



# Delivering a Smarter Border

National will deliver a smarter border that allows New Zealand to safely reconnect to the world.

Covid-19 is going to be with us for a long time and we can't afford to isolate ourselves forever. The latest dire projections from Treasury show decades of deficits and sky-rocketing debt.

National has a plan to defeat the deficit, restore the economy and secure New Zealand's borders from Covid-19.

Changes to the way our border arrangements operate due to Covid-19 are as fundamental as the changes in the wake of the 9/11 terror attacks in New York.

We need a dedicated border agency to provide strong security and policy advice to the Government on how we secure the border and safely reconnect to the world.

The first phase of our smarter border plan is to establish Te Korowai Whakamaru/NZ Border Protection Agency, to provide long-term security for New Zealand families, their health and the wider economy. The agency will be established within National's first 100 days of Government.

The second phase of National's smarter border plan will enable New Zealand to safely reconnect to the world.

## National's plan will:

- Implement a booking system to manage more arrivals into New Zealand safely
- Allow accommodation providers to gain approval to act as managed isolation facilities to scale up capacity
- Immediately invest in and deploy Bluetooth contact-tracing, and invest in new testing technologies
- Investigate streamlined travel arrangements for low-risk countries and territories

## 1. National will expand our managed isolation capacity

Managed isolation is currently coordinated by multiple agencies under a senior military officer who reports to the Minister of Housing. We need to move away from this ad hoc approach and develop a more robust, flexible and long-term solution to allow people to safely enter New Zealand.

National will instruct Te Korowai Whakamaru/NZ Border Protection Agency to establish a set of clear, robust criteria for accommodation providers to become part of the Government-controlled managed isolation network.

All managed isolation facilities must meet or exceed required levels of safety, security, reporting, training and testing. The Agency will maintain full oversight of these facilities.

Any new managed isolation facility would need to meet the costs of Government safety and security requirements, safe and secure transport of visitors, and other costs as required. They will be able to set their own charges for their facilities.

As Te Korowai Whakamaru/NZ Border Protection Agency develops, security capacity with trained staff, similar to aviation officers, customs officers, MPI, fisheries officers and other specialist services, military and police personnel will be drawn down.

This approach will deliver a more flexible network of managed isolation facilities that allow us to safely reconnect with the world and bring non-residents into New Zealand to drive economic growth.

Examples like Regional Seasonal Employer schemes fill critical gaps in the labour market and save primary industries from a loss of production without endangering New Zealand jobs.



The scheme establishes a blueprint for a long-term and certain arrangement at the border where costs can be more evenly shared between those wishing to enter the country and industries who need overseas workers. This, alongside National's co-payment policy, helps relieve the burden put on taxpayers of the estimated half a billion spent to date on managed isolation and quarantine.

## **2. Allow accommodation providers to gain approval to act as managed isolation facilities to scale up capacity**

This system will prioritise the management and safe return of New Zealanders into the country. The system will also enable essential workers, skilled workers, students and, eventually, long-stay tourists to book a place in a managed isolation facility.

New Zealand currently has space for 7300 people in managed isolation at any one time, and up to a third of this capacity is not being used. It makes sense to use these places to enable more non-residents to safely enter New Zealand.

Priority will always be given to returning Kiwis, followed by essential workers, skilled workers, students and eventually, long-term tourists.

Safely bringing non-residents back into New Zealand will give our economy the boost it desperately needs in terms of both skills and capital, while supporting thousands of jobs.

The booking system will be operated by Te Korowai Whakamaru/NZ Border Protection Agency, and will allow non-residents to confirm a booking in managed isolation 30 days prior to their arrival. Returning Kiwis will be able to confirm their booking up to a year prior to arrival.

National will also provide a process for partners of New Zealanders to apply for entry into New Zealand.

## **3. National will immediately invest in and deploy Bluetooth contact tracing technology and invest in new testing technologies**

National will invest in Bluetooth technologies, recognising that privacy of individuals must be respected. We will also continue trials of other technologies such as a Covid-Card, This will enhance managed isolation protocols.

New Zealand has been slow to adopt Bluetooth contact tracing technology. It is important that we keep up with the rapid advances in technology that are assisting global efforts to combat this virus and helping countries standardise contact tracing systems.

Similarly, we must be ready to invest in and deploy new testing advancements like the Covid-19 rapid tests being explored and deployed in the United Kingdom.

This will allow us to reduce the risk of uncontrolled community transmission and avoid the need for more costly lockdowns.

Many New Zealanders currently have access to the Ministry of Health's NZ COVID Tracer app that provides for QR code scanning. But new technologies, like the Exposure Notification System jointly developed by Apple and Google, and the BlueTrace system underpinning tracer apps in Singapore and Australia, are being rapidly deployed around the world. New Zealand must keep up with these innovations to ensure our contact tracing capability is best-in-class.

New Zealand must keep up to date with the latest technologies to beat Covid-19. We should be quick to adopt, trial and deploy technologies where they are available and supported by public health advice.

Over time, options to replace QR code scans with Bluetooth technology that passively records entry and exit into premises and contacts, provides a more long-term solution for New Zealand.



#### 4. National will investigate streamlined travel arrangements for low-risk countries and territories

National would look at flexible arrangements for countries and territories that are Covid-free.

Currently all entrants into New Zealand are required to undergo 14 days in managed isolation.

Under National's border plan, travellers would require:

- A test pre-departure
- Compulsory tests on day 3 of managed isolation as well as day 12
- Thermal imaging at points of entry
- Completion of a health declaration card on arrival
- The ability to be adequately contact traced, including the option to require compulsory use of contact tracing technology

Many countries in the Pacific, for example, do not have Covid-19. There is very little risk in exploring options such as shorter managed isolation periods for returning New Zealanders or other arrivals from these countries alongside requirements such as :

- Pre-departure testing
- Original point of departure information
- Health declarations
- Thermal imaging
- Day three testing
- Adequate contact tracing

Flexible arrangements have already been offered in the negotiations for New Zealand - Australia rugby test matches. Exploring options, alongside public health advice, for Pacific countries that have had no Covid-19 should be explored.

## Other elements of National's strong border plan

### Border management

Ensuring a strong border will help keep New Zealanders safe. National will strengthen management of the border.

National will:

- Require people travelling to New Zealand to provide evidence of a negative COVID-19 test before arriving into New Zealand. This follows similar policies being put in place across Europe, parts of South East Asia, and States within the United States of America
- Implement thermal imaging at points of entry
- Require arrivals to complete a health declaration card.
- Require another test within three days of arrival as well as a test on day 12.
- Ensure new arrivals can be adequately contact traced by requiring compulsory use of contact tracing technology
- Deploy compulsory contact tracing technology for Agency workers, workers in border facilities and points of entry, and District Health Board staff treating or testing patients

### Strengthening the Public Health Response

National recognises we must also prepare a second line of defence, behind our border so that in the event of any limited outbreak cases can be identified, traced and isolated quickly.

National will:

- Ensure the response to Covid-19 and other pandemic threats is coordinated nationally to provide for a more comprehensive contact tracing system
- Scale up the contact tracing capability by increasing the numbers of people working on contact tracing to ensure contacts can be identified, traced and isolated quickly



- Immediately invest and seek to rapidly deploy a Bluetooth application to enhance contact tracing capability
- Explore alternative contact tracing technologies to add more tools to the contact tracing system (eg: Covid Card)
- Immediately provide additional resource to bolster the campaign to increase the use and take-up of the Covid-19 App and continue to update its functionality
- Ensure the Government is working with private providers to ensure best practice in the way we are deploying contact tracing technology
- Undertake risk-based assessments for requiring the use of certain contact tracing technologies. For example, requiring border-facing workers to use Bluetooth contact tracing for people arriving from certain high-risk countries in the future
- Ensure regular wastewater testing for Covid-19 to monitor potential early outbreaks in the community. This would build on the testing already undertaken by the Institute of Environmental Science and Research in April and operating in other countries such as the Netherlands
- Ensure people in managed isolation and quarantine have a compulsory day three and day 12 Covid-19 test

### At-risk care contingency planning

Certain populations are more at risk of a Covid-19 outbreak than others and it is important a clear plan is developed to continue to keep these New Zealanders safe. Most obviously, those who live in retirement homes across the country require a plan in place so they are prioritised, even under Alert Level 1.

#### National would:

- Require regular testing of aged-care workers
- Have regular opportunities for testing within retirement homes
- Ensure adequate supplies of personal protective equipment and appropriate hygiene protocols are in place
- Coordinate with food providers and delivery agencies for an aged-care response plan to cater to those who cannot simply rely on volunteers to deliver necessities to them in the event of an alert level increase

### Surveillance and Monitoring

Continued monitoring and surveillance will be required to make sure the policies at the border are successful. A strong testing regime will provide confidence in the efforts at the border.

#### National will:

- Widen the availability of testing throughout the country, making sure there are readily deployable mobile testing stations in each main population centre as well as any population centre where there is a quarantine facility
- Implement a target for test waiting times of no longer than 60 minutes for a test
- Strive towards a 'test on demand' system where people seeking a test can and do receive one. A number of reports of individuals being told they do not require a test or waiting for more than five hours for a test is not optimal. National would scale up availability and processing so we have as widespread of a testing system as possible