

## Omicron key messages – BusinessNZ Network

As at 1pm 28/01/2022 | For external use

### Governments Public Health Response to Covid

- The Government outlined its three-phase public health response to Omicron on 26 January. A full rundown on these phases [can be found at UniteAgainstCovid19](#)

#### **Phase One - Stamp it out**

- There are few cases in community and most are linked
- Cases must isolate for 14 days
- Contacts must isolate for 10 days

#### **Phase Two - Need to minimise and slow further spread**

- Case numbers are increasing significantly with growing but still manageable pressure on health system
- Cases must isolate for 10 days
- Contacts must isolate for 7 days

#### **Phase Three - Managing it**

- Widespread community cases with focus on managing pressure on health services and maintaining critical/essential services
- Cases must Isolate for 10 days
- Contacts must isolate for 7 days with extra support in place for health and critical workforces.

- Throughout these phases, critical workers who are close contacts are able to show proof of a negative rapid antigen test to return to work during their required period of isolation.

### Mask requirements

- For business, workers who are mandated to be vaccinated will need to wear a medical grade mask when working in public facing roles from 11:59pm on 3 February.
- For people visiting these places, makeshift face coverings (ie scarf, bandana or t-shirt) will no longer be adequate.
- [More info on mask mandate changes can be found here](#)

### **Critical services**

- Associate Health Minister Verrall on 26 January said the process of identifying critical services is underway. BusinessNZ has been asked to contribute to this process.
- We encourage all who think business should be considered as critical to get in touch with the BusinessNZ Network.

### **Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs)**

- The BusinessNZ Network continues to receive strong demand from companies and members with large workforces asking for access to rapid antigen tests (RATs) at scale and with urgency.
- The Government has asked suppliers of rapid antigen tests (RATs) to divert business orders and provide to Government. However BusinessNZ has coordinated Major Company Group (MCG) members and Network members to consolidate orders for over a million RAT tests at a competitive price that will be arriving in February.
- These RATs are of critical importance to companies with large manufacturing bases and other industries, in order to help manage operations once the highly infectious Omicron variant starts to negatively impact the workforce.
- The BusinessNZ Network has requested Ministers and officials to confirm a process where we can engage pragmatically and with transparency, to help business leaders manage their risks, keep their workplaces and community safe while continuing to support the economy.
- Like the rest of the world, New Zealand businesses must continue to trade and manage their operations in a Covid constrained world if they are to survive and contribute to our recovery. Access to RATs will greatly improve our ability to continue conducting business safely.
- Minister Verrall on 26 January said more info will be coming in the following days and weeks around New Zealand's supply of RATs and the process for application.

### **Self-Isolation**

- If you have Covid-19 or are a close contact, you will be required to isolate and follow all public health advice you or your business receives

### **Support for Business**

- There are a few steps you and your business can take to help manage the spread of Covid-19:
  1. Encourage your staff to get vaccinated and boosted - and offer your support
  2. Review mask policies in your place of business
  3. Increase ventilation/airflow in your place of business

4. Consider adjusting your policy on sick leave to support staff who need to isolate or quarantine
  - See more info on [Testing and returning to work during Omicron — business.govt.nz](https://www.business.govt.nz/testing-and-returning-to-work-during-omicron)

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