



31 August 2020

Louisa Wall
Chairperson
Health Select Committee
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

Via email: lousia.wall@parliament.govt.nz; health@parliament.govt.nz

Dear Louisa,

While I understand the meeting of the Health Select Committee on Wednesday 2 September is not open to submissions, I am writing to you to outline the road freight transport industry's concerns about the Government's recent Covid-19 response level changes. I would ask that some consideration be given to the concerns of businesses in the supply chain during the Select Committee's one remaining meeting prior to the 2020 General Election.

I would also ask you give some consideration to giving answers to our questions. There is no way for business to currently question the Government, other than via the media. This does not feel open and transparent, or at times even democratic.

The following is a list of things we would like to know to better understand the reasons behind the Government's actions in the absence of access to any kind of response strategy. We would like to be able to prepare for any other level change decisions that wreak the kind of havoc on the supply chain that the move to Level 3 for Auckland did.

Decision on Auckland borders

- When the decision was made for Auckland to go to Level 3, what was the basis of decision-making on what that area would include? Which agency/agencies decided on the border lines? What was the process behind their decision making? Over what timeframe did the decision making occur? What consideration was given to movement of goods, including food, petroleum, oxygen for hospitals, ingredients for food, welfare of live insects and animals, supply chain functions (with people living outside Auckland unable to get to work)?
- What consideration was given to isolating Northland from the rest of the country and the impact of that on the supply chain?
- Who developed the exemption process for crossing Auckland's road borders? What consideration was given to time taken to get exemptions?

- What costing was done on the impact to the supply chain of Auckland's road borders and the exemption process for those road borders?
- What consideration was given to the health and safety of truck drivers who are bound in law by work hours, but could not just walk away from their trucks and cargo when stuck at the Auckland borders and exceeding their work hours?
- What agency/agencies were responsible for the border management logistics? How long did they put into planning? Who did they consult from the private sector? Did they consult anyone from the private sector involved in supply chain logistics?

Ports of Auckland/Port of Tauranga Covid-19 testing

- Why was such a short timeframe given for the testing of all workers who had been on the Ports of Auckland and Port of Tauranga? What was the Government's estimation of the number of workers who would need to be tested and where did that estimation come from?
- What proportion of truck drivers were tested at Ports of Auckland and/or Port of Tauranga over what time frame? What was the average waiting time for testing ie. Time in a queue?
- When we have been clearly told that decisions issued from "the podium" (Beehive theatre media briefings) are gospel, why did the Health Minister say from the podium that asymptomatic people did not have to be tested, but the Health Order said all workers who had been to ports since 21 July had to be tested within 48 hours?
- Why was the Health Order regarding Covid-19 testing at the ports amended to extend the time for testing?

Learning as you go

- If, as the Prime Minister has indicated, the Government's Covid-19 response strategy is a "learning as you go" exercise, what system has been set up to record any such learning? Who is responsible for that system? Who has access to it? If and when another decision to change levels is made, will any of this learning be taken into consideration? If so, what will be the process for that?
- What has the Government learned about the supply chain during its response to Covid-19? Where has it recorded any of the things it has learned?
- What has the Government learned about the logistics of the supply chain during its response to Covid-19? Where has it recorded any of the things it has learned?

- In a future level change, who will be responsible for supply chain logistics? Will they give any consideration to anything that may have been learned throughout 2020? Will they consult anyone in the private sector, skilled in supply chain logistics?

Level changes

- What process has been developed for further level changes? Who will be in charge?
- Will the Government consult with supply chain businesses before the next level change/s?

While I appreciate this is a lot of questions, when there are no conversations with the business sector, it leaves a giant void of information. Business owners who make daily decisions about running their businesses need to know there is robust decision-making processes within Government and that those decisions are thoroughly tested. Being dictated to from "the podium" just throws up a whole lot more questions, rather than providing adequate answers.

The decisions made by the Government have had severe economic impacts on New Zealand's businesses. Whether or not that has been good decision making can only be determined if we are privy to the processes behind that decision making.

Yours sincerely



Nick Leggett
Chief Executive, Road Transport Forum