

PRESS RELEASE

21 March 2023

McGuinness Institute

Level 1A, 15 Allen Street,
PO Box 24222,
Wellington 6142,
New Zealand

+64 4 499 8888

wmcg@mcguinnessinstitute.org

McGuinness Institute launches COVID-19 timeline book

McGuinness Institute announces the release of *COVID-19 Nation Dates: A timeline of significant events in Aotearoa New Zealand's COVID-19 pandemic*, to be launched this Thursday, 23 March 2023, from 12.30pm.

Three years ago this Thursday, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern announced to New Zealanders that the country would be [moving into a full lockdown](#) at 11:59 pm on Wednesday 25 March 2020.

This was a momentous time in our history, signalling the start of Aotearoa New Zealand's COVID-19 elimination strategy.

To commemorate this date, the Institute is pleased to share our latest book, *COVID-19 Nation Dates*, a timeline of 430 significant events in Aotearoa New Zealand, beginning with the initial response by the political parties on 23 January 2020. To illustrate the connections between the entries, each of the 430 events are grouped under one of ten domains and 30 threads.

Wendy McGuinness, Chief Executive, McGuinness Institute, states: 'Most of us will remember where we were when we heard the news of the lockdown.'

The book aims to record the events as they occurred without opinion or prejudice. It does not attempt to analyse or interpret the quality of our response, but rather shares the information we have been gathering over the last three-plus years, for reflection and discussion. It is a resource for us all as we work towards creating a fairer and less fragile Aotearoa New Zealand.

McGuinness states: 'Doing well in a pandemic is not just about what you do during a pandemic. It is about preparation. The team of 5 million did many things well but we could have done better. Now is time for lessons to be learned – bubbles to be burst, anger to be channelled and voices to be heard. The legacy of COVID-19 must be to create a country – and a world – better able to withstand the shock of the next pandemic or global emergency.'

Join us at the book launch:

Register to attend: [In person only](#)

Purchase the book: [\\$35.00 incl. postage](#)

Date: Thursday, 23 March 2023

Time: Light refreshments from 12:30–2pm, 1pm official launch

Location: McGuinness Institute, Level 1A, 15 Allen St, Wellington

Any questions, please contact:

Wendy McGuinness, 04 4998888, wmcg@mcguinnessinstitute.org

Advance praise for *COVID-19 Nation Dates*:

‘Pandemics have been part of history since the 1900s; many Māori lives were lost due to wave upon wave of pandemics. The speed and global spread of COVID-19 was unprecedented and our ability to respond variable, and regrettably the outcome for Māori was no different. We must learn and prepare for the future now, where lives and decisions are not determined by politics, power and resources that privilege some and not others. Not until we have researched and analysed critically our response, will we know how to prepare our health workforce and communities for the future to protect themselves and our mokopuna.’

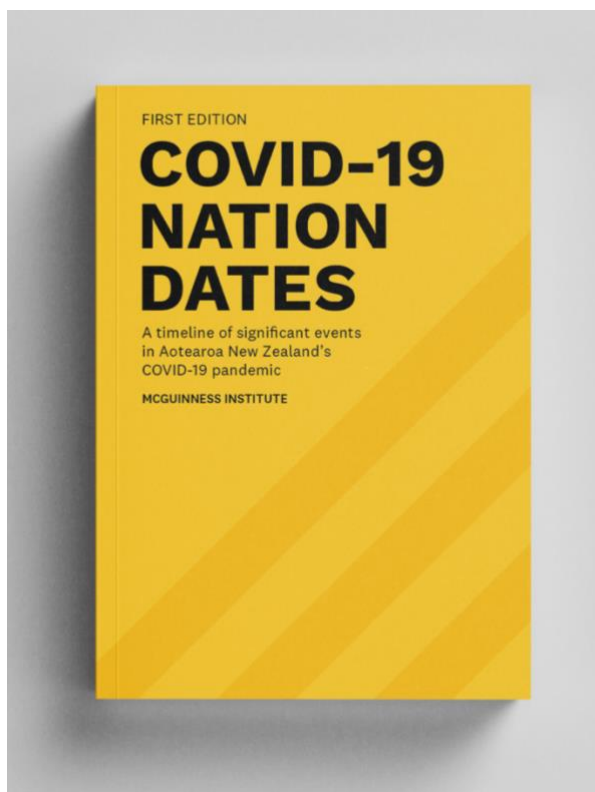
— Kerri Nuku, Kaiwhakahaere, New Zealand Nurses Organisation (NZNO)

‘Looking back, it is hard to believe now how almost every day threw up new challenges to our COVID-19 response. This thorough and comprehensive timeline documents those challenges and will be a hugely valuable reminder of those difficult times for years to come.’

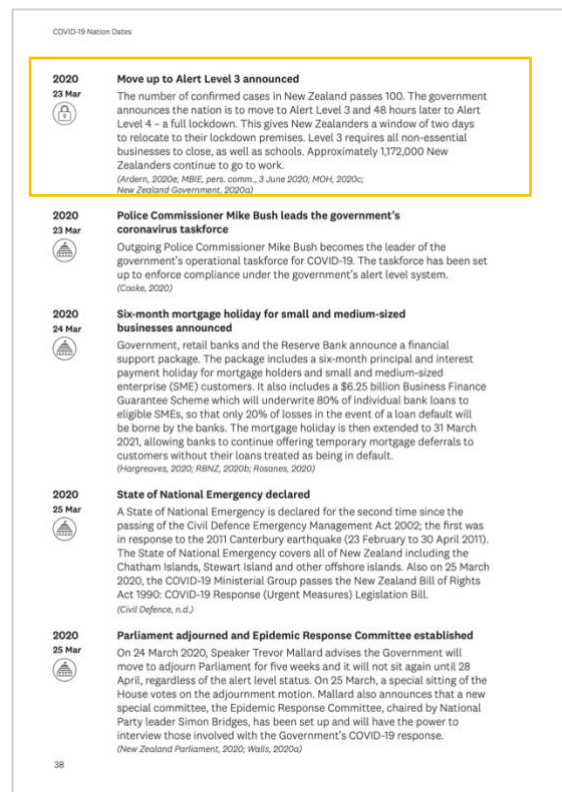
— Shaun Hendy, COVID-19 modeller, University of Auckland

‘With the COVID-19 pandemic now in its fourth year, I’ve started to see more and more misleading statements about Aotearoa New Zealand’s early pandemic response. There’s a revisioning of our history going on, particularly by those at home and abroad who believe we shouldn’t have pursued an elimination strategy to deal with what was a new and very dangerous virus. While our response was far from perfect, that strategy saved lives and livelihoods. As time passes, and our own memories fade and become more unreliable, this book stands as an important record of what happened and when.’

— Siouxsie Wiles, MNZM, microbiologist and science communicator



COVID-19 Nation Dates cover



Move up to Alert Level 3 announced, *COVID-19 Nation Dates*, p. 38

Beehive Post-Cabinet Press Conference: 23 March 2020: [Transcript of press conference](#)

Radio New Zealand: 23 March 2020: [Video](#)