

The governance structure

The early governance structure in relation to the elimination strategy is set out in Figure 2.3 below. Importantly, Parliament's business committee established an Epidemic Response Committee. The committee was chaired by National Party leader Simon Bridges and was made up of a group of MPs from both sides of the House. The aim was to create a mechanism for the opposition to hold the Government to account while Parliament was not sitting, enabling the committee to effectively interrogate ministers or public servants (Walls, J., 2020a). See also Table A1.5 for details of key groups, and Tables A1.6 and A1.7 for details of advisory groups.

On 24 March 2020, pursuant to s 5 of the Epidemic Preparedness Act 2006, the Prime Minister issued the Epidemic Preparedness (COVID-19) Notice 2020. It came into force on 25 March 2020, and was renewed every three months until expiring on 20 October 2022.

On 2 November 2020 a new role was announced in Cabinet – the Minister for COVID-19 Response. Chris Hipkins became the first Minister for COVID-19 Response, a position he held until May/June 2022, when Dr Ayesha Verrall took over. Dr Verrall continued as the Minister for COVID-19 Response until early 2023, when the role was disestablished. [\[\[awaiting OIA\]\]](#)

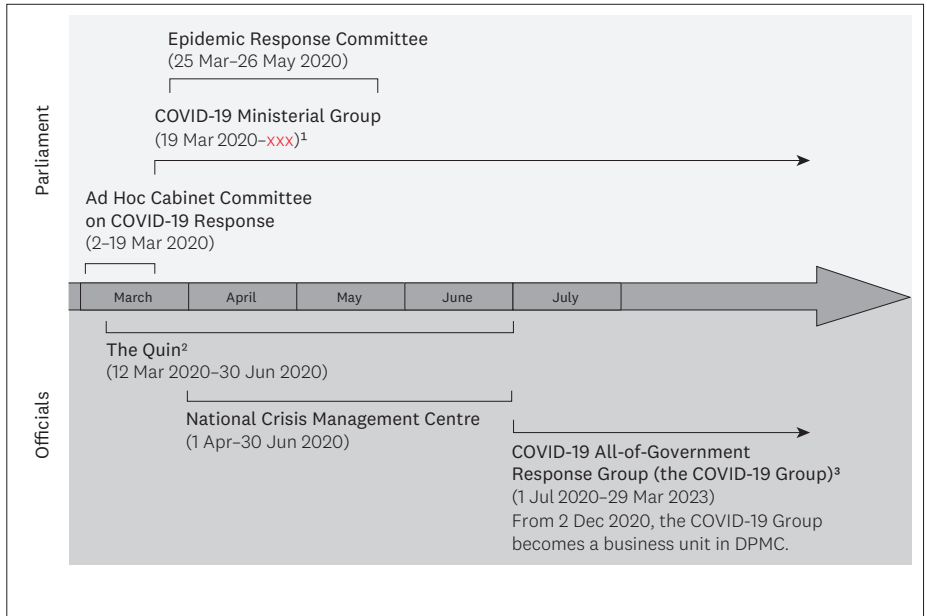
A series of reviews were undertaken to assess progress, review processes and to hear what others were thinking. These reviews were either internal or external to government.

Internal reviews are initiated and/or commissioned by the Government of the day to provide independent advice. Groups are formed at the direction of a minister for the purpose of providing independent review and advisory functions to Government. Commonly known as ministerial advisory committees or ministerial advisory groups, they are made up of independent members and are distinct from ministerial groups (which are made up of ministers). These advisory groups are temporary, although they can remain in existence for a long time. Each advisory group has its own terms of reference that dictate its purpose, role, membership and other relevant processes. Advisory groups are usually funded by the relevant department. Their independence arises from their membership, and they do not report to the relevant chief executive but directly to the minister. Examples include the COVID-19 Independent Continuous Review, Improvement and Advice Group (CICRIAG) and the Strategic COVID-19 Public Health Advisory Group. See Tables A1.6 and A1.7 for more information on these internal advisory groups.

In contrast, external reviews are completed by a third party because they consider a review is useful. For example, reports by the Offices of Parliament and the Ombudsman are treated as external. See Table A1.8 for more information on these external organisations and their reports.

Figure 2.3: New Zealand’s governance structure in relation to COVID-19, 2 March to 31 July 2020

Adapted from DPMC, 2022b; DPMC, pers. comm., 10 November 2020; DPMC, pers. comm., 16 March 2023; Walls, J., 2020a



Notes to Figure 2.3:

1. The COVID-19 Ministerial Group was established by Cabinet to coordinate and direct the government response, which included the 'Power to Act' on COVID-19 matters (DPMC, 2020a). The COVID-19 Ministerial Group is sometimes referred to as the COVID-19 Ministers. It is disestablished on xxx [awaiting OIA].
2. The five members of 'the Quin' are All-of-Government (AoG) Controller John Ombler (Chair), Director-General of Health Dr Ashley Bloomfield, Director of Civil Defence Emergency Management Sarah Stuart-Black, AoG Strategy and Policy Lead Dr Peter Crabtree and Strategic Operations Command Lead Mike Bush (OAG, 2022). John Ombler was Chair over the duration of the Quin [awaiting OIA].
3. On 30 June 2020, the COVID-19 Group took over many of the functions of the NCMC. However this Group is not officially given responsibility by Cabinet to lead the COVID-19 response until 2 December 2020, when they were provided funding as part of the . Over this time, the COVID-19 Group is led by a deputy chief executive who reported to DPMC’s chief executive (OAG, 2022). The COVID-19 Group is sometimes abbreviated to CARG in official documents. This stands for COVID-19 All-of-Government Response Group (DIA, 2020).
4. The Minister for COVID-19 Response is established on 2 Nov 2020. The role continues until it is disestablished on xxx 20xx [awaiting OIA].