistance	Page 13
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Humanitarian Assistance: Outstanding Actions	Page 15
Next steps	Page 17
Appendices	Pages 18-38
1. Further context and additional detail	
2. Additional information about triggers	
3. Additional information about the return journey	
4. Outstanding actions	
5. What went well with the Trans-Tasman QFT over Anzac Weekend	

1. Context

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Context



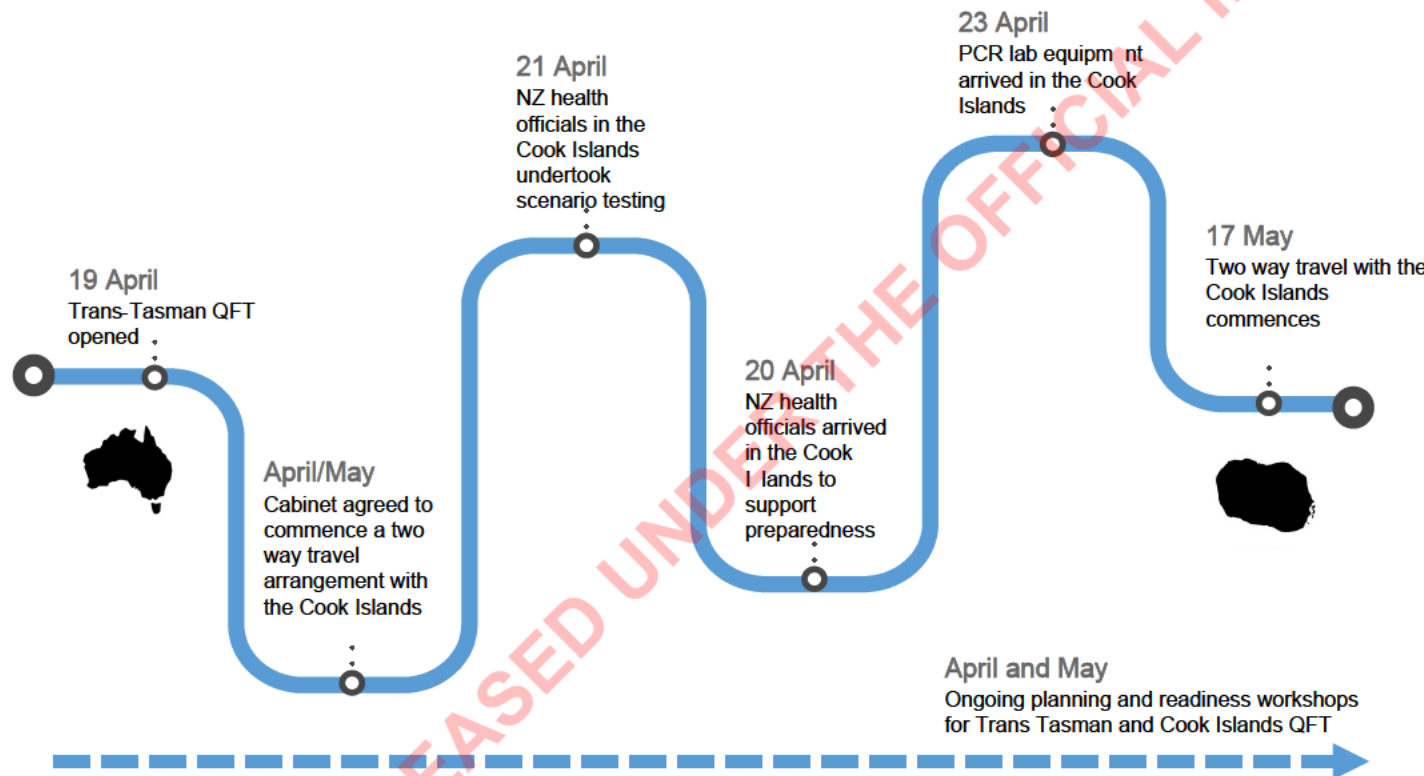
The QFT for the Cook Islands builds on the system developed for Australia, as well as our domestic response mechanisms – we are already seeing strong demand for flights

Background

Over the past year we have established systems and structures that are well placed to support and coordinate a domestic response to COVID-19 in New Zealand. We have learnt from each response and continued to refine our approach to provide the best response to COVID -19.

The system that we have developed is versatile and able to adapt to the public health considerations presented. This system has been assessed as being 'gold standard' and has seen New Zealand as a world leader in the fight against COVID-19. This system has been tested robustly as we have shifted Alert Levels.

Demand Summary



- s9(2)(ba)(i)
- Traveller numbers are demand-driven and managed by Industry; maximum capacity of the Cook Islands is ~6000 hotel beds
- Initially, we only expect Air New Zealand to provide flights and only from Auckland. Other international airports may be used as flights expand
- We envisage demand will be split between reunification and tourism, with a higher tourism demand than we have seen for Australia
- s9(2)(ba)(i)

2. System readiness

- System readiness overview
- Risk assessment
- Actions to reduce the risk



System readiness overview

We have assessed the readiness of key factors required to establish a Cook Islands QFT

Ministers have indicated readiness conditions for the Cook Islands QFT. When Cabinet agreed to a QFT with the Cook Islands, Ministers signalled there are a number of key considerations that they would like in place before a QFT is operational

Current readiness of these conditions. Currently these settings have been assessed and risks have been identified. The risk assessment is likely to change again prior to 17 May when the QFT opens.

Overall system capability (Cook Islands)	No operating experience for system capability and resilience to deal with bilateral QFT. Need to consider workforce design and contact tracing across multiple systems to support continuous improvement and prevent future complacency
Overall system capability (New Zealand)	New Zealand's domestic capability has been repeatedly tested. Key risk is around whether the system becomes compromised by deploying support to the Cook Islands.
Acceptable overall health assessment	Health to report back prior to commencement of QFT
Maximise Cook Islands health system preparedness	New Zealand health officials have been working closely with the Cook Islands since February 2021 to strengthen the system
Development and operationalisation of the New Zealand Response Framework and decision making process, including refining terminology	Cook Islands Response Framework and New Zealand Response Framework have been prepared, but alignment between them is yet to be worked through
Air Border to be finalised and in place before travel commences	Air Border Order confirmed and templates for the Cook Islands are progressing
Ensure airline readiness to accommodate two-way QFT	AirNZ working with Cook Islands and New Zealand to ensure requirements of QFT are met*
Technical issues are resolved	(a) Access integrating APP data into Nau Mai Ra to connect border and airline systems for contact tracing purposes (dates TBC); (b) PNR data flow improvements between industry and border agencies are being considered to improve data flow; (c) A manual backup process for PNR matching is in place; (d) Work is outstanding on ways to improve internet reliability.
Public communication process in place and agreed to	Interagency communications planning is ready for the commencement of the QFT

*Contingency for response requirements is still being planned by airlines

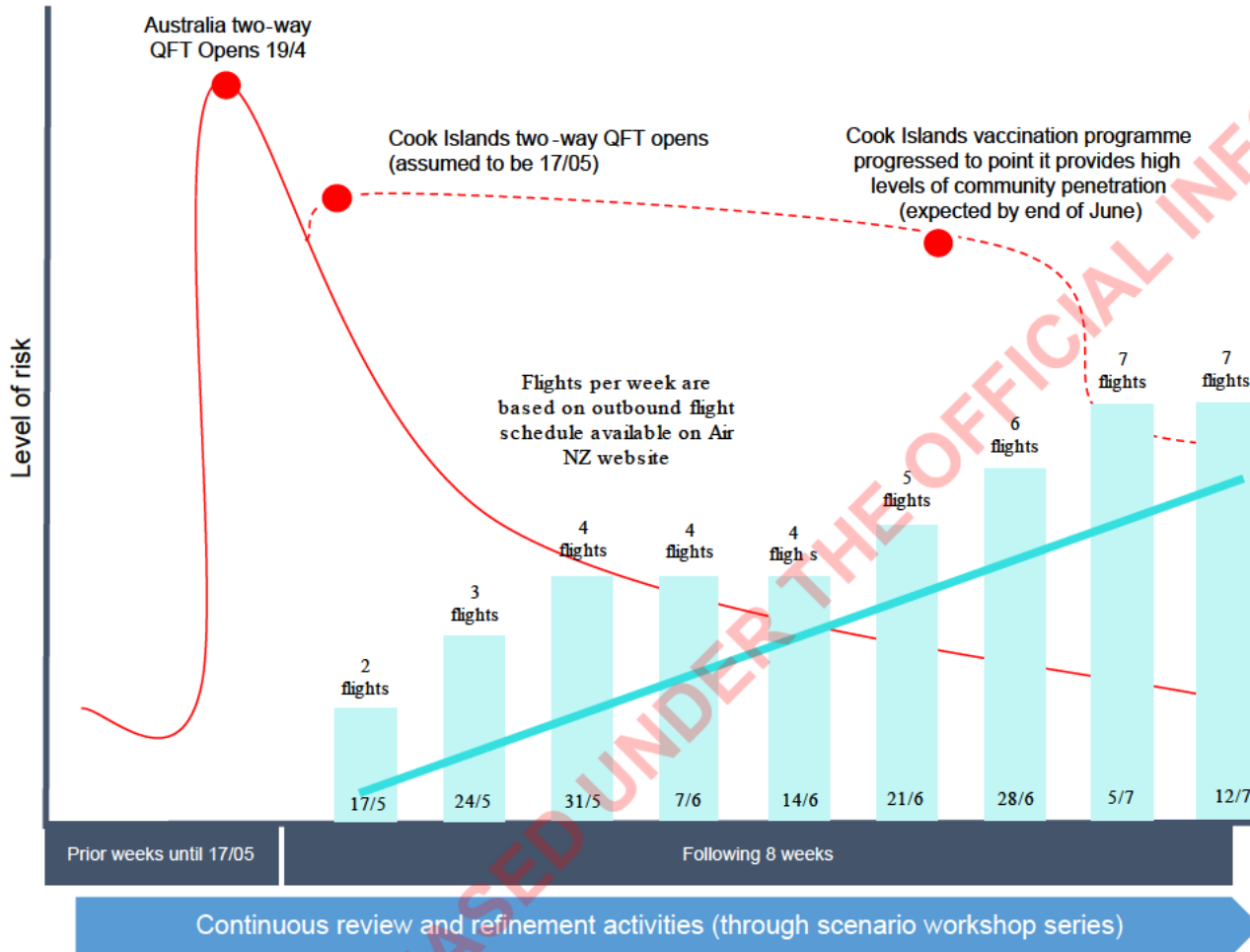
How risk in the QFT is being managed



As QFT opens, the risk profile will increase but the Cook Islands vaccinations programme will mitigate much of the risk

Illustrative risk profile for the coming weeks

Key
— Risk
— Demand for Cook Islands travel



Assumptions: Risk is an output of hazard, vulnerability and exposure – although the hazard does not change the vulnerability is influenced by the vaccine rollout and the exposure changes due to QFT opening. QFT risk profile may change as new geographies are brought onboard in the QFT and as countries within the QFT open to new countries; graph is illustrative; even post -vaccine rollout, cases may emerge due to unvaccinated pockets and/or infected travellers; graph assumes a high uptake vaccination roll -out to and rollout within six weeks.

s7(b)(ii)

We accept this level of risk

- s9(2)(ba)(i)
 - By July, the Cook Islands plan to have vaccinated a critical mass of their population against COVID-19
- The Cook Islands vaccination programme is due to commence on 20 May and last for six weeks - The Cook Islands will be exposed to heightened risk until this completes (and there is a risk that it takes longer than six weeks to complete)
- In future there will be additional considerations that contribute to this risk assessment, including the impact of booster vaccinations and understanding required threshold is for vaccination. These factors are currently unknown but will be explored in the future
- We have started a communications campaign to help the public to understand the risks associated with travel and expectations on them



Prepare for possible travel disruptions due to COVID-19
 Unite against COVID-19
 New Zealand Government

Actions required to improve QFT for both Australia and the Cook Islands



We have completed key steps but work is still needed to mitigate the risk - much of this will happen prior to May 17th

	Policy Settings Confirmed	Notifications	Decision - Making	Contact Tracing (CT)	External Comms/ Operationalisation	Managed return Journey in Suspended State
Already complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Agree high level policy with Australia / Cook Islands ✓ Agree high level system protocols with Australia / Cook Islands ✓ Gain Cabinet approval ✓ Air Border Order confirmed ✓ Confirm MIQ slot cancellation policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Agree Australia / Cook Island to NZ notification process ✓ Identify liaison officers from key departments for IMT notifications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Develop QFT decision-making framework ✓ Identify workstream leads for NRLT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Review existing CT processes around international notifications for use for the QFT ✓ Launch online tool to collect contact tracing information on traveller declaration form for travellers prior to travel from Australia to New Zealand (Nau Mai Ra) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Develop initial QFT communications ✓ Develop initial QFT SOPs and protocols 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Identify process to restart travel from a pause or suspension ✓ Develop self-isolation SOP
In progress: due prior to 17/05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refine templates for changes to the Air Border Order • Testing of scenarios - end to end- government and industry stakeholders – Aid and Managed Returns 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how airlines and airports can support decision-making by feeding in information • Formalise information sharing with Australia to notify Australian federal govt of a decision prior to announcement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a plan to scale each part of the contact tracing system • Understand the Cook Islands Health response and how New Zealand should support it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refine SOP to confirm communication processes with airlines and with airports • Refine messages and clear comms on the impact of making a false statement on the declaration form • Confirm vaccine implementation status for QFT frontline workers • Develop templates and contingency plans for given scenarios 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm enforcement options to compel people to return to New Zealand if required • Confirm with Air NZ whether return flights (during a suspension) would be run commercially or would require government support
Action required by 17/05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop templates and contingency plans for given scenarios 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine categorisation of risk profile for island population in the event of a potential COVID -19 outbreak • Explain the nature of consultation expected for decision making • Confirm the default position on flights changing en route • NRG to contain legal rep • Draft x-agency contact list • Formalise information sharing with Australia to notify federal govt of a decision prior to announcement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a bilingual traveller declaration form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a co -decision making mechanism at an official level that includes the Cook Islands • Confirm process for developing a joint press release with the Cook Islands • Increase resilience and sustainability of the government during a response • Understand implications of compliance and meet with the enforcement team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine payment mechanism for potential repatriation flights/ underwriting requirements • Scenario test self-isolation SOP • Model demand scenarios for MIQ if QFT is suspended and MIQ is required for returnees • Confirm health check SOPs on arrival and amber flights in green zones • Airlines to confirm a 'return home' policy 'amber' flights if required and air crew process if a pause or suspension occurs
Within six weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the existing capacity of the system and any bottlenecks • Increase resilience and sustainability of the government during a response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider establishing a cross-governmental Inte Hub and PIM Group 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make key improvements to the traveller declaration form including offline capability, language options and further health questions • Consider a backup for Nau Mai Ra if the system fails 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements to Australian / Cook Islands media scanning • Improvements to deconflict messaging with airlines from NZ, Australian and Cook Islands governments • Implement improvements to cross agency COVID comms e.g colocation • Understand how airlines can support communications insights • Launch revived comms campaign for the contact tracing app 	

Actions required to improve QFT for both Australia and the Cook Islands



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3. How the Cook Islands QFT will operate

- Decision-making triggers
- Return journey
- Humanitarian assistance

How the QFT will work: QFT Decisions



New Zealand may pause, suspend or resume QFT travel as the operational Cook Island situation changes - these decisions have triggers and will require actions to be completed

There are a range of decisions and actions that New Zealand could choose as situations arise in the Cook Islands. These decisions will be informed by some key triggers which will depend on the information relating to the case. At all stages, the decision to pause or suspend must be consultative with the Cook Islands.

s7(a)(i)		
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How the QFT will work: Managed Return Journey Options



If a managed return journey is required, Ministers have a range of options available to them

Option 1: Green zone arrival scheduled flight	Option 2: non green managed return - self isolate	Option 3: Non green managed return - MIQ	Option 4: Repatriation - NZ Govt funded travel (e.g. NZDF/Medevac)
<p>Following robust contact tracing, travellers that are not classified as contacts, casual and casual plus contacts are instructed to return to New Zealand.</p> <p>Travellers take 'green' flight and are requested to isolate at home and will be advised to test on day 5.</p> <p>This is the preferred option if the public health situation permits it</p>	<p>To protect the Cook Islands, we will rapidly return all travellers that have not tested positive and can not be accommodated on scheduled flights.</p> <p>Travellers take non-scheduled flights 'amber' flight and are required to isolate at home and will be advised to test on day 5.</p>	<p>To protect the Cook Islands, we will rapidly return all travellers that have not tested positive and can not be accommodated on scheduled flights.</p> <p>Travellers take non-scheduled flights red flight to Auckland or Christchurch airport and use MIQ facilities.</p> <p>Up to an additional 1,000 rooms in MIQ capacity will need to be found - likely MIQ will need to reallocate slots from other countries and cancel travel for other passengers</p> <p>This is a last resort option</p>	<p>Government charters flights and/or directs NZDF to provide flights to return positive and/or high risk travellers to New Zealand.</p> <p>Flights treated as red flights to Auckland or Christchurch airport and use MIQ facilities</p> <p>Additional rooms in MIQ capacity will need to be found - likely MIQ will need to reallocate slots from other countries and cancel travel for other passengers</p>

These are initial option considerations and more detailed planning will be undertaken on 14 May.

How the QFT will work: Humanitarian Assistance

New Zealand could be called on to provide humanitarian support to the Cook Islands in the event of an outbreak



Context

- The New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) leads New Zealand's official offshore humanitarian responses under the National Security System.
- This is a well tested machine that has been deployed throughout the Pacific, Asia and further afield; the system is tested regularly. However, to date, it has not been used or tested specifically for COVID-related support
- Although New Zealand can make helpful offers of support, the Cook Islands would need to formally request assistance or accept an offer of assistance before the New Zealand can deploy
- The High Commissioner for the Cook Islands will act as overall lead on the ground
- Government support could be requested from a range of organisations including MFAT, FENZ, Police, MPP, DPMC, NZDF, MPI, MBIE etc.
- Additionally, it is likely that the response will include NGO support (e.g. New Zealand Red Cross)
- Current planning focuses on support to the COVID response; it excludes security and stability -related operations
- Concurrently to the formal assistance process, it is highly likely that the Cook Islands will request low -level advice and support from the Ministry of Health to inform and support their response for any suspected or confirmed cases
- Any domestic response could restrict resources available for deployment in the Cook Islands



Humanitarian Assistance: Potential Requests



Although any request for support would be context -specific, an potential light ask or heavy ask is illustrated below

Existing assistance

- NZMAT Assessment Team* already in country (to backfill for local staff conducting vaccines) until end of June

Potential light ask (within 72 hours)

- Support with genome sequencing (flights to NZ and doing testing)
- AoG comms support
- Forward-deployed communications group - Public health, MFAT/ Consular, MIQ, Public Communications
- Communications infrastructure (e.g. Satellite Broadband)
- **NZMAT (NZ Medical Assistance Team) support / Deployable health group including FENZ coordination
- **NZDF logistics/ liaison mobilisation
- Support to get items to outer islands (TBC)
- Planning return flights (travellers and medical)

**These options may take longer than 72 hours to deploy

Potential heavy ask (longer to mobilise eg. 5-7 days)

- Welfare supplies (food, water etc.)
- PPE/ Medical consumables
- Additional resources to bolster health system including clinical teams
- Technical evaluation support-e.g. lab capacity/ capability
- Risk assessment team
- Uplift and relocation support
- Managed Isolation Facility resources
- MSD welfare support
- Compliance support

Level of support

*NZMAT is a voluntary organisation and requires DHB approval for release

Humanitarian Assistance: Outstanding Questions

Additional questions are outlined below



Question to be considered by decision makers:

1. What is the governance model for international assistance to the Cook Islands?

Option A: Use existing National Security model
ODESK
Watch Group
Working Group (MFAT-led)

+ Tested mechanisms for assistance
+ Well understood
+ Different group so potential more capacity

Option B: Use existing COVID response model
NRLT
NRG
[Humanitarian working group: MFAT led]

+ Has visibility of domestic COVID response so knows impact of provide assistance (which may be impact the domestic response)
+ Proven response fo COVID

Questions to be explored in a further workshop

2. What are the protocols for patient transport, and what does this mean from a capacity perspective? (e.g. if crew need to self isolate)
3. What are the medical assistance options and are we comfortable that this gives sufficient certainty in the response (e.g. NZMAT is staffed by volunteers and may take 3-5 days to mobilise subject to DHB approval release)
4. Are the logistics in place for individuals that may be deployed to the Cook Islands? (e.g. laptops allocated, passports, vaccinations etc.)
5. Can the internet cope if tourists are told to shelter in location? If it cannot, will this impede the Cook Islands' response? (e.g. ability to contact trace)
6. Is there an option to improve the resilience of the Cook Islands' internet through accessing the Samoan cable?
7. Is there an opportunity to conduct joint operational planning with Cook Islands officials?

4. Next steps

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Next steps

Moving forward the Government will continue to reconnect New Zealand

Next steps for the Cook Islands QFT

- Officials will continue to iterate planning exercises to inform readiness. In the near term, the focus will be on improving the humanitarian response and managing the traveller return journey
- Scenario planning will be further developed to inform response protocols
- Confirm key impacts on the options for the managed return of travellers if required
- Establish planning for small crafts (air and maritime)

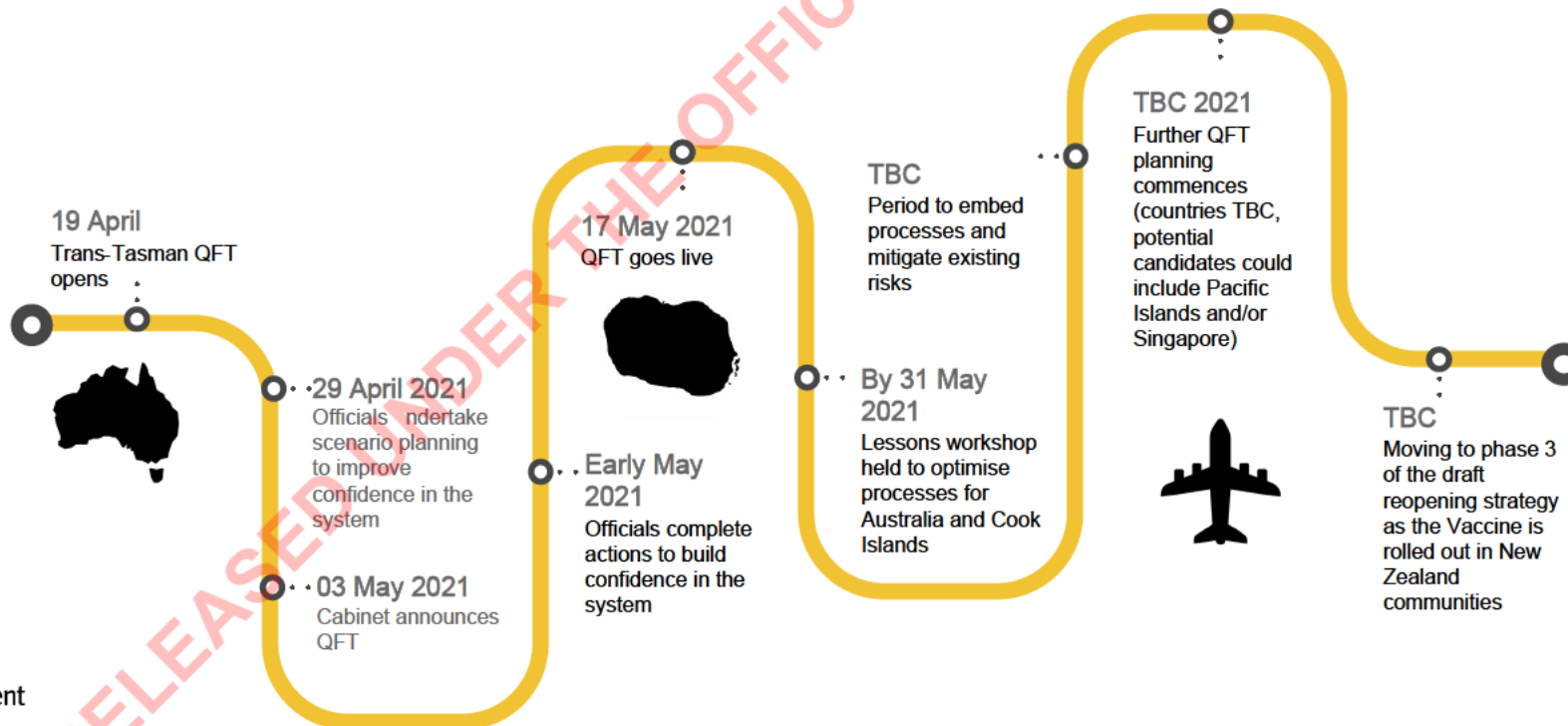
Next steps for the Trans Tasman QFT

- Undertake scenario planning at all levels to improve confidence in the system and respond to ongoing risks
- Undertake review by assurance and continuous improvement, COVID-19 Group (DPMC)
- Establish planning for small crafts (air and maritime)
- Establish process for when QFT countries seek to extend their QFT agreements with other countries

Outcomes we are trying to achieve

- Deliver a safe and protective environment to gradually reopen the border
- Establish public confidence in the process and wider system
- Share clear communications about future travel agreements

Timeline





Appendices

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Appendix 1

Further context and additional detail

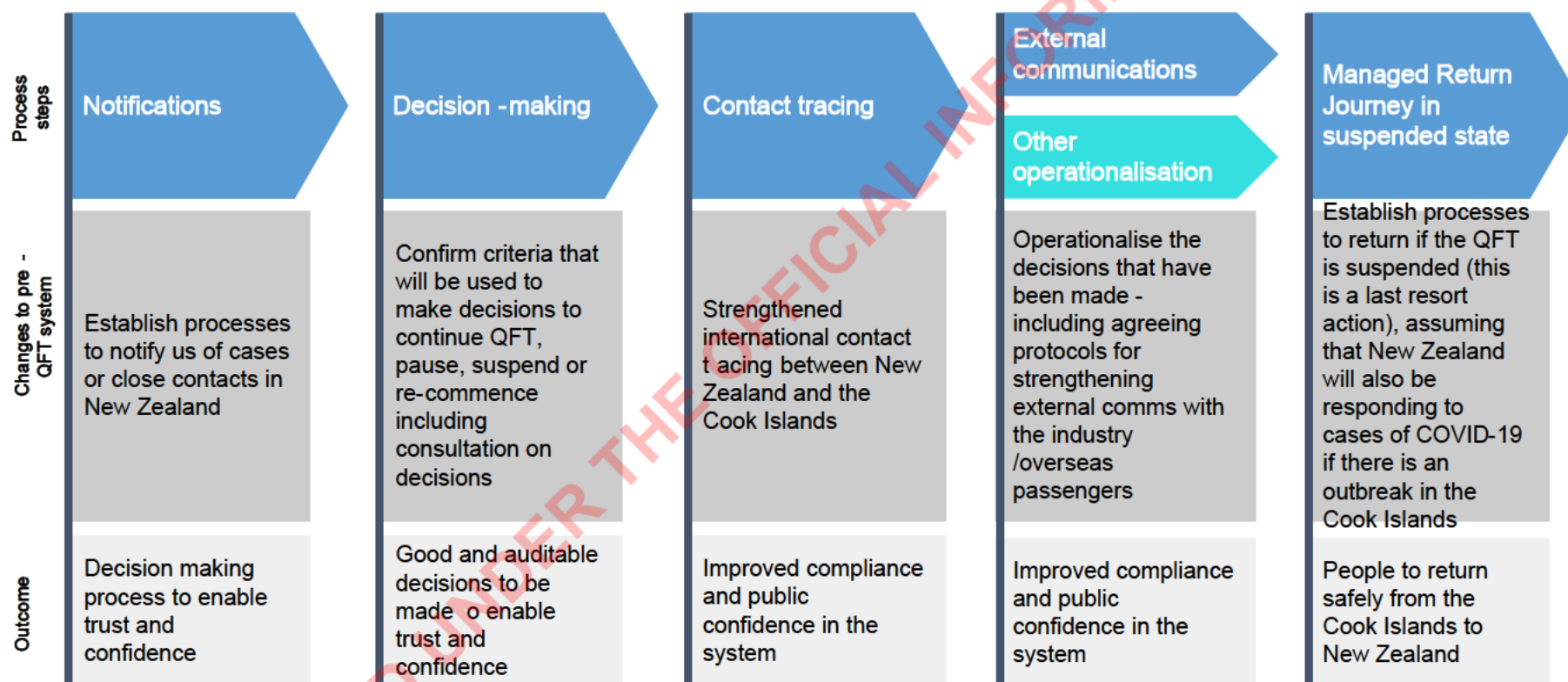
Process to manage the system



Our proposed QFT design builds on lessons from Australia and reflects the unique nature of our relationship

To date, New Zealand's response to COVID-19 has only needed to consider the impact on our domestic settings. As we extend the QFT, we have refined our process based on our experience with Australia and have acknowledged there are some differences which reflect the unique relationship that New Zealand enjoys with the Cook Islands.

There are several process steps that must occur for a QFT to operate effectively and are outlined below.



We are incorporating identified refinements to our domestic response and refinements to our Australian QFT. These would be needed regardless of whether the QFT with the Cook Islands was extending and we are basing these refinements on the lessons learnt from each response.



KEY

All countries

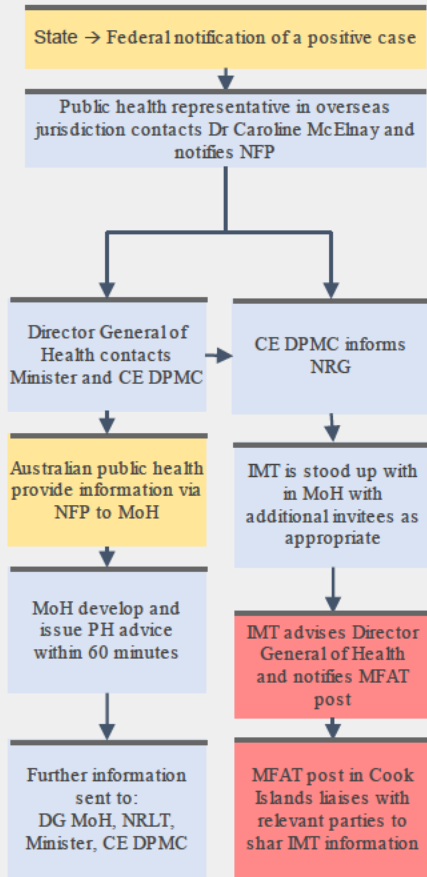
Australia only

Cook Islands only

QFT System Process Map

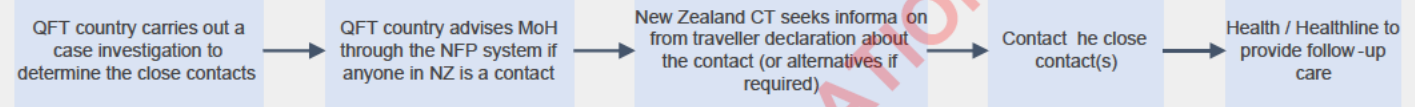
We have refined our system process map for the Cook Islands and Australia

Notifications

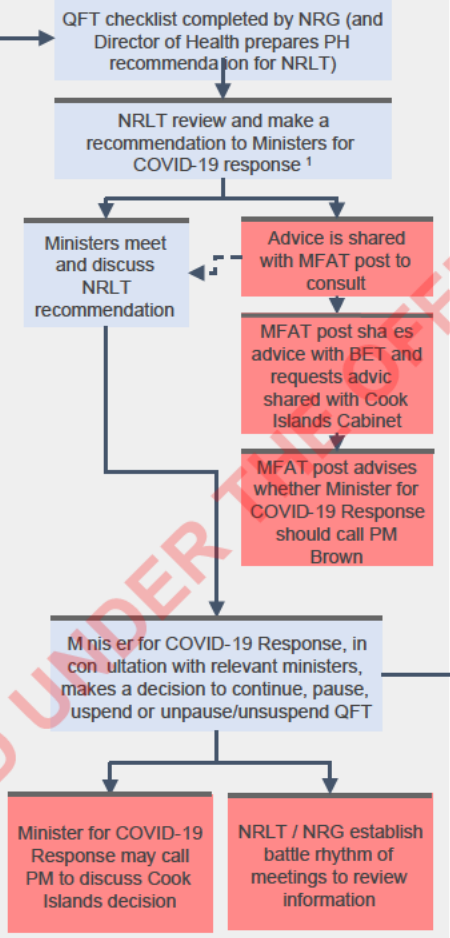


AHPPC (with NZ as a member) - meet to discuss the health response in Australia

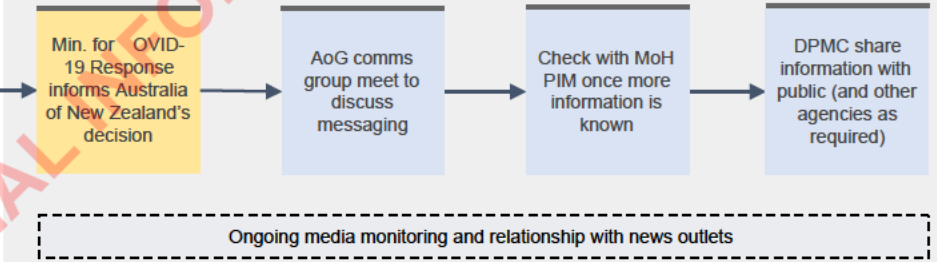
Contact Tracing



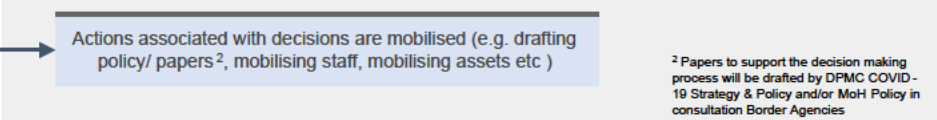
Decision Making



External Communications

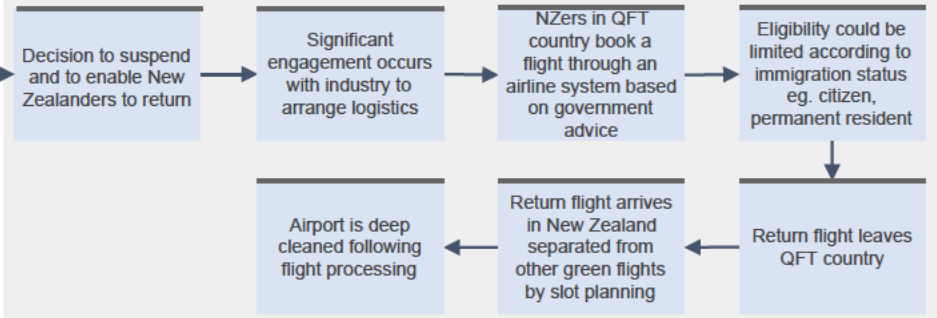


Other operationalisation 2



Managed return journey in suspended state

(Amber flights - last resort tactic for Australia, potential early tactic in Cook Islands)



- ¹ Groups to be notified of the recommended action:
- I - I
 - MSD
 - N - MA
 - C - C
 - PCO/ Crown Law (TBC)
 - Regional leaders
 - Local govt
 - Transport

- Transport
- Airport and aviation security
- Tourism NZ/Tourism Industry Association
- Insurance
- QFT partners (MFAT)

Framing: High level decisions

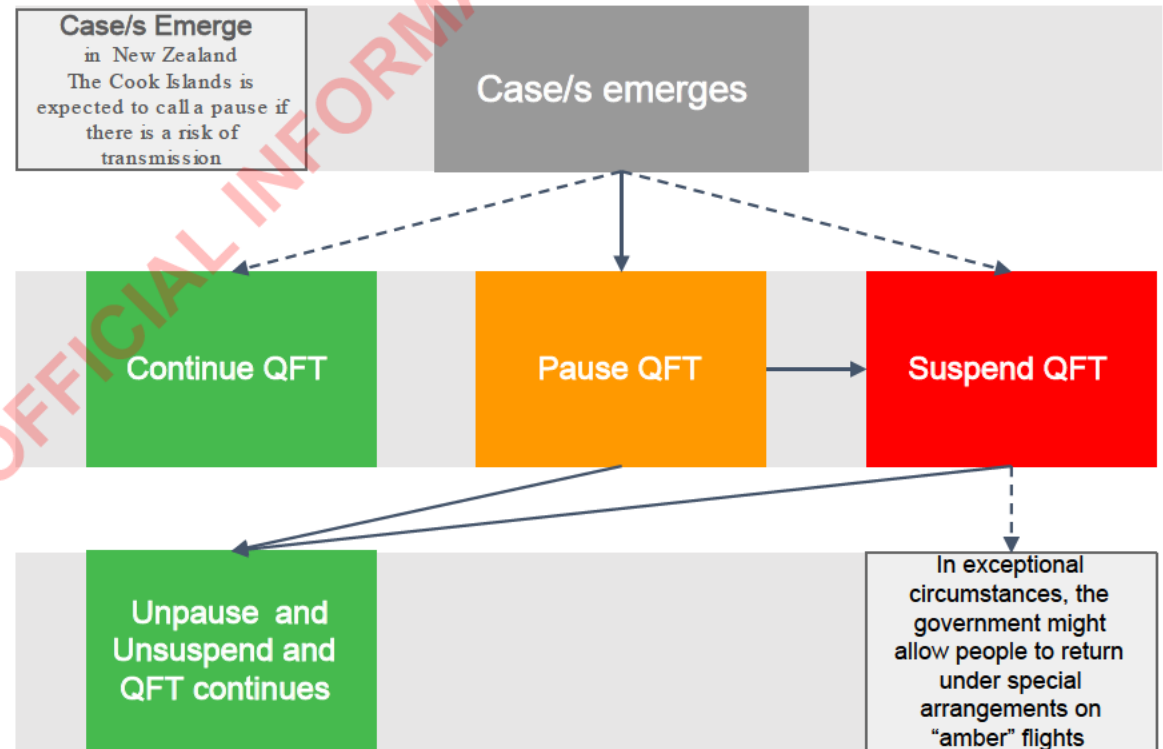


The high level framework that we're working to has three key statuses:

- Continue QFT
- Pause QFT
- Suspend QFT

We assume that following a pause or suspension, a decision may be taken to extend the pause or suspension or to recommence QFT.

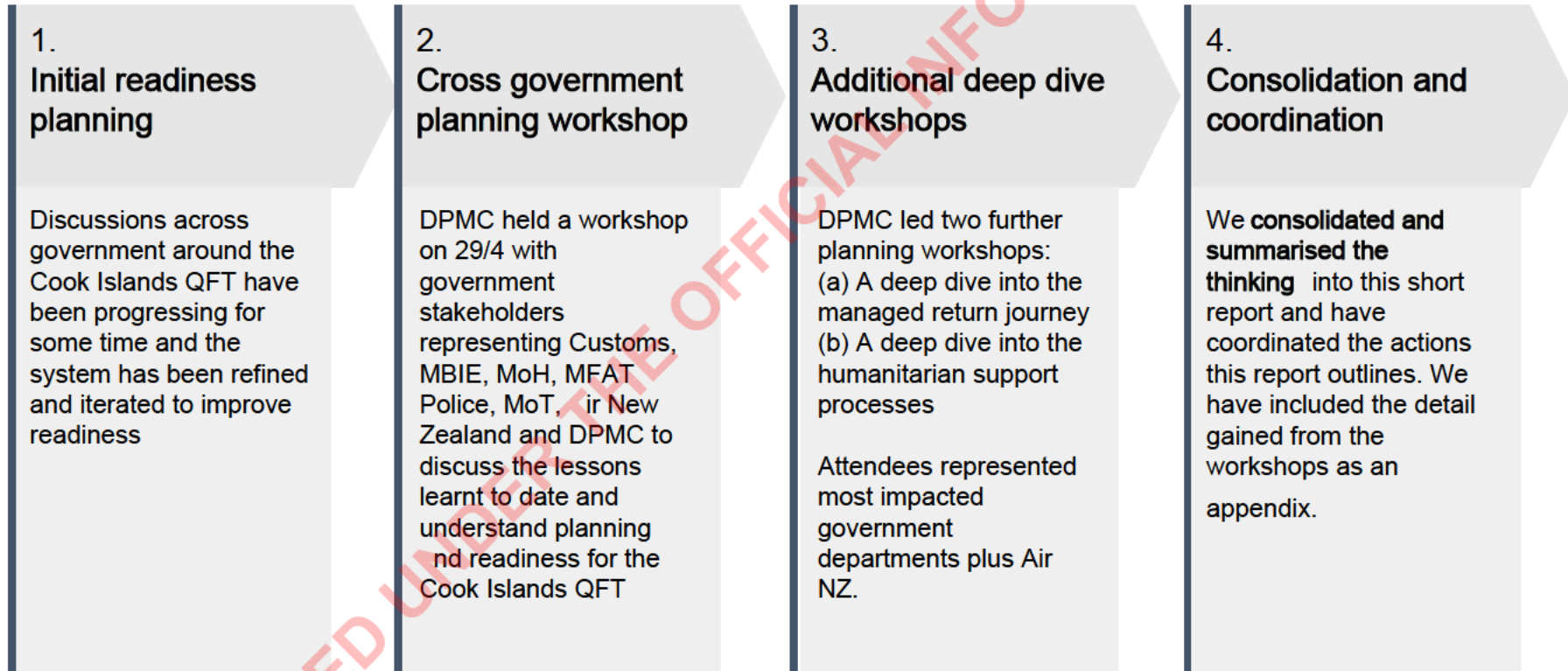
In exceptional circumstances, the government might allow people to return to New Zealand under special arrangements on "Amber" flights.



The process for determining QFT and response readiness



This document reflects many weeks of planning. However, this readiness checklist has been drawn together rapidly. We followed a four stage process to do this:





Options to further reduce risks associated with the QFT

Government can further decrease the risk by considering additional policy settings

Potential mechanisms

Domestic and QFT Response

QFT specific

Additional airport screening measures including pre-departure testing, in-person health questionnaires etc (both at departure and on arrival).

Increasing contact tracing capacity and infrastructure.

Follow up calls/ visits for returnees for health questioning (either random sampling or every traveller follow up)

Restrict flights from other destinations to increase space in MIQ and prioritise Cook Island returnees in the event of a suspension.

Improvement to data and information flows to increase the speed of contact tracing.

Arranging managed return flights in a major outbreak including underwriting flights/ charter flights if required

Building in additional resilience to the existing New Zealand response system including surveillance, testing capacity etc.

Additional Unite against COVID campaigns to promote use of NZ COVID Tracer app.

Increased monitoring/ compliance

Support the Cook Islands to build MIQ capacity on the Cook Islands and/or bolster the health response for the Cook Islands

As is the case with the QFT established with Australia, the Government has mechanisms available to decrease the risk for QFT.

Ministerial direction and Government agreement will be required across the COVID-19 response system to ensure the policy settings are well placed to account for a QFT with both Australia and the Cook Islands, as well as any future potential jurisdictions.

Using different policy levers could also be required should a QFT be paused or suspended and eventually reopened. The industry is expecting that additional measures or conditions could be put in place to manage the risk if a QFT reopens after being closed.

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Appendix 2

Additional information about triggers

Triggers and Actions



If there is a domestic response required in the Cook Islands, there are a range of decisions and actions that New Zealand could choose. These decisions will be informed by some key triggers which will depend on the information relating to the case. At all stages, the decision to pause or suspend must be consultative with the Cook Islands.

s7(a)(i)		
[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]
[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]
[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]

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Appendix 3

Additional information about the return journey

Managed Return Journey



Cabinet Paper Context

The Cabinet Paper states in paragraph 70 that:

“In the event of a significant outbreak, returning travellers to New Zealand safely would be a priority to reduce the pressure of a Cook Islands system that may be responding to its first COVID-19 outbreak. A precautionary approach will be taken to any outbreak... initially every traveller return from the Cook Islands would be treated as high-risk... this could change depending on the context as more information is gathered.”

Assumptions and Actions

This table outlines our working assumptions which have informed the detail on the following slide for managed return journey options.

#	Assumption (regardless of option)	Implication
1	We assume that up to nine flights will be running - We assume this equates to approximately 2700 people – we assume that there will not be a requirement to bring Cook Island Residents to New Zealand	Up to 2700 people may need to be returned to New Zealand
2	Return flights will operate in a suspension (and not during a pause). Until return flights are held, passengers may be required to shelter in place at their cost, although care packages will be made available by the Cook Islands	We need to communicate clearly to passengers that they may incur additional costs to shelter in place and that this is at their risk if they choose to travel
3	Cook Island flights are locked down for changes 72h before the flight	If a pause occurs (or is rumoured), people cannot rebook to come on it early which reduces the risk that people will relocate en-mass immediately prior to decisions
4	If hospital capacity is reached, New Zealanders with COVID-19 will need to be evacuated on medical flights. Payment for MedEvac flights will be established on a case by case basis but may require the New Zealand government to pay for them	Budget needs to be confirmed to pay for MedEvac flights and determine who will pay for MedEvac. Communications need to stress importance of travel insurance that includes COVID-related cover
5	The most likely source of any COVID infection is via New Zealand	It is likely that New Zealand will be managing a domestic response concurrently to any Cook Islands response requirements
6	The 500 rooms in MIQ being held in contingency for other emergencies, including the Trans-Tasman QFT. This number is not sufficient to shelter all returnees from the Cook Islands. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On average, there are 1.4 people per room in MIQ We assume that up to 2,000 people will be in the Cook Islands and that they would require 1429 rooms (2000/1.4) Of the 500 rooms being held, we assume that only 400 may be available at any time This leaves a deficit of 1029 rooms 	If we require all returning travellers to go into MIQ, either additional capacity will need to be found (new facilities, reprioritisation of slots) or travellers will need to shelter in place in the Cook Islands for longer periods
7	MIQ is 14 days - we are not considering a shorter duration - this excludes time required to prepare for arrivals/ actions on departure (e.g. deep cleaning MIQ facilities)	This exacerbates the issue above and people may need to shelter in place for long periods without additional capacity being created
8	All return measures include all people that have travelled from New Zealand; this includes New Zealanders, Permanent Residents, New Zealand visa holders, Australian QFT travellers etc.	The numbers are higher than if we included only New Zealand citizens and permanent residents
9	It is not acceptable to require travellers to remain in place on the Cook Islands for 14 days/Cook islands govt asks travellers to return to NZ.	There needs to be a mechanism to return people to New Zealand
10	There is a legal basis to compel people to return to New Zealand. Currently this does not exist.	TBC - additional legislation could be required
11	Government funding may be required to underwrite some flight costs (as airlines are likely to need to fly empty flights to the Cook Islands to return passengers to New Zealand)	Additional funding (amount TBC) would need to be added to an existing appropriation to fund the flights
12	All options could have further public health actions to further mitigate risks (e.g. Public Health officers meeting flights to brief travellers and answer questions/ concerns)	Regardless of the options, public health advice will be critical to manage the risks
13	We assume that the Cook Islands may request light touch humanitarian support when they suspect they have a case. We have not set a threshold for establishing managed return flights as this will be situation specific.	We need to be able to offer humanitarian assistance to the Cook Islands, even if we are managing a concurrent event in New Zealand

Managed Return Journey Options



	Option 1: Green zone arrival scheduled flight	Option 2: non green managed return - self isolate	Option 2b: Non green managed return MIQ	Option 3: Repatriation - NZ Govt funded travel (eg. charter/NZDF/medevac)
Summary description	<p>Following robust contact tracing, travellers that are not classified as contacts, casual and casual plus contacts are instructed to return to New Zealand.</p> <p>Travellers take 'green' flight and are requested to isolate at home and will be advised to test on day 5.</p> <p>This is the preferred option if the public health situation permits it</p>	<p>To protect the Cook Islands, we will rapidly return all travellers that have not tested positive and can not be accommodated on scheduled flights.</p> <p>Travellers take non-scheduled flights 'amber' flight and are required to isolate at home and will be advised to test on day 5.</p>	<p>To protect the Cook Islands we will rapidly return all travellers that have not tested positive and can not be accommodated on scheduled flights.</p> <p>Travellers take on scheduled flights red flight to Auckland or Christchurch airport and use MIQ facilities</p> <p>Up to an additional 1,000 rooms in MIQ capacity will need to be found - likely MIQ will need to reallocate slots from other countries and cancel travel for other passengers</p> <p>This is a last resort option</p>	<p>Government charters flights and/or directs NZDF to provide flights to return positive and/or high risk travellers to New Zealand.</p> <p>Flights treated as red flights to Auckland or Christchurch airport and use MIQ facilities</p> <p>Additional rooms in MIQ capacity will need to be found - likely MIQ will need to reallocate slots from other countries and cancel travel for other passengers</p>
Benefits of this option	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An easy way to get people home quickly Public Health transit risk is similar to the move from AL2 to AL3 in terms of allowing people to return home Allows people to fly from Cook Islands to multiple New Zealand airports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enables people to return regardless of the level of maturity of the Cook Islands contact tracing Public Health transit risk is similar to move from AL2 to AL3 in terms of allowing people to return home Allows people to fly from Cook Islands to multiple New Zealand airports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MIQ is a proven tool to manage the public health risk if required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Last resort option if airlines refuse to provide commercial flights
Risks or Issues with this option	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenging to further mitigate public health risks beyond current protocols for any onwards domestic connections (e.g. flight or bus from Auckland to Tauranga) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large numbers entering MIQ Restricts flights to Auckland or Christchurch only (that have red zones) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to an additional 1,000 rooms in MIQ capacity will need to be found - likely MIQ will need to reallocate slots from other countries and cancel travel for other passengers Resource intensive and expensive with large numbers entering MIQ - unlikely that the government could charge for MIQ in this situation Negative public perception of being forced to isolate in MIQ and potentially deters travellers, and in cancelling flights from other locations to make MIQ slots available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costly- likely New Zealand government would fund the flight and MIQ Up to an additional 1,000 rooms in MIQ capacity will need to be found - likely MIQ will need to reallocate slots from other countries and cancel travel for other passengers Negative public perception of being forced to isolate in MIQ and potentially deters travellers, and in cancelling flights from other locations to make MIQ slots available

Current Communications Approach (Summary)



Current approach - three elements:

1

Targeted digital campaign information layer for those looking at travelling to the Cook Islands. This will be our usual "Get in the know before you go". Below is an example although we planning to develop creative more appropriate for a Pacific audience (more colour, imagery).

2

Targeted comms to Cook Island residents/families of Cook Island residents in NZ. We have determined that those looking to travel are more likely to be coming to see family, as opposed to a holiday. The messaging will need to be softer.

3

Targeted advertising to travellers while they are in the Cook Islands - reminding them of the required behaviours. This will be relevant for both the locals and visitors, and the design will be appropriate for the Cook Islands.

Draft branding



Key messages

Prior to departure

- Know the COVID-19 advice for the country/Cook Islands/Rarotonga
- Prepare for possible travel disruptions due to COVID-19
- Download the CookSafe+ app onto your phone
- Turn on Bluetooth tracing on the CookSafe+ app

When you arrive

- Register for your CookSafe QR code at the airport or the Tourism Visitor Information Centre
- Download the CookSafe+ app onto your phone
- Turn on Bluetooth tracing in the CookSafe+ app

While you are there

- Respect the places you are going

Prior to departure

- Know the COVID-19 advice for the country/Cook Islands/Rarotonga
- Prepare for possible travel disruptions due to COVID-19
- Complete the pre-departure travel declaration
- Download the NZ COVID Tracer app

When you arrive/while you are here

- Download the NZ COVID Tracer app
- Scan QR codes with the NZ COVID Tracer app, and turn on Bluetooth tracing
- Wear a face covering on public transport
- Wash and sanitise hands often

MPP advice: Cook islanders need targeted, positive comms, even if they choose not to travel. This comms needs to be appropriate for both visitors in the country and for locals. Outdoor/OOH advertising in the Cooks is key. Messaging includes:

- The opening of the borders and the benefits for them
- That they are safe
- What the CTA is for the visitors while they are in the country.

Next steps

- Engaging with Pacific TV & MFAT for further insights on the media channels in the Cook Islands (via Koula)
- Engaging with a CI advertising expert who can help shape our messaging, creative and align with the Cook Islands Promise (via Koula)
- Developing a media plan and creative (working with our partners)



Appendix 4

Outstanding actions

Activities to increase confidence in QFT (Australia and Cook Islands)



Session 1: Lessons learned from Australia QFT	Owner	Due
Develop templates and contingency plans for given scenarios. This will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal templates • Decisions / thresholds and notification steps for decisions (where appropriate) • Operating procedures and toolbox of options • Pre-developed external comms e.g. holding messages for government contact centres Action is for DMPC to confirm next steps on this. We will update this action next week.	DPMC (further actions to follow)	TBC
Develop “single source of the truth” for the cross -agency contact list (SOG level) – share with SOG and NRG members	DPMC	07/05
Add a legal representative into NRG	DPMC	07/05
Add step to the process for implementation and to inform federal government of decisions prior to public announcement	DPMC	07/05
Confirm assumption with the Minister that if a plane is boarded/ in the air, the default position is that it will be received in New Zealand as the same colour flight that it started	DPMC	07/05
Being clear on compliance options and helping the public to understand these (especially around the traveller declaration form and those consciously trying to work around the system) – Initial action is for DPMC to meet with the enforcement team to understand existing work	DPMC	14/05
Increase the resilience and sustainability of our workforce in responses (e.g. on call rosters etc.)	DPMC (further actions to follow)	14/05

Activities to increase confidence in the Cook Islands QFT



Session 2: Cook Islands QFT Planning		
Minister to provide steer on nature of consultation expected for decision -making	DPMC	ASAP
MFAT to discuss the consultative decision -making process with Cook Island Representatives	MFAT	07/05
Hold managed return journey workshop	DPMC	07/05
Hold humanitarian response workshop	DPMC	07/05
Provide update on learnings from the MoH team in the Cook Islands currently (e.g. copy of interim reporting if available)	MoH	07/05
Confirm who in the Cook Islands should be invited to NRLT	MFAT	07/05
Confirm timeline for bilingual traveller declaration form updates	MoH	07/05
Confirm any additional 'spot checks' that would be appropriate on the traveller declaration form completion	MoH	07/05
Confirm approach for joint press releases with the Cook Islands	DPMC/ MFAT	07/05
Confirm enforcement options to compel people to return to New Zealand if required	MFAT	Ahead of return journey workshop
Confirm with Air NZ if return flights (during a suspension) would be run commercially or would require government support	MoT	Ahead of return journey workshop
Determine categorisation of risk profile for island population in the event of a potential COVID -19 outbreak	MoH	14/05
Develop a co-decision making mechanism at an official level that includes the Cook Islands	DPMC/MFAT	14/05
Determine payment mechanism for potential repatriation flights	TBC	14/05

Glossary of terms used in the system process diagram



Acronym	Definition
CE	Chief Executive
AHPPC	Australian Health Protection Principal Committee
AirNZ	Air New Zealand
BET	Border Executive Team
C4C	Caring for Communities
CT	Contact Tracing
DPMC	Department for the Prime Minister and Cabinet
IMT	Incident Management Group
MFAT	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoT	Ministry of Transport
MSD	Ministry for Social Development
NEMA	National Emergency Management Agency
NFP	National Focal Point
NRG	National Response Group
NRLT	National Response Leadership Team
NZers	New Zealanders
QFT	Quarantine Free Travel zone



Appendix 5


What went well with the Trans-Tasman QFT over Anzac Weekend

What went well



Many aspects of the QFT are working well, enabling New Zealand citizens and inhabitants to safely travel to Australia and vice versa


Public perception is positive that the bubble is working and it's safe




The Prime Minister and Minister Hipkins made timely decisions




We rapidly contact-traced over 600 people, and the traveller notification system made this much easier



The public got the information they needed in a timely manner




The foundations and instruments are in place to make legally binding changes quickly



Ministers and public servants went above and beyond by sacrificing their weekends



The system is reflecting on the experience in real time to ensure we can learn from our experience quickly



Some of the key players were on leave and the system continued to function

