



## AIDE MEMOIRE

### Talking Points for COVID-19 Minister

<b>Date:</b>	6 April 2021	<b>Priority:</b>	Urgent
<b>Security classification:</b>		<b>Tracking number:</b>	2021-3116

<b>Information for Minister(s)</b>
Hon Chris Hipkins <b>Minister for COVID-19 Response</b>

<b>Contact for telephone discussion (if required)</b>			
<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Telephone</b>	<b>1st contact</b>
Kara Isaac	General Manager Policy, MIQ	<div style="background-color: #cccccc; padding: 2px;">Privacy of natural persons</div>	✓

<b>The following departments/agencies have been consulted</b>
Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment

**Minister's office to complete:**

Approved

Declined

Noted

Needs change

Seen

Overtaken by Events

See Minister's Notes

Withdrawn

**Comments**



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### **Purpose**

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Response to Ministers' Office request for briefing notes for Cabinet meeting for Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

- An update on the Pullman review
- An update on the Grand Mercure review
- An update on capacity
- An update on Quarantine Free Travel

Kara Isaac  
**General Manager Policy MIQ**  
MIQ, MBIE

1.04.2021

## Update on the Pullman review

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- An independent report was commissioned into the three COVID-19 transmission events that occurred in January 2021 at the Pullman Hotel managed isolation facility in Auckland.
- The report notes that the three events occurred in the context of emerging new strains of COVID-19 with higher transmissibility; increased global incidence of COVID; growing international evidence of aerosol transmission; and greater awareness of the role of ventilation systems (especially in confined spaces like lifts and lift lobbies).
- The report also notes that it is not possible to conclude with absolute certainty where and how transmission occurred in any of the transmission events. At best, an assessment of the most likely place and mode of transmission can be made. The events were most likely caused by airborne transmission in confined spaces.
- The Ministry of Health and MBIE are working to progress outstanding recommendations.

## Update on the Grand Mercure review

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- In response to the situation at the Grand Mercure, officials from MBIE and MOH are completing an incident review to look at what occurred and what changes need to be made to further strengthen the system. A rapid investigation is also being completed to look specifically at how the returnee who subsequently tested positive for COVID-19 was allowed on the managed isolation walk.
- Some immediate changes to how the buses to managed isolation walks occur have already been taken. This includes using busses with double doors, better seat allocation and now all bus drivers are behind a plastic screen and wearing N95 masks.
- The Technical Advisory Group has been stood up to look at this situation. An onsite ventilation assessment has been completed and this is being considered by the TAG.

## Update on capacity

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- Over the past 8 weeks, a total of 29,877 rooms have been released for the period of April through to the end of July 2021, equating to over 38,448 returnees across this period.
- Returnees from over 180 countries have successfully secured a voucher to travel during this period.
- As at the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2021, there were 1,800 rooms available for the period of April through to July 2021.
- We have seen a decrease in the demand for rooms in recent weeks and at this point current demand is satisfied.

## Update on Quarantine Free Travel

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- Upon commencement of the Quarantine Free Travel Zone MIQ will hold 500 of the rooms 'freed up' as additional reserve to respond to any pause in the Quarantine Free Travel Zone and allow them to respond to the changing risk profile of the facilities.

- I have agreed that the 500 will be split into (a) a 350 room targeted occupancy reduction across the larger Auckland MIFs, including the four that do not have onsite exercise facilities, (b) a 100 room targeted occupancy reduction in Christchurch, and (c) 50 rooms across other regional MIQs.
- For the remaining freed up rooms which are expected to be 500-800 per fortnight I have agreed that for April through to June these be released into MIAS to support the existing commitments the Government has already made (e.g. critical workers and international students).
- For July I have agreed to increase the group allocations by 200 in order to respond to forecast increased demand, with the remaining being released onto MIAS.
- Vouchers for August to October have not yet been released. This period is also forecast to have a heavy demand for group allocations. I will receive further advice on the proposed allocation for these by the end of April.