

New Zealand COVID-19 Timeline

Methodology

As at 5 July 2021

Purpose

The purpose of the McGuinness Institute's COVID-19 timeline is to build a comprehensive picture of New Zealand's response to COVID-19. The timeline aims to provide an historical record for examining success, identifying failures, and where appropriate, recommending improvements to New Zealand's existing pandemic plan.

Timeline entries

When looking for information and events to include on the COVID-19 timeline, the McGuinness Institute consulted multiple different sources, including official statements from Ministers and the Prime Minister, information published on Ministry websites, reviews of the government response undertaken by independent bodies and articles from news outlets.

The entries are condensed summaries of events that include the most pertinent information, while providing links to external articles, reports and sources so that the reader can find more detailed sources. The aim is to ensure the timeline is factually correct and sources are always publicly available. This means that in addition to providing the web address, the Institute also scanned the references so that a pdf was also available (even when external links no longer work).

- Entries are generally written in the present tense.
- Entries contain important dates, financial figures, official names and titles of figures and organisations. In a few cases, entries contain additional information from a future date, in order to avoid repetition and provide context.
- Entries tend to ignore specific global events, as the Institute considers there will be a range of comprehensive and accurate timelines for that purpose, available to the public, in the international arena.

As at June 2021 there are over 130 entries.

Themes

The Institute identified a set of common themes that entries cover. The entries in the timeline can be ordered by theme (as well as by date and title).

We have grouped timeline entries under 13 major themes:

1. Aged residential care
2. Alert level
3. Border control
4. Community outbreak
5. Financial support
6. Governance
7. National reserve supply

8. Pacific bubble
9. Personal protective equipment (PPE)
10. Testing
11. Track and tracing
12. Trans-Tasman bubble
13. Vaccination

Allocating themes to entries

While many events clearly belonged to one major theme, others featured elements of multiple themes. Further, key decisions and actions from the government – such as the implementation of the alert level system, restrictions at the border for non-New Zealanders, and the creation of MIQ facilities – lead to secondary themes, such as regional alert level changes, intensifying border control protocols, and MIQ-related outbreaks. This means judgement was necessary in terms of allocating a theme to a particular entry.

In order to categorise the events clearly, the Institute decided to assign only one theme to an event.

The Institute assigned a theme to an entry by attempting to identify the major theme. In practice this meant assessing the entries for evidence of the most relevant, overarching theme. For example, events such as the introduction of mandatory day 0/1 testing and pre-departure testing from travellers from overseas fall under both the categories of border control and testing. However, as mandatory testing was introduced as a method to keep the border membrane intact and was only required for those who were travelling into the country from outside New Zealand, the Institute decided to categorise this event as 'border control'. Because New Zealand's strategy focused on keeping the border membrane intact, many entries, particularly initially, were categorised as 'border control'.

We hope the timeline provides a useful resource for current and future researchers of pandemics, both in New Zealand and globally.