Ministry of Health

Summary of the Aotearoa New Zealand Strategic Framework for Managing COVID-19

**November 2023**

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a major worldwide event that has had huge health, social and economic impacts both nationally and internationally. In Aotearoa New Zealand, our response to COVID-19 has evolved from seeking to eliminate the virus to the current situation of high levels of immunity, better access to antivirals, improved surveillance and diagnostics and open borders.

COVID-19 is here to stay – for now. This creates its own challenges, especially as the virus is different from other flu-like illnesses. We need to build on the progress we’ve made so that our health system and communities are better prepared to respond to, and recover from, future outbreaks. As COVID-19 continues to change, so will our response to it.

# Purpose of this strategic framework

The Aotearoa New Zealand Strategic Framework for Managing COVID-19 builds on and replaces Aotearoa New Zealand’s Strategic Framework for COVID-19 Variants of Concern and COVID-19 National Management Plan 2022.

This new, single strategic framework outlines the outcomes we want to achieve and the priorities we will set for the long-term management of COVID-19. It focuses on managing COVID-19 as an everyday issue for our health system, with a clear and coordinated approach that:

* provides a single source of direction for government action;
* clearly shows the government’s priorities;
* sets up a long-term, coordinated response to future COVID-19 and other pandemic events.

# Te Tiriti o Waitangi and our COVID-19 response

Under Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the Government must protect and support Māori. Te Tiriti is at the centre of this strategic framework.

This includes a commitment to partnering with Māori to prepare for and manage COVID-19, supporting tino rangatiratanga (decisions by Māori for Māori) and establishing services and community-led programmes that reflect the needs and goals of Māori.

# Principles to guide our work around COVID-19

Our approach to managing COVID-19 is guided by two key principles.

* **Equity:** The strategic framework applies a fair and balanced approach to address underlying issues that make some populations more vulnerable to COVID-19.
* **Proportionality:** The public health measures applied are consistent with the risks different communities face from COVID-19.

# Outcomes and objectives

The overall aim is to help create pae ora – healthy futures, where all New Zealanders live longer, healthier lives. Specifically, there are three outcomes we want to achieve.

**Outcome 1 - Prepare:** We are prepared for future waves and new variants of the virus. Our experience with COVID-19 has highlighted the importance of being prepared for the future.

#### Key objectives to achieve this outcome

* **Vaccination:** Vaccination protects against serious illness and reduces transmission.
* **Knowledge:** There is a broad understanding across our society of the virus, its impacts, and the effectiveness of our response.
* **Resource:** The resources and ability to respond to COVID-19 and scale up our response as needed are in place.

**Outcome 2 - Manage:** We will minimise the impacts of COVID-19 on our country and people.

#### Key objectives to achieve this outcome

* **Transmission:** Transmission is managed in proportion to the public health risk.
* **Care:** Treatment and care protect against serious illness and improve health outcomes.
* **Wider impacts:** Wider health, social and economic impacts are minimised.

**Outcome 3 – Integrate:** We strengthen and integrate resilience across our health system. We focus on a long-term management approach to COVID-19. This shifts Aotearoa New Zealand away from a state of emergency response, drawing on the lessons learned from and maintaining the skills and knowledge gained during the pandemic response.

#### Key objectives to achieve this outcome

* **Transition:** COVID-19 preparedness and response are part of our everyday health system.
* **Decisions:** Appropriate legal tools and decision-making frameworks are in place.
* **Lessons:** Lessons from COVID-19 are applied across the health system.

**Good communication** about COVID-19 that reaches the communities it needs to, builds trust, and reduces misinformation is important for achieving all our key objectives and outcomes.

# Tools and measures we will use to manage COVID-19

We have many tools to manage the impacts and risks of COVID-19. These include community public health measures, border measures and support for individuals and communities. To work out the best tools and measures to use in each case, decision makers will consider a range of factors, such as: health factors; the effectiveness of specific tools or measures; proportionality, equity and Te Tiriti o Waitangi considerations; and the social and economic consequences of specific measures.

# More information

You can find more information on:

* the tools and measures we will use in the full strategic framework on the Manatū Hauora website at: **<https://www.health.govt.nz/strategic-framework-managing-covid-19>** and at [**http://tinyurl.com/2p9ckyh9**](http://tinyurl.com/2p9ckyh9)
* the full strategic framework document at: **[strategic\_framework\_for\_managing\_covid-19\_2023.docx (live.com)](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.health.govt.nz%2Fsystem%2Ffiles%2Fdocuments%2Fpublications%2Fstrategic_framework_for_managing_covid-19_2023.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)**
and at [**http://tinyurl.com/38m45yzh**](http://tinyurl.com/38m45yzh)
* the past response to COVID-19 on the Unite against COVID-19 website at: **<https://covid19.govt.nz/about-our-covid-19-response/>**and at [**http://tinyurl.com/4bje4sjc**](http://tinyurl.com/4bje4sjc)

**End of information: Summary of the Aotearoa New Zealand Strategic Framework for Managing COVID-19**

This Large Print document is adapted by Blind Citizens NZ from the standard document provided by the Ministry of Social Development