



## Proactive Release

The following document has been proactively released by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC), on behalf of the Minister for COVID-19 Response, Hon Dr Ayesha Verrall:

### **COVID-19 Briefings - August 2022**

The following documents have been included in this release:

**Title of paper:** 01082022 Assurance of System readiness Work Underway to Respond to a Variant of Concern

**Title of paper:** 03082022 Insights from Recommendations across COVID-19 Response System Reviews

**Title of paper:** 05082022 Review of New Zealand's COVID-19 Protection Framework and self-isolation settings - 5 August

**Title of paper:** 05082022 Public awareness campaign to support people who are unable to wear masks

**Title of paper:** 08082022 Meeting with Strategic COVID-19 Public Health Advisory Group 10 August 2022

**Title of paper:** 12082022 Preparation for Release of Haumaruru Briefing

**Title of paper:** 25082022 Meeting with Prof. Michael Plank

**Title of paper:** 26082022 All of Government COVID-19 System Readiness Exercise

**Title of paper:** 30082022 COVID-19 Community Panel, Chair's Report

Some parts of this information release would not be appropriate to release and, if requested, would be withheld under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Where this is the case, the relevant section of the Act that would apply has been identified. Where information has been withheld, no public interest has been identified that would outweigh the reasons for withholding it.

### **Key to redaction codes:**

- Section 9(2)(a), to protect the privacy of individuals;
- Section 9(2)(f)(iv), to maintain the confidentiality of advice tendered by or to Ministers and officials;
- Section 9(2)(g)(i), to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinion; and
- Section 9(2)(h), to maintain legal professional privilege.



# Aide-Memoire

## PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN to SUPPORT PEOPLE WHO ARE UNABLE TO WEAR MASKS (CAMPAIGN NAME: KIA ATAWHAI TĀTOU KI A TĀTOU)

|             |   |             |           |
|-------------|---|-------------|-----------|
| <b>To</b>   | Hon Dr Ayesha Verrall<br>Minister for COVID-19 Response   |             |           |
| <b>From</b> | Fiona Weightman<br>Head of Communications and Public Engagement, COVID-19 Group<br>Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet | <b>Date</b> | 5/08/2022 |

### Purpose

1. This aide memoire provides an update on the 'Kia atawhai tātou ki a tātou' campaign. This Unite Against COVID-19 (UAC) campaign has been developed and aims to build the public's awareness and understanding of those unable to wear face masks. This campaign can be rolled out from 15 August.
2. You are meeting with Hon Poto Williams, Minister for Disability Issues, on this campaign at 5.00pm, Tuesday 9 August.

### Background

3. The COVID-19 Public Health Response (Protection Framework) Order 2021 exempts people from face mask requirements if they have a physical or mental illness or condition or disability that makes wearing a face mask unsuitable.
4. An updated approach to mask exemptions was developed early in 2022 (see Ministry of Health's report number 20220204 for the initial paper, signed by the Minister on 12 March). Five options were presented to Minister Hipkins and the Minister signed off on a combination of three of the five options:
  - Providing legal protection for people who are exempt to better ensure they can access essential businesses and services.
  - Taking an educative approach with businesses and the public to clarify what obligations are for businesses and who is exempt from wearing a face mask.
  - Requiring those eligible for an exemption to self-declare their status to be issued with a personalised exemption card.
5. The Ministry of Health led on options 1 and 3, as well as the communications on how to acquire a mask exemption pass, and on the launch of the new process.
6. A new exemption pass system was subsequently established by the Ministry of Health in May 2022, which requires a self-declaration by individuals with legitimate exemptions and provides them with

recourse should they be turned away from services because they are not wearing a face mask. As of 1 August, 33,486 individuals had had exemption passes issued to them.

## Engagement to develop the Campaign

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7. Officials determined that DPMC would deliver option 2. It was agreed that this would take the form of a public awareness campaign delivered through Unite Against COVID-19 channels, in keeping with all nationally significant All-of-Government COVID-19 campaigns.
8. The Ministry of Health led engagement with the transport and retail sectors alongside the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment and the Ministry of Transport to ensure that these stakeholders were aware of their obligations under the system.
9. DPMC held an initial meeting with stakeholders from affected communities in May 2022 to propose a range of concepts. These stakeholders had been engaged with on the mask exemption policy by the Ministry of Health so were re-engaged with for consistency. They included: Alzheimer's New Zealand, Association of Blind Citizens New Zealand, Balance New Zealand, Deaf Aotearoa, Dementia New Zealand, Disabled Persons Assembly New Zealand, Mental Health Foundation, New Zealand Dementia Foundation, New Zealand Disability Support Network, People First New Zealand, Victim Support New Zealand.
10. The Ministry of Health Policy team, who were responsible for developing the new Mask Exemptions Pass policy, and Ministry of Health communications team were also consulted on the campaign and their feedback incorporated. This campaign was produced before the introduction of Whaikaha – Ministry of Disabled People, but they have subsequently been consulted for their awareness and feedback.
11. It was agreed across stakeholders that an animation was the best creative approach to avoid stigma or abuse on what can be a contentious public issue. The production agency's script and storyboard were shared with stakeholders for their contribution before production.
12. Accordingly, UAC has produced an animation, poster, and pamphlet titled 'Kia atawhai tātou ki a tātou', which translates to 'Let us be kind to each other'. This content does not promote or mention the pass itself, aiming instead to foster social acceptance. It does point to where more information can be found. This was an intentional decision as we do not want to risk mask exemptions being abused by those who do not have a legitimate reason not to wear a face mask.
  - Delivery of this campaign will be timed and delivered through specific channels, due to the complexities of messages. It presents themes that may be seen as contradicting one of the UAC's primary messages: 'Wear a mask to limit the spread of the virus'. Also there has been recent publicity from some hospitals that, due to the risk of COVID-19 spreading within hospitals, they would not allow access into hospitals by people not wearing masks – even if they had a legitimate exemption pass.
  - To address these issues messaging in both campaigns encourages those who can wear a mask to do so, however, 'Kia atawhai tātou ki a tātou' also asks for understanding for those people who are unable to. To mitigate any issues that might arise due to the perception of mixed messaging, we have a range of campaign approaches that include social media posts, paid campaigns on Unite Against COVID-19 and external channels, as well as distribution of print collateral.
13. With the ongoing use of face coverings as a public health protection measure against COVID-19, there remains a challenge for those unable to wear masks. Recent feedback from stakeholders, as well as the Ministry of Social Development, show that issues and abuse towards those unable to wear masks are regular occurrences, if not increasing.

14. Stakeholders are very supportive of this campaign to help vulnerable people with legitimate reasons for being unable to wear a mask, and for the campaign to be launched as soon as possible to help alleviate stressful situations. One contributing stakeholder has already followed up asking when this campaign will be made public.

## Further context

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15. Campaign key messages

- Wearing a face mask reduces the spread of COVID-19.
- For people with certain impairments, health conditions, a physical disability, mental health condition, or who have experienced trauma, wearing a mask may not be feasible or possible.
- By understanding that not all people can wear masks due to genuine reasons, issues and stress should be alleviated.

16. Audience

- All people of New Zealand. By raising awareness across the motu, it is hoped that with a greater understanding of those unable to wear masks, this will reduce adverse encounters.
- The animation recently underwent audience testing by TRA New Zealand (The Research Agency). It was well received for being clear and showing empathy.

17. Release date

- The intention is to launch the 'Kia atawhai tātou ki a tātou' campaign, starting with a social post in the week commencing 15 August 2022.

## Materials

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- The campaign videos can be found below:
  - [Hero \(43 sec\)](#)
  - [Cutdown](#)
- The accompanying collateral (posters and pamphlet) can be found attached to this aide memoire.

## Recommendations

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20. It is recommended that you:

- a) Note the contents of this aide-memoire.
- b) Discuss this aide-memoire with Hon Poto Williams, Minister for Disability Issues.

Fiona Weightman  
Head of Communications and Public Engagement,  
COVID-19 Group  
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

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Hon Dr Ayesha Verrall  
Minister for COVID-19 Response

Date: / /

Proactively Released





# Masks reduce the spread of COVID-19

But not everyone can wear them due to health and other reasons.

**Kia atawhai tātou ki a tātou** | Be considerate and kind



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# Some people experience conditions that make wearing a mask really uncomfortable or not possible.

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These can include:

- Anxiety
- Disabilities
- Respiratory conditions
- Skin rashes and reactions
- Trauma and others

Everyone's health and circumstances are different.

Support everyone doing their bit to manage Covid-19.

**Be mindful of masks.**



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