

*Future opportunities to re-open passenger travel safely and in collaboration with other States*



# Domestic Context – NZ Elimination Strategy



- The New Zealand Government's overall public health strategy in respect of the COVID-19 pandemic affecting New Zealand is elimination.
- Our elimination strategy is a sustained approach to keep it out, find it and stamp it out. We do this by applying a range of control measures under the following pillars:

**Border controls**

**Robust case detection and surveillance**

**Effective contact tracing and quarantine**

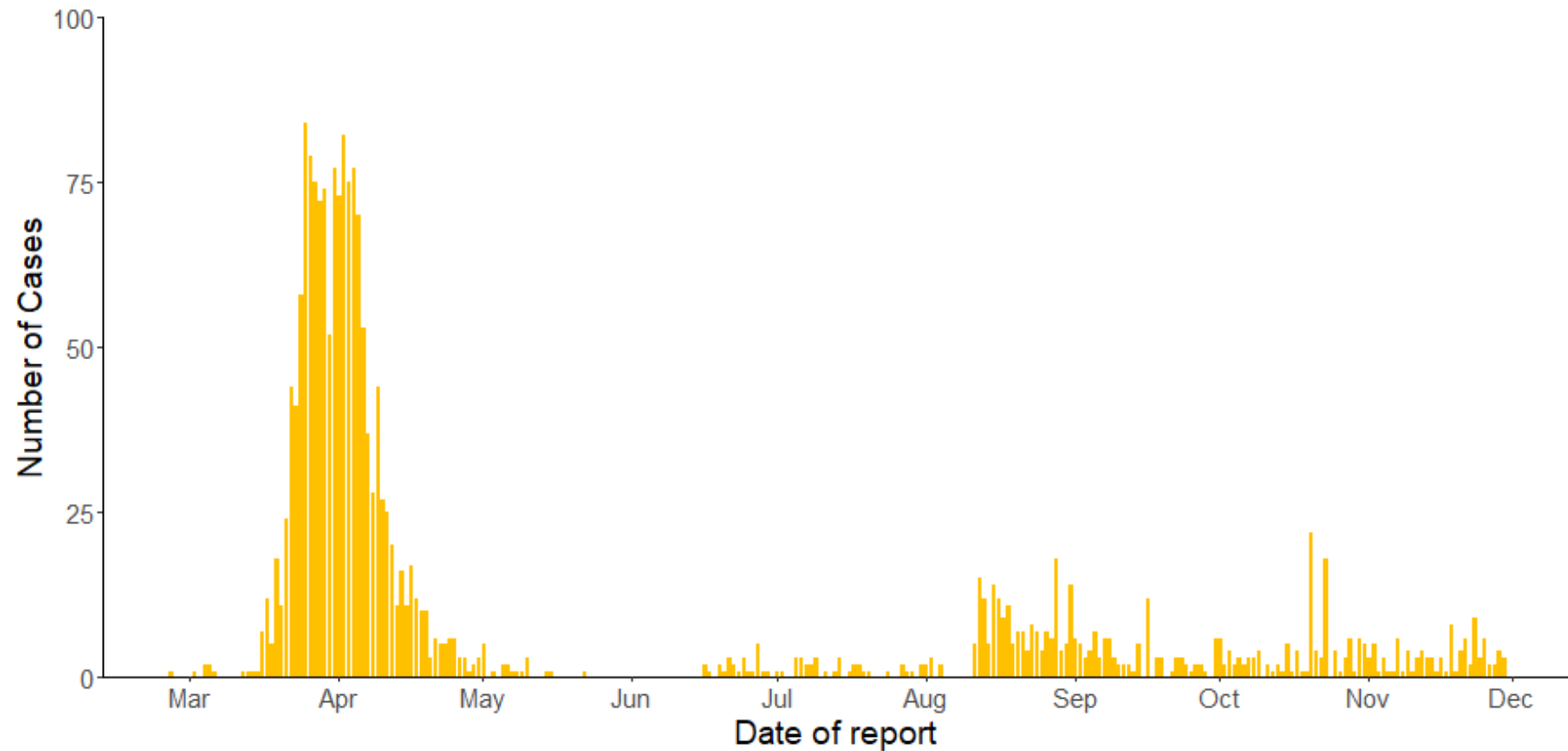
**Strong community support of control measures**

- Elimination does not mean eradicating the virus permanently from New Zealand; rather it is being confident we have eliminated chains of transmission in our community for at least 28 days and can effectively contain any future imported cases from overseas.
- It is accepted that this approach will be needed in the long term ie, for many months or longer, depending on the emerging epidemiology and evidence around the disease and its management and progress with developing safe and effective treatments and/or vaccines.

# Domestic Context – NZ Elimination Strategy



Daily confirmed and probable cases (30 November 2020)



## Current Border Controls



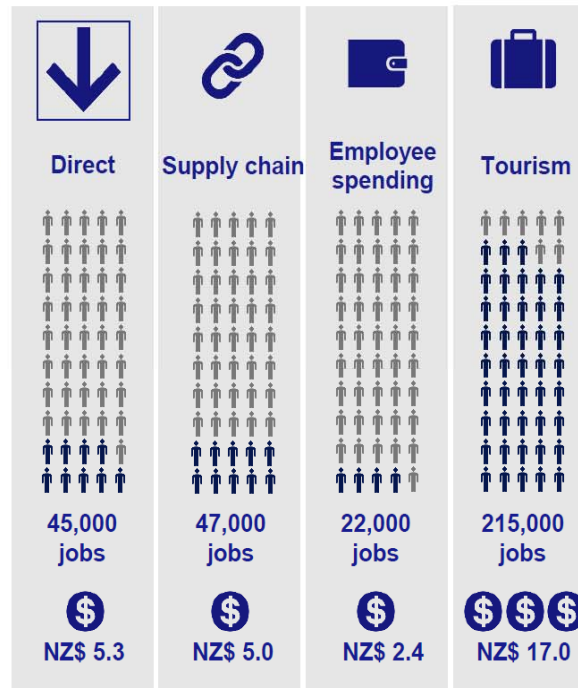
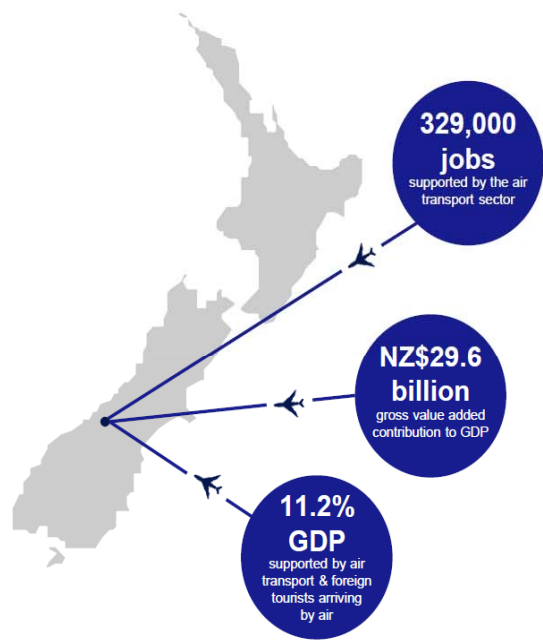
- Key tool for stopping the introduction and spread of new cases from overseas
- All people entering New Zealand are currently isolated in a government-controlled facility for at least 14 days on arrival (with some exceptions), ensuring no new COVID-19 infections are introduced into the wider population
- There are also controls for those who work at the border, including a regular testing regime
- The Government is considering how border controls might be eased in the future, noting that the emphasis will continue to be on keeping COVID-19 out of the New Zealand community. This work is ongoing

## Re-opening air travel safely is critical for NZ's wellbeing



- International air links are critical for New Zealand's social, cultural and economic wellbeing. They underpin our trade in goods and services and connect our people to the world
- Pre-COVID, more than 80 percent of New Zealand's international air freight was carried in the belly-hold of passenger aircraft (550 per week)
- The collapse of the passenger market meant the New Zealand government needed to step in to ensure planes could continue to fly and transport essential medical supplies in and exports out. This adds capacity to maintain trade links but is not a panacea
- Airlines are in a cash flow crisis, and need surety – New Zealand's International Air Freight Capacity Scheme is critical temporary measure, but so too is the need to increase passenger volumes

# The benefits that aviation provides driving safe travel



billion gross value added



20 year forecast scenarios for passenger traffic, jobs & GDP footprint (based on pre-COVID trends)

		Pax	NZ\$ GDP	Jobs
	<b>2017</b>	20.3m	29.6 bn	328,990
2037	Current trends	29.9m	43.6 bn	391,468
	Upside	45.3m	66.0 bn	595,439
	Downside	23.5m	34.3 bn	307,512

Source: IATA The Importance of Air Transport to New Zealand 2019

## Quarantine Free Travel (“travel bubble”)



- Discussions on quarantine free travel are underway with the following countries:
  - Australia
  - Realm Countries - Cook Islands and Niue
- Layers of assurance are envisaged with each partner to ensure travel is as safe as possible
- Removes the requirement for 14-day quarantine – no quarantine or isolation for arriving passengers
- Travel can only commence once both countries health authorities have:
  - determined that the rate of COVID-19 transmission and associated public health risk is acceptably low in both countries, and
  - there is confidence that both countries can implement the necessary border and travel protocols

# Airport and airline engagement critical



- Airlines and airports will play a key role in implementing enhanced border and travel protocols for quarantine-free travel
- The eligibility of airlines, and relevant criteria to operate quarantine-free flights, will be confirmed in regulation
- Significant engagement with industry – essential to ensure that the proposed operational requirements are workable and commercially viable
- New Zealand Aviation Coalition – peak body providing coordinated engagement - comprising :
  - New Zealand Airports Association
  - Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Queenstown Airports
  - The Board of Airline Representatives
  - Air New Zealand and the Qantas Group

## Models we have observed globally to support Quarantine Free Travel



- Bilateral arrangements (“travel bubbles”) are the approach the New Zealand Government has chosen to date to achieve reconnection
- We watch with interest as other countries develop and implement other approaches, including unilateral, risk-based openings

We observe across the globe different forms that quarantine-free travel can take to manage risk and provide assurance

### Bilateral arrangements with other countries

- Consultation/information-sharing mechanisms built in
- Significant negotiation period
- Consultation between States expected before changing settings

### Unilateral entry

- Higher level of autonomy over settings
- Can turn settings (and countries) on and off based on risk

**Hybrid models** e.g. short government-government arrangements for (i) specific groups of travellers, (ii) information-sharing.

**Layers of assurance and measures** – to support the reduction or removal of quarantine and/or isolation requirements

## Observations on quarantine free travel



- **A few observations:**
  - understanding a countries broader COVID-19 strategy is an important starting point
  - think about how social licence might change in response to cases being detected in one country who is party to a travel arrangement
  - acknowledge that there is a need to start small continuously improve operational systems, and build public confidence to grow further opportunities
  - ongoing dialogue through ICAO is critical, particularly in relation to pre-departure and on arrival testing, and how we factor vaccine roll-out into our response

