



Meeting of the COVID-19 Ministerial Group

Minute of Decision

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Essential Services: News and Media

The group of Ministers with Power to Act on COVID-19 matters [CAB-20-MIN-0130] convened on 31 March 2020 at 10.30am, and in accordance with their Power to Act:

- 1 **noted** that RNZ and TVNZ are the only media entities that the government has an obligation to maintain as Lifeline Utilities under the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002;
- 2 **noted** that the Ministry for Culture and Heritage (the Ministry) has issued guidance to assist organisations to determine whether they were an 'essential business' during COVID-19 Alert Level 4, which had supporting public health as the key determinant;
- 3 **noted** that the principles and guidelines referred to above do not restrict the content of any news or media;
- 4 **noted** that under the principles and guidelines, the physical delivery of news and media has been limited to contact-less media (broadcast and online) and tightly controlled daily metropolitan newspaper production and delivery;
- 5 **noted** that the Ministry will seek further public health input on how to mitigate the risks associated with the production and distribution of print news media during the COVID-19 Alert Level 4 period;
- 6 **agreed** to expand the guidance around news and media as an essential service to allow targeted production and delivery of printed newspapers for communities that are hard to reach due to physical location, with limited digital connectivity or non-English language material provided that all appropriate health measures are taken during production and delivery to minimise the transmission of COVID-19.

Rachel Hayward
for Secretary of the Cabinet

Distribution:

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Copied to officials via email