



Kia ora koutou

This afternoon the Prime Minister confirmed Cabinet's decision to maintain Auckland at the current Alert Level 3: Step 1 restrictions for a further two weeks, until 11.59pm on Tuesday 2 November. Waikato will also remain at its current Alert Level 3 setting for at least the rest of this week, with a review on Friday. Northland will move to Alert Level 2 at 11.59pm tomorrow, Tuesday 19 October.

This means the University's current Alert Level 3 arrangements remain in place for our Auckland campuses. Only staff and students specifically authorised to access campus in Alert Level 3 are permitted to do so. If you do not have permission to be on campus, please do not attend. From Wednesday, our Tai Tokerau campus in Whangārei will move back to Alert Level 2 arrangements. More details are available at the [University operations at different levels](#) website.

The Prime Minister also confirmed that the Government's new Covid Protection Framework, which is the 'traffic light' system announced last week, will be presented in greater detail on Friday. We will be working with the relevant Ministries and the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) to understand the implications of this new approach for universities, however we do not expect it to be implemented until vaccination rates reach significantly higher levels.

Update on the University's vaccination approach

Throughout the pandemic, the University has made clear that the number one priority in its decision making has been to protect the health, safety and well-being of our students, staff and wider University community.

In recent days you may have seen in the media that employers such as PwC and Russell McVeagh will require proof of vaccination before staff and clients are able to enter offices and workplaces. On Friday, Victoria University of Wellington announced that all students and staff living in the university's halls of residence will also need to be fully vaccinated from early next year.

I would like to confirm that the University is also assessing this type of approach, including the option of requiring staff, students and visitors to be fully vaccinated as a condition of being able to come onto our campuses. This is a highly complex issue which requires serious thought and working through the practical implications. I will be able to provide more details on this in the next couple of weeks.

In the meantime, thank you to everyone who responded to the consultation on the draft Vaccination and Testing Policy, which ended on 4 October. We have been assessing the ideas and suggestions submitted which will assist in determining our next steps.

Finally, the Prime Minister acknowledged that Auckland has been in lockdown for over 60 days. I would like to personally acknowledge all of you. Ordinarily, at this time of year there is often a sense of anticipation for the Summer break. In these extraordinary times, I am aware of just how important those focal points in the calendar and in our lives become. I have witnessed extraordinary commitment, loyalty, diligence and focus during each and every one of our multiple lockdowns. I am confident that we can continue to respond to the challenges and opportunities before us this year, however there is no doubt in my mind that the pandemic has and is exerting a toll on all of our communities. Please do take care of yourselves and each other.

He waka eke noa

Noho ora mai
Dawn

Professor Dawn Freshwater
Vice-Chancellor

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