

Mike Hosking: Damning report on Covid-19 response tells us what we already know

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Sir Brian Roche during the Reconnecting New Zealanders to the World forum in Wellington. Photo / Mark Mitchell

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OPINION:

Does Sir Brian Roche end his reports with: "Guys I thought we talked about this?"

"Hey does anyone read these things?"

"Hello? Am I wasting my time?"

Yet another report telling the Government how useless it is, this one was over the lack of preparedness for Delta.

Summation ... they weren't prepared.

I'm not sure why Sir Brian does these reports other than he's been asked to, and I assume he sends an invoice.

The trouble is they state the obvious. That's not a criticism of Sir Brian, you can only report what is there to be seen. The point is, what is there to be seen is so damn obvious.

Which is the heartbreaking thing, because it's so obvious it beggars belief the Government doesn't see it for itself and does something about it.

The entire lockdown we have experienced for the past 107 days has been predicated on a couple of really simple, clear things.

One, we didn't have the vaccine in time for Delta.

Two, we hadn't done anything about the hospital bed situation - hence we remained paranoid that if a variant got loose in any way we would be overwhelmed.

One could've helped solve two, and of course if we had acted on one and two, we wouldn't be here on day 107.

But that's the point, we all know that, we don't need Sir Brian writing it down.

The other part that's fascinating is what does the Government do with these reports?

Are they embarrassed? Do they even care?

I note Grant Robertson firmly behind the pulpit of truth last Friday said Sir Brian was entitled to his view.

Well of course he is, that's what we are paying him for isn't it?



✿ A Flourish data visualization

What I would have liked to have heard from Robertson is a recognition that not only is he entitled to his view, his view is shared by the majority of observant New Zealanders and the Government has become humbled and somewhat humiliated by the fact that there is an ongoing theme to Sir Brian's reports and that's that by and large each and every one of them contains the simple truth that the Covid response is lacking.

This latest report by the way, yet again talks about the value and urgency of rapid antigen testing.

The reports started talking about that urgency last September, as in 2020, but as we all know, nothing was done.

What we also now know, with the benefit of several Roche reports and a series of Official Information Act requests, is that this government has been woeful in its handling of this pandemic from day one.

From the many faults Sir Brian has pointed out, to the letters from Pfizer which then Health Minister David Clark may or may not have read, thus putting our vaccine rollout hopelessly, dangerously behind so many other countries, to the Auditor General's report on the saliva testing tender process where conflict of interest and arrogance ruled the day, to the Māori health organisations who had to go to court to get details of the non-vaccinated they should've had all along, only to one, win, but then two, get stalled by yet more arrogance at the Ministry of Health who refused to comply.

Let's not even start on MIQ last week and the completely nonsensical rubbish that passed for a plan: home isolation for double-vaxxed negative-tested New Zealanders, while unvaccinated Kiwis wander around shopping malls?

Airlines that won't return because they have no idea what happens in April and, as of tomorrow, a light system that literally doesn't make sense.

Read it ... Auckland goes to red, red is when the hospital system is strained, and yet the hospital system isn't strained, so why are we in red?

It's also red to protect vulnerable populations including Māori. When do those populations stop being vulnerable?

I've asked three ministers that question so far and not one had an answer.

So they have no answers to simple questions, plans that don't make sense, and reports that say they're failing.

All I want for Christmas is a government that's up to the job ... fat chance.