

(Wade, 2021)

CORONAVIRUS

COVID-19: Sir Brian Roche's searing review of Government's handling of Delta outbreak

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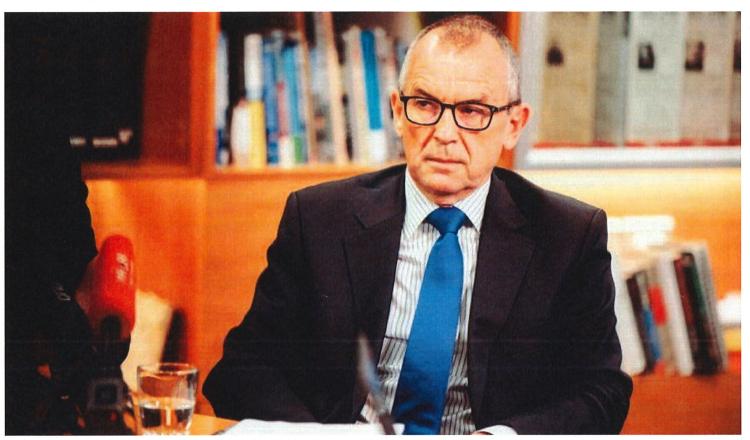


Photo credit: File

Sir Brian Roche warned lockdown tolerance was waning, the vaccine rollout was failing Māori and MIQ was causing social and economic harm, a document dump released on Friday shows.

The esteemed advisor also told the Government the "current outbreak has revealed the very poor level of preparedness of hospitals for Delta".

Sir Brian reviewed the Delta outbreak and its impact on reopening the borders. He sent his advice to ministers on September 23 - two days after Auckland moved to alert level 3.

Tolerance and goodwill for lockdowns and closed borders were being challenged, Sir Brian warned.

"The current Delta outbreak has, to a significant extent, exposed urgent issues with respect to New Zealand's preparedness for reconnecting.

"Delta has fundamentally changed the model of preparedness and response and we must adapt accordingly. We do not have a do-nothing option."

High vaccination rates were a "critical first line of defence" and at least 90 per cent of New Zealanders needed to be vaccinated - but the vaccination rollout was "failing certain populations, most notably Māori", Sir Brian said.

"Addressing such disparities is an urgent priority."

A month later the Government announced a \$120 million fund for Māori health providers.

The health system's ability to deal with Delta "was left wanting".

"The current Delta outbreak has exposed the shortfall in proper engager response while it has also exposed the huge potential of proper engager			eak and overall
"Optimising engagement is an urgent priority."			
Sir Brian also wanted the Government to begin opening the international before doing so there needed to be a means for vaccination verification, and rapid antigen resting rolled out widely "as quickly as possible".			
"Rapid antigen testing is a critical prerequisite - we cannot afford the dela	ays in its introduction that	have been experienc	ed with saliva testing.'
The Government only rolled out vaccine passes on November 17 and an week - two months after getting that advice.	nounced changes to MIQ	alternatives and rapi	d antigen testing this
To address the issues Sir Brian wanted a fit-for-purpose COVID agency of when the country reopens.	or response unit because	the current model "is	failing and will fail"
"We recommend that this unit is put in place before the end of the vaccin unnecessary risk."	ation rollout as the curren	t arrangements put th	e country at
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