

PROACTIVE INFORMATION	
COVID-19: Update for Cabinet	
Deadline: 4 April 2020	Date of Response: 4 April 2020

Purpose

- 1 This paper provides you with speaking points and Q&A for your oral update to Cabinet on Monday 6 April regarding the use of geo-location technology to check compliance with self-isolation requirements.

A range of technology is being used to support the All of Government response to the COVID-19 epidemic

- 2 As you are aware, Police has developed an online system to assist with checking that people are complying with the self-isolation requirements [IPR/20/90]. Your oral update to Cabinet on Monday will provide a high-level overview of the system. The Commissioner of Police, Andy Coster, and the All of Government Strategic Operations Controller, Mike Bush, will provide a detailed report on the system to COVID-19 Ministers on Tuesday 7 April. The detailed report will cover the development and use of the technology.

- 3 s9(2)(f)(iv)
[Redacted content]

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Speaking points

Border management

- New Zealand's greatest risk of COVID-19 spread continues to be from people entering the country from overseas.
- Limiting and managing the movement of people into and around New Zealand is critical to containing the spread of COVID-19 under Alert Level 4.
- As you know, we have strict controls in place for managing the ongoing arrival of international passengers into our airports, and people are required to go into quarantine, managed isolation or self-isolation within the home.
- When the three options were developed, there was an expectation that Police would conduct a compliance check on all of the people in self-isolation in their home within 72 hours of their arrival into New Zealand.
- Numbers of international arrivals have been higher than expected and we now have approximately [4,000 – to be updated on Monday morning] people in self-isolation in their homes across New Zealand.
- This number will increase as people continue to arrive on international flights, and as we provide domestic flights to move people out of the government-managed isolation facilities into their self-isolation in their own homes.
- There is significant pressure on Police resources to complete compliance checks within the target timeframe of 72 hours post-arrival.
- In addition, it took time to establish an effective system to ensure Police had necessary data on international arrivals to enable compliance checking

The geo-location system

- To help meet the demand, geo-location technology is being used to ensure people returning to NZ are complying with self-isolation requirements.
- Police repurposed an existing search and rescue tool (Mobile Locate) to assist with checking the location of people in self-isolation.
- The system went live on the evening of 31 March 2020.
- Those returning receive a call from a welfare officer, followed by a text message and hyperlink asking for consent to share their location with Police.
- The text message says: *“NZPolice COVID19 self-isolation check under S.70(1)(f) Health Act 1956. Select the link to confirm geolocation: [internet address link]”*
- The person receiving the message is required to click on the internet address link at the end of the text message. This brings up a screen on their phone, which will ask them to agree to their location details being shared.
- If the recipient clicks “accept”, their location details are provided back to the system. Police staff can then confirm that the address provided in the person’s self-isolation plan matches the location of the mobile device, and contact with the person’s phone is then closed.
- The system is voluntary. If a person chooses not to participate, they will either receive a phone call or a face to face visit.
- Random compliance checks will also continue to occur.
- This is a whole of system approach designed to minimise the risk that this group presents in the community.

Data – [will be updated on Monday morning]

- Since 31 March approximately 8,900 text messages have been sent to recent arrivals, with a response rate of 53 percent.
- The response rate is increasing.
- 5.9% of recipients have declined to share their location data.

Privacy

- There has been good engagement with the Privacy Commissioner, John Edwards, over the system, particularly on Thursday 2 and Friday 3 April.
- Police's Chief Privacy Officer has briefed Mr Edwards on details of how the system works, and shared the broad findings of a privacy impact analysis which has been completed.
- Mr Edwards did not raise any concerns about the consent-based nature of the system, but suggested Police include further advice about options, and how the geolocation process works. These were enhancements that we already in train.
- On Friday 3 April, the Privacy Commissioner also took the step of issuing a media statement to confirm that he was "reassured that the appropriate steps are being taken to ensure system is being used proportionately and is fit for purpose".

Questions & Answers

How does the technology work?

- Note: The Commissioner of Police, Andy Coster, and the All of Government Strategic Operations Controller, Mike Bush, will be providing a detailed report on the system to COVID-19 Ministers tomorrow (Tuesday 7 April).
- When a person arrives into New Zealand, they are screened at the border. Screening includes a health check, and an assessment of whether the person has an appropriate self-isolation plan.
- As part of the screening process, the person is required to provide a mobile phone number and their self-isolation location to the screening officer. This data is then provided to Police and Immigration staff.
- Incoming passengers are advised that in addition to welfare calls from Ministry of Health officials, they will receive a text, phone call or visit from Police to check they are complying with their self-isolation plan.
- Police staff sign into a website with a unique user name and password. They create a new record of the contact including the person's name, phone number and address. The system then sends a message to the person which says:

*"NZPolice COVID19 self-isolation check under S.70(1)(f) Health Act 1956.
Select the link to confirm geolocation: [internet address link]"*

- The system sends the Police staff member a confirmation that the message has been received.
- The person receiving the message is asked to click on the internet address link at the end of the text message. This brings up a screen on their phone which will ask them to agree to their location details being shared.
- If the recipient clicks "accept", the location details including latitude, longitude, closest address and accuracy data (to within metres) are provided back to the system.
- Police staff can then confirm that the address provided in the person's self-isolation plan at the point of arrival matches the location of the mobile device.
- An ongoing record is created which tracks the location of the mobile device every time it connects with the mobile network until the contact is closed.
- Police are closing contacts within the system as soon as the person's location has been confirmed to match the address given in their self-isolation plan.
- If for any reason a contact is not actively closed, it will automatically close after 30 hours of going live.

What happens if someone does not respond to the text message?

- If the person does not accept (i.e. by clicking “no” or “block”) or does not respond to the message, the record stays in the system but does not include any location data.
- People who do not respond to the message or who do not agree to the use of geo-location will receive a second text or call within four hours of the initial text being sent.
- If contact is not made after two texts and two phone calls, the person will be visited in person.

Where is the information stored? Is it secure?

- The All of Government team is using a separate website and standalone server to undertake this function, not the Police website.
- None of the information transmitted enters into the Police system.
- All of the information recorded in the system can be deleted at the end of the person’s 14 day self-isolation period or at any other time as necessary. Police is currently seeking legal advice on the appropriate steps to take with this data in the longer term.
- Each staff member undertaking compliance checks logs into the system using a unique identifier (username and password). Each contact initiated by the staff member is recorded along with the response from the recipient. Full records of all log-ins into the system and all contacts created are kept so that contacts can be linked back to the user if necessary.
- Work is ongoing to ensure the system is secure and security systems have been further strengthened.

How reliable is the system?

- The accuracy of the system requires the person to have a smart phone, a functioning battery and the ability to connect to GPS.
- Location is not exact, but it is sufficiently accurate to assess if the person is within the permitted 1km range of their nominated self-isolation address. People in self-isolation are permitted to exercise within 1km of their nominated address, but are not permitted to enter shops within that range.

What is the feedback from people who have been sent a text?

- The overall feedback is positive and people have texted back thanking Police for keeping them and their wider communities safe and well. Many have also texted back photographs showing them located within their self-isolation location.

- However, some recipients are naturally suspicious of scams and are not responding or are checking the legitimacy through other sources such as ringing 105 or through MBIE CERT notifications. This was expected given the speed with which the system was established and the limited wider public communication. A notice about checking by text is posted on the front page of the Police website and new arrivals from 31 March have been advised in person. Recent media coverage will also improve public awareness.
- In order to provide greater assurance that the text message is from NZ Police, the system was updated to amend the web address which people are required to click on to include the “police.govt.nz” URL. The new link should help to reassure people that they are not providing access to their location data to a third party.