

Hon Chris Hipkins

MP for Remutaka

Minister for COVID-19 Response

Minister of Education

Minister for the Public Service

Leader of the House



- 6 APR 2022

Christina Wardle
fyi-request-18821-16d26e8e@requests.fyi.org.nz

Ref: OIA0653

Dear Christina,

Thank you for your email of 9 March 2022 in which you asked when vaccine passports and mandates will no longer be required and when COVID-19 legislation will be repealed in New Zealand.

I acknowledge that COVID-19 public health restrictions have had a real impact on people's lives. Throughout the response to COVID-19, the Government has relied on public health advice to try and achieve a balance between the impact of public health restrictions on New Zealanders, businesses and communities, and the need to minimise the spread of COVID-19.

As you may be aware from 4 April 2022, vaccine pass requirements were removed from the COVID-19 Protection Framework. This means that New Zealanders will no longer be required by law to present a My Vaccine Pass to enter certain venues. Additionally, the definition of vaccine mandated workplaces will be narrowed to specific groups, frontline workers in the health and disability sectors, aged care, Corrections, and Border workers to ensure our most vulnerable remain safe. The easing of these restrictions reflects New Zealand's successful management of the Omicron outbreak and our high rates of vaccination.

It is important to note that, while there will be no requirement to use My Vaccine Pass from 4 April 2022, businesses will still be entitled to use the system if they choose to.

For now, we are keeping the Traffic Lights System in place to offer ongoing protections to communities, in the event of a new variant, or in cases of future surges. While we are remaining at Red for now, our plan is to move down to Orange, and then to Green once it is safe to do so.

The COVID-19 Public Health Response Act 2020 (the Act) has a sunset provision in section 3(3), which means that it will be automatically revoked at the close of 13 May 2023. The Act could be repealed earlier if Parliament does not periodically resolve to continue it. Most recently, in December 2021, Parliament resolved to continue the Act until 30 June 2022. The Act will automatically be repealed on that date unless Parliament again resolves to continue it. As the COVID-19 response remains ongoing, it is anticipated that there will be a notice of motion to extend the effect of the Act past 30 June 2022.

While I acknowledge our COVID-19 restrictions have been tough, the Government's response to COVID-19 to date has delivered a strong foundation for us to move forward. The hard work and sacrifices all New Zealanders have made over the last two years has put us in the best position to recover.

Thank you for taking the time to raise your concerns with me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'CH', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Chris Hipkins
Minister for COVID-19 Response