



Securing Our Border – Q&A

Why is National implementing a new Crown Agency?

Te Korowai Whakamaru/NZ Border Protection Agency is required to provide a professional and coordinated approach to securing the border from COVID-19 and other pandemic threats in the future.

The current arrangements are ad-hoc and have been assembled in haste. Various agencies are in charge of different facets of securing our border, which has led to a disorderly and confused response, miscommunication and insufficient testing.

National's agency will have overall control of the response when dealing with an outbreak, including the ability to order compliance with agency policies and oversee the response from other agencies such as the Ministry of Health, District Health Boards and other agencies operating at points of entry.

Will the Border Protection Agency take the place of current agencies?

The Agency will be in addition to current ministries and departments but will have a specific mandate to take control of the response to protecting New Zealand from pandemic threats such as COVID-19.

This enhances the 'all-of-government-approach' that is not working under the current Government by providing a clear authority.

The operation more closely reflects the way Civil Defence operates in the event of a national emergency.

Agencies such as the Ministry of Health will continue to manage the health response to COVID-19, but the Border Response Agency will have oversight of the policy and procedures.

Is National changing the approach to contact tracing?

National's policies enhance the contact tracing system to ensure that New Zealanders can have confidence in the Government's ability to trace close contacts and isolated cases when and if needed.

We know that a high quality contact tracing can be effective against suppressing COVID-19.

National's policies would expand capacity and add to the tools available to Government to conduct contact tracing.

Investing in and deploying additional tools, such as Bluetooth technologies, provides additional ways to trace contacts and lower the risks of wide ranging and prolonged lockdowns.

National will also require workers at the border and those who work with active or potential cases to carry and use contact tracing technologies. Those who arrive in managed isolation and quarantine will also be required to carry and use such technologies.

How will National deliver new contact tracing technologies?

Currently contact tracing is primarily achieved through talking to close contacts of suspected cases. New Zealanders can better prepare themselves through filling out details at businesses they go to or by using the Government's COVID-19 QR code app.

But other countries are deploying technologies that deploy Bluetooth to assist contact tracing and investigations into options such as a COVID Card that would look to achieve similar are underway.

National would require those who work or stay in managed isolation and quarantine to use the technologies currently available and would urgently seek to deploy Bluetooth technologies and require the use of these.



Is National changing the approach to testing?

National is expanding the scope of the testing regime to ensure that we are having testing done at the places that it is most needed, at the border, at all points of entry, and throughout the community.

National will ensure that tests are compulsory across all staff at managed isolation and quarantine facilities, points of entry and for travellers pre-departure to New Zealand.

What changes is National introducing to the border?

National is introducing a comprehensive response to the management of the border to restore confidence in the efforts to protect New Zealand from COVID-19 and other pandemic threats.

National will require people travelling to New Zealand to provide evidence of a negative COVID-19 test before arriving into New Zealand, deploy compulsory contact tracing technology for Agency workers, workers in border facilities and points of entry, and District Health Board staff treating or testing patient, and new arrivals, ensure compulsory testing of staff and those staying in managed isolation and quarantine, and introduce new measures for ensuring health checks at the border.

How does the Agency's name translate?

The border protection agency will be named Te Korowai Whakamaru, which can be translated as the 'cloak of protection' and is an appropriate description of how it will protect New Zealanders – enveloping them in the safety of the korowai.

The korowai instills a sense of pride for many New Zealanders. A korowai is made up of many threads that together are strong and often tell the story, or whakapapa, of a family.

We see the border protection agency in the same way – many threads woven together to make one cloak of protection.