



19 MAR 2020

Dear State Sector Leadership Team,

The All-of-Government response to COVID-19 is being intensified with immediate effect.

The operational pillar of this response is being led, directed and coordinated by Mike Bush.

This includes standing up the necessary command centre and structures, and working with Chief Executives to assign roles and responsibilities.

The operational command centre will be based on Lambton Quay at the Evidence Based Policing Centre. This can house 70 officials from across government and will be operational on Monday. Other pillars of the response will remain at the Ministry of Health.

Chief Executives have been superb to date, offering support and resources whenever they have been asked for. But time is not on our side. Mike's mandate now needs to go well beyond an expectation of ordinary cooperation. All necessary public sector resources must be re-deployed at pace to support the operational response.

Given the unique circumstances we now face, I would be grateful if any lawful request from Mike could be urgently addressed by Chief Executives personally, given the necessary weight, and prioritised in terms of response.

Mike also needs to connect with the private sector and seek their cooperation in mobilising their resources in support of the operational response. I would be grateful if you could offer him all available support in this effort.

This letter will operate in conjunction with existing statutory powers held, for example, by the Director-General of Health and the Director of Civil Defence and Emergency Management.

Finally, these are extraordinary times and we need to take extraordinary steps. If you receive any request which causes you concern, please discuss that concern with Mike in the first instance, and then with your Minister if required. Otherwise, I cannot understate my expectation that the public service must continue to respond quickly and comprehensively to any such requests.

Thank you for your leadership in these testing times. Your commitment and skill has never been more important, for the good of all New Zealanders and this country.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Jacinda', written in a cursive style.

Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern
PRIME MINISTER