



**To:** Hon Damien O'Connor, Minister for Biosecurity  
**From:** Stuart Anderson Deputy Director-General Biosecurity New Zealand

## Airport Biosecurity measures for Passenger arrivals over summer peak

<b>Date</b>	9 December 2022	<b>Reference</b>	AM22-0744
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Contacts			
Name	Position	Contact number	First contact
Stuart Anderson	Deputy Director-General Biosecurity New Zealand	s9(2)(a)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Steve Gilbert	Central/South Regional Commissioner		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Michael Inglis	Northern Regional Commissioner		<input type="checkbox"/>
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### Purpose

- This aide memoire provides an update on Biosecurity New Zealand's management of the passenger pathway function at international airports in the post-COVID-19 era.
- It outlines the initiatives underway to address short- and long-term pressures on the airport passenger pathway.
- It outlines proposed changes to extend the use of the Express Lane for low-risk passengers to operate when Detector Dogs are not present, to ensure biosecurity screening processes do not unnecessarily impact on these passengers. An additional quarantine officer will work in the Express Lane and conduct a secondary risk assessment function.
- New Quarantine Officers and dog handlers are currently being recruited to meet resourcing requirements while existing recent recruits are being upskilled.

## Key Messages

- Since the reopening of the border passenger numbers have increased at a greater rate than original predictions with further increases expected over the next eight to 12 weeks.
- All components of international air travel are experiencing challenges, both globally and nationally.
- Biosecurity New Zealand is implementing short- and long- term initiatives to improve our processing approach while maintaining effective biosecurity outcomes.
- To more effectively allocate resources Biosecurity New Zealand has implemented an Express Lane to process high-volume, low-risk travellers quickly.
- Dog handlers are present in the Express Lanes at all operational international airports, Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Queenstown.
- We propose to extend use of the Express Lane during peak times when dog handlers are not available. This is currently in a conceptual stage, but will be rolled out gradually after trial periods at each airport this month.
- Biosecurity risk will be managed by utilising verification data to allocate dog handler resources during the highest-risk periods and refine the eligibility of passengers to use the Express Lane. An additional quarantine officer will work in the Express Lane and conduct a secondary risk assessment function.

## Background

*The impact of COVID-19 has led to difficulties resuming operations at international airports globally.*

1. Passenger numbers have steadily increased beyond the most optimistic forecast since the reopening of the New Zealand Border this year. See table below for passenger arrivals per month compared with numbers forecasted during lockdown.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Moderate forecast	40,000	40,000	45,000	80,000	100,000	115,000	170,000	170,000	195,000	245,000	255,000	325,000
Actual numbers 2022	15,000	16,000	65,000	125,000	169,000	206,000	308,000	310,000	333,000	377,000	474,000	540,000 - 600,000*
Percentage difference	-38%	-40%	44%	56%	69%	79%	81%	82%	71%	54%	65%	65-85%*

\*estimates based on current increases and predicted flight schedules.

2. Prior to the travel restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the international aviation system generally worked well. Although there were times of stress, these were generally not sustained. The success of the overall system is attributed to airport resources and space aligning with passenger demand, along with passengers being familiar with travel requirements and processes.
3. In the last eight weeks during the build up to the busy summer period significant delays at peak times have been experienced by passengers at airports around New Zealand. The passenger experience can have a significant impact on how compliant passengers are and how willing they are to declare for biosecurity. Passengers experiencing delays on arrival are more disgruntled when they reach Biosecurity New Zealand's staff. We need to ensure that the passenger processing that Biosecurity New Zealand is responsible for is working as efficiently as possible or we risk losing the social licence needed by Quarantine Officers to ask probing questions to understand the biosecurity risk posed by the passenger and their baggage.
4. Returning to pre-COVID-19 operational performance levels has been challenging in the airport environment for a number of reasons:
  - a) flights not arriving at scheduled times;
  - b) low numbers of baggage handlers causing delays to baggage arriving on carousals;
  - c) resourcing constraints across the airport campus, especially customer service staff, baggage handlers and queue facilitators;
  - d) flow on issues as delays in parts of the airport system outside of our control result in passenger numbers changing erratically and make predicting resource requirements difficult;
  - e) serious mishandled baggage issues resulting in around 2,000 items of luggage arriving without passengers every month;
  - f) ongoing construction in the Auckland International Airport processing area reducing the size of the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) operational area by 30 percent; and
  - g) new Quarantine Officers and dog handlers are currently being recruited to meet resourcing requirements whilst existing recent recruits are being upskilled.

s9(2)(g)(i)

*Biosecurity New Zealand is implementing initiatives to improve processing at airports*

6. **Resourcing:** MPI is currently recruiting staff. Sixty-four quarantine officers have been recruited this year and recruitment will continue into 2023 to build up the Border Clearance Services workforce.
7. **Maximise space:** Risk Assessment podiums at Auckland Airport have increased from nine to 11 and queues have been reconfigured to separate passengers with something to declare from those with nothing to declare. This has helped process low risk passengers more efficiently.

8. **Upskilling:** At Auckland airport, assistant staff contracted by MPI are being upskilled so that they can provide additional support to Quarantine Officers. These staff will be trained to engage with passengers in the search area; determining which bags contain risk goods, unpacking these products ready for a Quarantine Officer to inspect, and assisting passengers to repack baggage and some administrative tasks related to searching baggage.
9. **Longer term initiatives:** We are focussing on longer term initiatives to provide a seamless and efficient entry for passengers and their luggage. We are working to further automate the detection of potential risk to New Zealand. The work includes:
  - a) the New Zealand Traveller Declaration that will digitise the arrival card by June 2023 and facilitate incremental improvements that reduce interactions with passengers without compromising biosecurity risk management; and
  - b) Long-term development and testing of algorithms in baggage scanning for biosecurity risk.

### Express Lanes

*MPI has successfully implemented Express Lanes to improve passenger flow and maintain biosecurity.*

10. We have reviewed the passenger processing operating model and incorporated an Express Lane for low-risk passengers with nothing to declare. These passengers can occupy an amount of resource disproportionate to their risk and it is an opportunity to more efficiently target our border resources and improve processing times.
11. Express Lanes are currently operating in all International airports; Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Queenstown, with a detector dog present to verify passengers and luggage before the exit.
12. Over the last four weeks the Auckland Airport processed 115,637 passengers through the Express Lane and the Detector Dogs intercepted items from 43 passengers. This equates to a 99.96 percent compliance rate, this is in excess of the performance standard for the passenger pathway which is 98.5 percent.
13. The current express lane process is:
  - a) all arriving passengers self-select either the "Something to Declare" or the "Nothing to Declare" lane, which is in line with what will be required of passengers using the digital arrival card due in July next year;
  - b) all passengers present to risk assessment where a Quarantine Officer questions them on declarations made on their Passenger Arrival Card;
  - c) the Quarantine Officer at risk assessment determines whether to direct the passenger to the Express Lane, to the x-ray or to the search bench. This kind of risk assessment has consistently ensured high compliance rates for passengers across many years; and
  - d) the criteria a Quarantine Officer uses for their decision to send a passenger to the Express Lane include:
    - i. confirm passenger knows the contents of their bag;

- ii. confirm passenger has read and understood the declaration they have made on the Passenger Arrival Card;
- iii. confirm passenger has no risk goods to declare, including food items;
- iv. confirm passenger movements while offshore (for example, has not been on a farm, has not visited a high-risk country); and
- v. confirm passenger does not fit other current risk profiles including baggage type, and type of traveller (for example, business, family group).

*We are rebuilding detector dog numbers post-COVID-19 restrictions.*

14. When the borders closed due to COVID-19 a number of dogs were retired as they were towards the end of their working life and passenger numbers were too low to support the full contingent of dogs. This has led to a reduction in number of detector dog teams relative to pre COVID-19 levels.

	Pre covid number of Detector dog teams	2022 number of Detector dog teams
<b>Auckland</b>	33	23
<b>Wellington</b>	3	1
<b>Christchurch</b>	8	2
<b>Queenstown</b>	3	2

15. A detector dog is typically required to operate an Express Lane. However, dog numbers are not sufficient to achieve 100 percent coverage in the Express Lane for the summer of 2022/23. Although a detector dog may be rostered to cover a shift the amount of time they are available to spend in the Express Lane is further affected by the need for the dog to take regular breaks so that they perform at the optimal level and to meet animal welfare requirements.
16. Biosecurity New Zealand is working hard to ramp up dog numbers, but it will take time to reach required levels owing to dog shortages worldwide. MPI's dog breeding programme has an 80 percent success rate. Six puppies were born on 6 December. These puppies will be ready for training in 12 months' time.

*While our dog breeding program is ramping up, we propose to extend the use of the Express Lane to operate in some circumstances where there are no detector dogs present.*

17. To maintain an acceptable flow of passengers through MPI processing as we head into the busy summer season, we propose to expand the use of the express lane to those peak times where we do not have detector dogs available.
18. To ensure that we are not compromising on our ability to manage biosecurity risk, there would be three additional assurance layers used at times when a detector dog is not available:
- a) detector dogs will be scheduled to optimise their presence during times of peak passenger volumes and high-risk flights, ensuring periods without a detector dog will coincide with those lower biosecurity risk passengers/flights;

- b) only low-risk passengers will be allowed to use the express lane when a detector dog is not operating. This will be determined using intelligence from passenger seizures and Passenger Compliance Monitoring Results, with only passengers from demographics with a rate of 0.2 percent or less undeclared seizures meeting the criteria for express lane. This will be based on pre COVID-19 data as well as current trends. It is expected that this will apply to most passengers on short business trips from low-risk destinations such as Australia and the United Kingdom; and
- c) a Senior Quarantine Officer will be positioned on the express lane to conduct randomised secondary assessments and redirect passengers to x-ray or search if required. This is to provide a second level of assurance that only low-risk passengers are proceeding through the Express Lane and to ensure that lost or misdirected passengers cannot bypass biosecurity processing.
19. Each airport will have a detailed operating plan for implementing an Express Lane without a dog. A trial stage will be carried out at each airport after which time the processing data will be reviewed to ensure it is performing at a high standard. From here assuming the trial is successful a gradual roll out will be planned specific to each site. Underpinning this will be the assurance survey to monitor the compliance rate.

## Assurance

20. **Passenger Compliance Monitoring:** The processes and procedures implemented to manage biosecurity risk at our international airports are informed by intelligence and data collected from seizures and our Passenger Compliance Monitoring survey. Passenger Compliance Monitoring is a random survey of passengers carried out by specifically trained Quarantine Officers throughout the year. Passengers are selected at the end of the biosecurity process for a full intensive baggage inspection to identify any missed biosecurity risk items (slippage).
21. Seizures made as part of this survey can be traced back through the system to identify which exit route the traveller took (including dog presence or roving Quarantine Officer for Express Lane), enabling us to determine which demographics are low-risk and can be safely sent through an Express Lane.

## Implementation

22. We will continue to monitor the number of passengers being directed through the Express lanes, and the rate of non-compliance detected, and adjust the settings around the express lanes accordingly. We will provide weekly reporting to you on numbers and non-compliance rates through your weekly report.

**Minister / Minister's Office**

Seen / Referred

/ / 2022

Minister's comments

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**From:** [Louise Kay \(Louise\)](#)  
**To:** s9(2)(a)  
**Cc:** [Michael Inglis](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Minister O'Connor Officials meeting - actions arising 12 December 2022  
**Date:** Wednesday, 14 December 2022 3:50:40 PM

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Hi Matt

In relation to the topics highlighted below:

**OTP:** All International Airports are experiencing issues with poor airline on-time performance (OTP). As 47% of flights do not arrive on time, this significantly impacts queues and processing. In Auckland, interagency teams have been stood up to manage peaks through summer with daily reporting and updates in the Ministers Weekly Report. There is also an operational decision making structure set up and an Airport Operation Centre (IPOC). There are also actions from the cross-agency Working Group to improve OTP as well as better queue facilitation across peak times.

**MHB:** The volume of mishandled bags compared to pre-covid has significantly increased. For example, the industry standard for mishandled luggage is 6 to 8 per 1000 passengers – Ground Handlers at Auckland Airport are currently dealing with some carriers where it is upwards of 200 items per 1000 passengers. MPI is working with Auckland Airport to help process mishandled luggage. s9(2)(f)(iv)

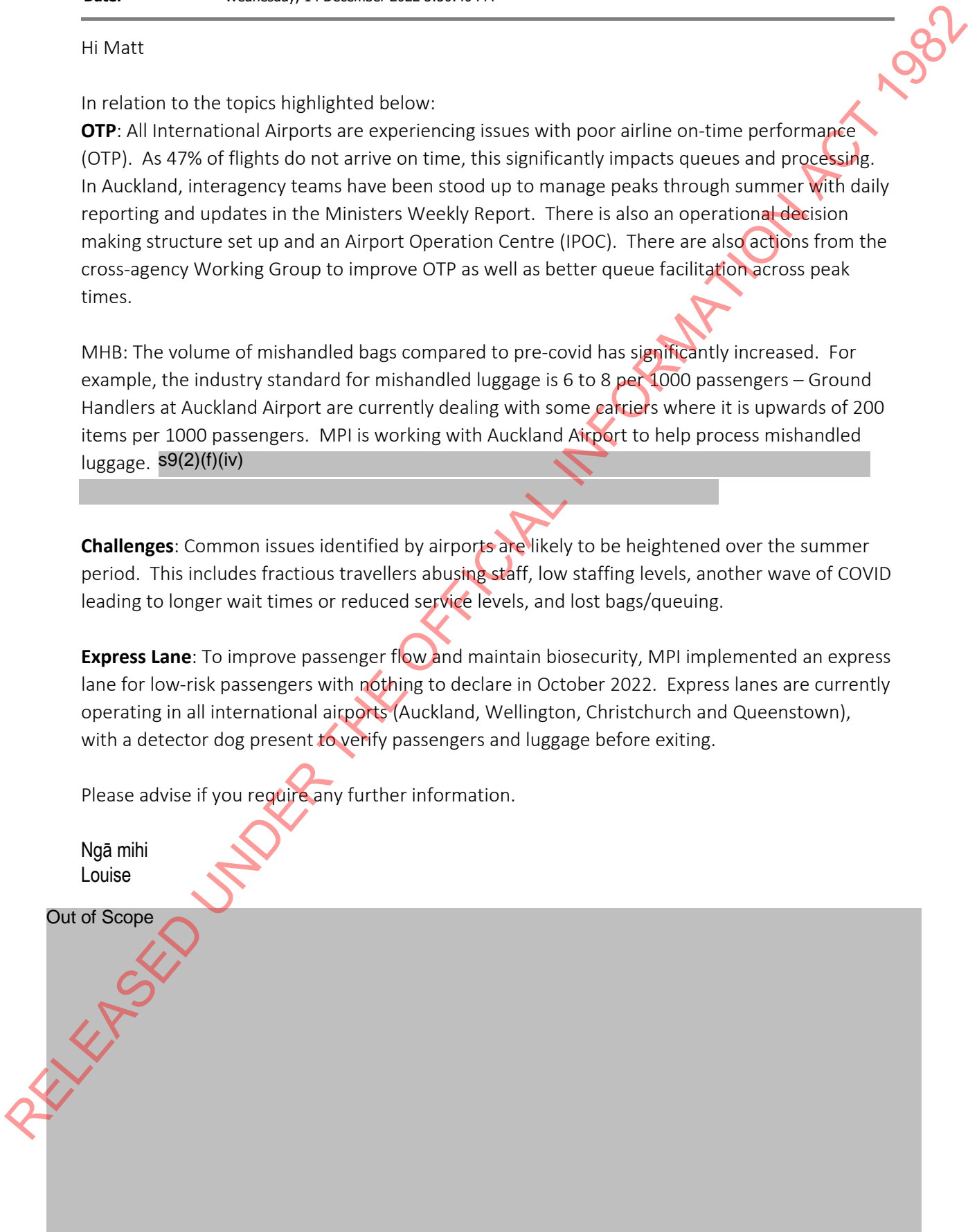
**Challenges:** Common issues identified by airports are likely to be heightened over the summer period. This includes fractious travellers abusing staff, low staffing levels, another wave of COVID leading to longer wait times or reduced service levels, and lost bags/queuing.

**Express Lane:** To improve passenger flow and maintain biosecurity, MPI implemented an express lane for low-risk passengers with nothing to declare in October 2022. Express lanes are currently operating in all international airports (Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Queenstown), with a detector dog present to verify passengers and luggage before exiting.

Please advise if you require any further information.

Ngā mihi  
Louise

Out of Scope





**To:** Hon Damien O'Connor, Minister for Biosecurity  
**From:** Stuart Anderson, Deputy Director-General Biosecurity

## Auckland International Airport Update

<b>Date</b>	22 December 2022	<b>Reference</b>	AM22-0787
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Contacts			
Name	Position	Contact number	First contact
Mike Inglis	Northern Regional Commissioner	s9(2)(a)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Tim Funaki	Assistant Regional Commissioner		<input type="checkbox"/>

### Purpose

1. This aide memoire updates you on the steps the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) has taken to address ongoing passenger experience issues, in particular at Auckland International Airport (AIAL), while maintaining our focus on biosecurity excellence.

### Background

2. Since the reopening of the border, passenger numbers have increased at a greater rate than predicted leading to significant passenger delays at airports. Three main concerns have been raised by Airports/Board of Airline Representatives of NZ (BARNZ) with Ministers regarding issues facing the aviation sector:
  - a) 2 December 2022: Carrie Hurihanganui (AIAL Chief Executive) sent a letter to the Minister of Transport, Minister of Immigration, Minister for Biosecurity, Minister of Tourism, and Associate Minister of Transport; and
  - b) 15 December 2022: New Zealand Airports and BARNZ sent a letter to the Minister for COVID-19 Response, Minister of Transport and Associate Minister of Transport.

## Summary of Concerns

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3. **Mishandled Baggage:** The volume of mishandled baggage (MHB) compared to pre-COVID-19 has significantly increased resulting in congestion in baggage halls. For example, the industry standard for mishandled luggage has gone from six to eight per 1000 passengers to upwards of 200 items per 1000 passengers for some carriers. For November 2022, there were ~1250 MHB bags per week compared to 150 to 200 pre-COVID-19. The reason for this increase is mainly due to a failure by airlines to carry bags alongside passengers; reasons for this include resourcing issues, commercial pressures, or fuel issues resulting in loadings on planes not being safe.
4. An estimated 50 percent of passengers are not completing a Property Irregularity Report (PIR) upon arrival. If this form is not presented by the passenger to MPI it means we are required to complete a full search on these bags, as no risk assessment is able to be completed to match the passenger to their bag (i.e. we are unable to question the passenger about their baggage in the normal manner). The process of clearing mishandled baggage, and the ability of a passenger to clear the airport quicker, is significantly enhanced if these forms are completed by passengers prior to arrival at the baggage carousel/BNZ desks.
5. **Staff Resourcing:** The AIAL claims there are an estimated 1600 vacant positions across the Auckland Airport precinct along with high levels of staff absence driven by increased illness, fatigue and mandatory stand-down periods. The AIAL CE mentioned that companies contracted by airlines to manage many aspects of aircraft ground processing, including the handling of baggage, are severely short staffed leading to delays in bags being offloaded. MPI does not have a staffing shortage.
6. **Airline On-Time Performance (OTP):** All our international Airports are experiencing issues with poor airline on-time performance. In Auckland an average of 43 percent of flights arrive on time, which causes ongoing operational issues.

## MPI: Present Position and Actions Being Taken

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7. **Mishandled Baggage:** Although it is the airlines' responsibility when they choose to communicate with their passengers, MPI is seeking assurance that airlines communicate to passengers if they are unable to load their baggage. If airlines notify passengers of their bags not being on the flight, it avoids them having to wait at the baggage carousel in vain and means the passenger will move through the baggage and biosecurity clearance areas much quicker. We have requested airlines to have representatives present 24/7 to notify passengers prior to the carousel and to assist the passenger complete a PIR before they get to us.

8. We have undertaken a number of steps to ensure that our part of the process for mishandled baggage can operate more efficiently:
- up to nine officers per day are now rostered to screen MHB; pre-COVID-19, this was one officer per day;
  - we have provided a dedicated officer to work full-time at the Baggage Tracing Unit (BTU) for the next month. They will have oversight to monitor progress, provide reporting, and determine the ongoing use of the PIR;
  - changed the process for 'urgent' bag searches where ground handlers now bring the bags to the MPI search area rather than an officer being sent to the BTU;
  - worked with AIAL to increase MPI bench/search space by reconfiguring the baggage storage room for a better search process;
  - continue to work with airlines on the PIR process;
  - provided AIAL information to set-up an offsite Transitional Facility option. This will be utilised for uncleared bags if required, which will relieve bottlenecks on the airport premises for these bags awaiting collection once they have been cleared; and
  - continue to look and adapt our clearance practices to support the process, whilst not reducing our biosecurity focus.
9. **Status of MHB at Other Airports:** All other regions have seen an increase in mishandled baggage. However, this is not causing as many problems operationally as in Auckland. Pre-COVID-19 most MHB could be processed at the end of the shift but due to higher numbers, this is no longer the case and airlines need to arrange a time to process these bags outside of normal passenger processing. s9(2)(f)(iv)
- In other regions, all passengers must complete the PIR form prior to MPI risk assessment - this minimises the number of bags that arrive that cannot be linked to a risk assessment.
10. **MPI Staffing:** We have no staffing shortage with now 124 Border Clearance Services (BCS) staff rostered to the Auckland Airport with 24/7 coverage (pre-COVID-19 we had 134). MPI has shown clear system leadership over last few months and has significantly increased our resources, including:
- redeploying staff from other worksites to the airport and rostering new officers to the airport, rather than other worksites;
  - approving additional overtime to cover the poor on-time performance (OTP) of flights – s9(2)(f)(iv)
  - resourcing/training nine OCS staff to support officers on the search bench; and
  - resourcing three additional leadership roles to provide support.
11. Across all Auckland worksites, BCS is running a low level of absence (~8 percent due to COVID-19, compared to other agencies reporting higher levels of absence of 15 to 20 percent). We reassess our resourcing levels daily to prioritise allocation of staff, manage any absences, and reaffirm safe working practices with regards to COVID-19.

12. **Other Airport Staffing:** Staffing levels at Queenstown and Wellington are back to pre-COVID-19 levels (with the exception of one less detector dog team in Wellington). Christchurch have recruited another five officers and Queenstown have just warranted another four officers. Like Auckland, there is the challenge of upskilling our newly warranted officers.
13. **On Time Performance:** The percentage of flights that arrive on time continues to remain low at around 43 percent, causing ongoing operational system issues. MPI has no control over flight arrival times and staff are rostered to cover scheduled flight arrival times. The daily inter-agency meetings are having a positive effect and have influenced better data sharing (and quality) to focus on actual arrivals (not planned and off-schedule), so resourcing can be more deliberately deployed. This now forms part of a leadership structure to ensure clear lines of accountability and decision making (Airport Operation Centre). AIAL have been requested to make decisions to stagger passengers off-boarding planes to limit the numbers of passengers within the baggage hall at any one time – we have not yet had a positive response to these requests.

### Other Actions

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14. **Express Lane:** The express lane was introduced in October 2022 for low-risk passengers with nothing to declare, initially in Auckland (and it has had a 99.96 percent compliance rate). Risk assessors base their decision to direct passengers down the express lane on biosecurity threat, passenger declaration and questioning. Express lanes are now operating in all international airports (Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Queenstown).
15. **Queue Management:** The average MPI processing performance for the previous week in Auckland has improved from 63 percent to 70 percent of passengers being processed in 16 minutes (target is 85 percent). This change correlates with recent initiatives such as the introduction of two additional risk assessment desks, additional queue facilitators, and an improved queue layout which includes contingency queueing for passengers with something to declare.

### Summary

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16. We will continue to reassess all of the above measures and staff deployment daily throughout the 2022/2033 summer period and adjust measures and settings accordingly.
17. We will provide you with a further update during the week of 9 January.

**Minister / Minister's Office**

Seen / Referred  
/ / 2022

<b>To:</b>	Hon Damien O'Connor, Minister of Agriculture
<b>Request:</b>	<b>Auckland Airport Situation</b>
<b>MPI Contact:</b>	Mike Inglis, North Regional Commissioner
<b>Date:</b>	17 January 2023

The increase in international passengers, and the significant number of unscheduled flight arrivals, has led to longer queue times and more mishandled baggage at the Auckland International Airport (AIAL). Although daily passenger arrivals have increased from an average of 10,000 per day in November to 13,000 per day now, the initiatives BNZ has put in place have helped keep queue times from increasing. We continue to monitor and modify our processes as needed, to ensure biosecurity excellence and to contribute to system-wide improvements and a successful summer period for passengers.

### **Mishandled Baggage (MHB)**

It is important to note that biosecurity screening of MHB is not the cause of any bottleneck as we can manage the numbers of MHB presented to us. The increasing volume of MHBs arriving at AIAL remains problematic from a system perspective and has been the subject of recent media and social media. This is mainly due to a failure by airlines to carry bags alongside passengers. The industry standard for MHB has gone from six to eight per 1000 passengers to upwards of 200 items per 1000 passengers for some carriers.

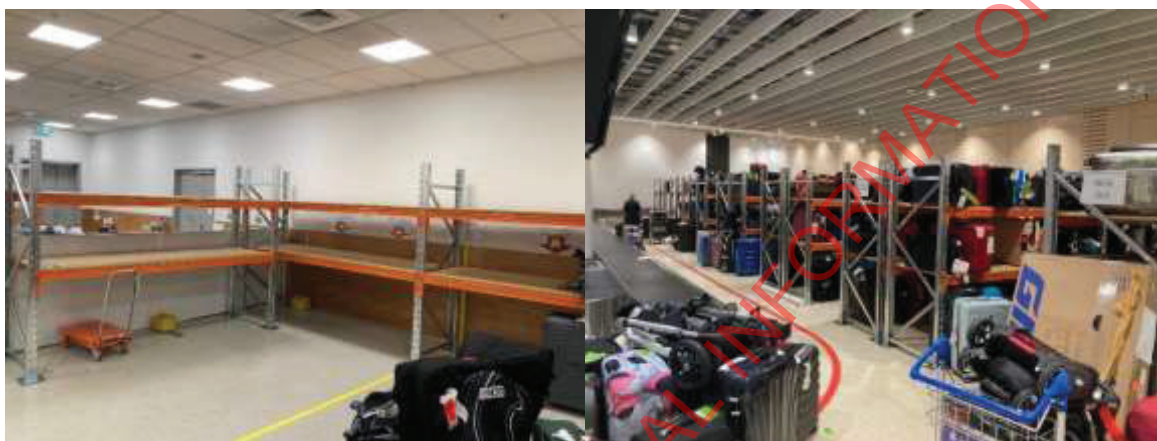
We are now x-raying an average of 250 MHB per day and doing a full inspection for 93 of these. Pre-Covid, we were x-raying around 100 MHB per day and doing a full inspection for 10 to 15 of these. We have requested airlines have representatives present 24/7 to notify passengers prior to the carousel, and to assist the passenger complete a Property Irregularity Report (PIR) before they get to us. Airlines are responsible to manage the MHB process and to reunite bags with passengers. Officers have reported additional airline reps on the floor at the Baggage Tracing Unit (BTU) working through bags (i.e. ground staff from Singapore Airlines, Qantas, Fiji Airways and Latam have increased visibility to maintain focus on the problem). We have been notified that additional ground handling resources (i.e. Menzies, Swissport) are coming from Australia to provide additional support and expertise around the MHB process.

We have undertaken a number of steps to ensure that our part of the process for MHB can operate as efficiently as possible:

- Up to nine officers per day are now rostered to help clear MHB. Pre-Covid, this was one officer per day. The x-ray machine in the BTU is available at all times. Every baggage item is screened by an officer to ensure that biosecurity risk is managed.
- s9(2)(b)(ii)
- We have provided a dedicated officer to work full-time at the BTU for the next month to be the sole contact point and to ensure consistent messaging. They will have oversight to monitor progress, provide reporting, and determine the ongoing use of the PIR.
- Changed the process for 'urgent' bag searches where ground handlers now bring the bags to the MPI search area rather than an officer being sent to the BTU.

- We have worked with AIAL to increase MPI bench/search space by reconfiguring the baggage storage room for a better search process and storage (see image 1 below).
- We have provided AIAL information to set-up an offsite Transitional Facility option. This could be an option to store uncleared bags if required, which will relieve bottlenecks on the airport premises.

Some MHB may require inspection following x-ray and these are held when the baggage handler is unable to get the key/code to open the bags or permission from the passenger to cut the locks. Biosecurity New Zealand is not responsible for matching the bag with the owner. It is the responsibility of the baggage handler staff at baggage tracing to provide the paperwork and have the bags unlocked, ready for inspection.



1. Reconfigured baggage storage room

2. AIAL temporary racking

AIAL installed temporary racking in the arrivals hall on 23 December to help store mishandled bags s9(2)(b)(ii) to assist baggage handlers (see image 2 above).

A meeting between BNZ and BARNZ Senior Leaders on Monday 9 January discussed process improvements to dispose of abandoned MHB (i.e. over 90 days) and that BNZ will only clear MHB matched to a passenger. Mike Inglis is also meeting Jetstar/Qantas Senior Leadership on 17 January to influence greater ownership and responsibility.

A governance group has been set up to meet weekly led by BARNZ to ensure continued management oversight of the MHB issue. This group will also look to ensure performance statistics are available for the whole system.

### Property Irregularity Report (PIR)

If a passenger does not complete a PIR upon arrival, this means we are required to complete a full search on the MHB as no risk assessment can be done to match the passenger to their bag (i.e. we are unable to question the passenger about their baggage in the normal manner). An estimated 30 percent of passengers with MHB are not completing a PIR because some baggage handler counters in the arrival hall are not staffed at all times.

The airline at the departing airport should notify their baggage handler representative in Auckland on any MHB, and they need to prepare 3 copies of the PIR (one for the passenger, Biosecurity New Zealand and the baggage handler). On arrival, the passenger goes to the baggage handler counter in the arrival hall and is given all three copies of the PIR. The passenger then goes to Biosecurity New Zealand's risk assessment desk and the officer will make notes on the PIR if any declared risk goods that are in the MHB.

We continue to work with airlines on the PIR process. For example, if ground handlers were to match bags prior to bringing them in for x-ray, this would ensure the bag is cleared as they are presented and not double screened (as they are now). We have also suggested to use plastic courier sleeves to secure PIR's to the bag as some are currently being lost as are not properly secured to the bag.

s9(2)(f)(iv)

### **On Time Performance (OTP)**

The percentage of flights that arrive on time continues to remain low and that results in ongoing operational system issues. Biosecurity New Zealand and NZ Customs staff are rostered to cover scheduled flight arrival times. The daily inter-agency meetings are having a positive effect and have influenced better data sharing (and quality) to focus on actual arrivals (not planned and off-schedule), so resourcing can be more deliberately deployed. This now forms part of a leadership structure to ensure clear lines of accountability and decision making (Airport Operation Centre).

### **BNZ Resourcing**

We do not have a staff shortage at AIAL. There are 124 staff rostered for the AIAL to cover 24/7 (before annual/sick leave). Pre-Covid, we had 134 staff. We also recruited 64 new quarantine officers in 2022. To manage operational issues and to help passenger facilitation while not compromising biosecurity, Biosecurity New Zealand has implemented the following over the past two months:

- Redeployed staff from other worksites such as the International Mail Centre and eight staff doing transitional facility audits to the AIAL.
- Agreed with unions to amend roster start times to resource actual flight arrivals, mainly post-midnight.
- s9(2)(f)(iv)
- All of our recent quarantine officers recruited into Cohort 2, and eight from Cohort 3, have been initially deployed to the AIAL rather than to other worksites as normal.
- Resourced and trained nine OCS staff to support our officers on the search bench.
- Resourced three additional leadership roles to provide support.
- Introduced additional risk assessment podiums – there are now 11 (up from nine).
- Reviewed processes to amend resource requirements.
- Reviewed the queue layout, including contingency queueing for passengers with something to declare.
- Introduced a biosecurity express lane at certain peak times.

### **Biosecurity New Zealand Performance**

The average Biosecurity New Zealand performance over the last seven days has averaged 69 percent of passengers being processed in 16 minutes (target is 85 percent). This is an improvement from 63 percent for the same period last month whilst we have been processing significantly more passengers. Recent initiatives such as the reviewed layout of our processing area, the introduction of additional risk assessment podiums, and the reviewed layout of queues, which includes contingency queueing for passengers with something to declare, has helped to improve processing times.





Biosecurity Respect Visuals



BNZ Staff clearing MHB

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