



# Ad Hoc Cabinet Committee on COVID-19 Response

## Minute of Decision

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### COVID-19: Mass Gatherings

#### Portfolio

#### Health

On 18 March 2020, the Ad Hoc Cabinet Committee on COVID-19 Response (CVD), acting in accordance with its Power to Act:

- 1 **noted** that on 16 March 2020, Cabinet:
  - 1.1 agreed that gatherings of 500 or more people, held outdoors or indoors, should be cancelled;
  - 1.2 agreed that the above decision apply to events including festivals, fairs, sporting, religious and cultural events;
  - 1.3 directed officials to provide further advice to CVD as soon as possible on guidance around events of different sizes, including statutory powers;

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- 2 **noted** that mass gatherings can pose a risk for the community transmission of COVID-19, and that cancelling mass gatherings can help to slow the spread of COVID-19 in New Zealand, reduce the number of people infected, and protect those who are more vulnerable to severe illness;
- 3 **noted** that avoiding non-essential gatherings, maintaining social distancing, and working from home if possible will assist in preventing the spread of COVID-19;
- 4 **agreed** that:
  - 4.1 gatherings of 500 or more people, held outdoors, should be cancelled until further notice;
  - 4.2 gatherings of 100 or more people, held indoors, should be cancelled until further notice;
- 5 **noted** that:
  - 5.1 the restriction on gatherings set out in paragraph 4 above can be enforced, if necessary, using existing statutory powers under the Health Act 1956;
  - 5.2 a notice under the Epidemic Preparedness Act 2006 is not required at this time;

- 6 **agreed** that guidelines for gatherings should be publicly promulgated, setting out advice to help event organisers to decide whether to proceed with such events;
- 7 **agreed** that clear communications, with examples, of what is a ‘gathering’ is critical to public understanding of the policy;
- 8 **noted** the need for clear and precise communications of the overall policy, and that relevant stakeholders and industry organisations will be informed prior to the public announcement;
- 9 **authorised** the Minister of Health, in consultation with the Prime Minister and other Ministers as appropriate, to finalise the details of the guidelines, for publication;
- 10 **agreed** that the guidelines will be published on the Ministry of Health’s website.

Janine Harvey  
Committee Secretary

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**Present:**

Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern (Chair)  
Rt Hon Winston Peters  
Hon Kelvin Davis  
Hon Grant Robertson  
Hon Phil Twyford  
Hon Chris Hipkins  
Hon Carmel Sepuloni  
Hon Dr David Clark  
Hon David Parker  
Hon Stuart Nash  
Hon Iain Lees-Galloway  
Hon Jenny Salesa  
Hon Damien O’Connor  
Hon Shane Jones  
Hon James Shaw  
Hon Julie Anne Genter

**Officials present from:**

Office of the Prime Minister  
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet  
Prime Minister’s Chief Science Advisor  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
State Services Commission  
Ministry of Health  
Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment  
Ministry of Education  
Ministry for Primary Industries  
Ministry of Social Development  
Ministry of Transport  
New Zealand Customs Service  
New Zealand Defence Force  
New Zealand Police

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Minister of Health