

COOK ISLANDS EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN TO COVID-19



MARCH 2020

WHAT IS CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019?

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a new respiratory illness affecting the lungs, spreading all over the world.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) declared a COVID-19 Pandemic on 11 March 2020

The incubation period (time between infection and onset of symptoms) is estimated to be 14 days.

80% of cases are reported as mild to moderate. 5% are critical, requiring intensive care unit (ICU) services.

There is no specific treatment (vaccine/antivirals).

HOW IS COVID-19 SPREAD?

The virus that causes COVID-19 is transmitted through:

1. Large droplet spread
2. Transmission through aerosolised spread (coughs)
3. Contact – direct or indirect – with respiratory secretions (saliva or contaminated surfaces)

WHO IS AT RISK OF SEVERE ILLNESS?

Population groups at high risk include:

- People aged 60 years and over
- People with medical conditions (such as lung disease, hypertension, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer)
- People who smoke

WHAT IS OUR PLAN?

The Cook Islands emergency response plan to COVID-19 (Plan) is a nationwide effort to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the health, social and economic status of the Cook Islands population.

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

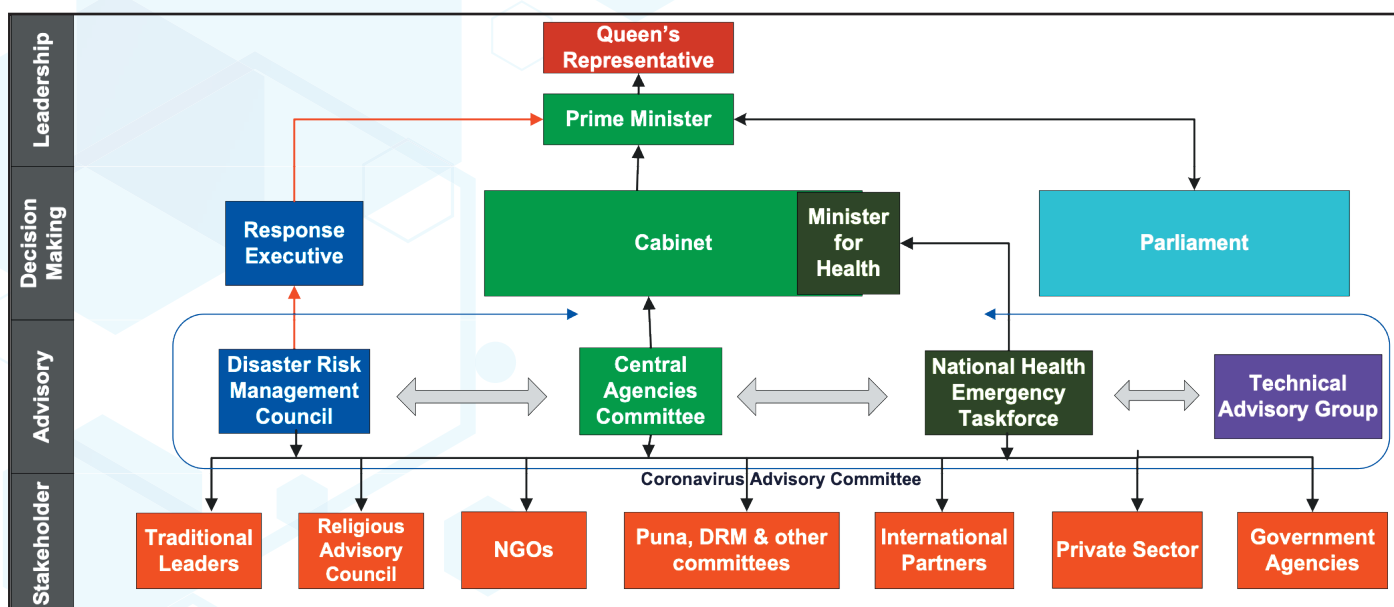
The Prime Minister will lead the national effort with the support of the Minister of Health and Cabinet, and other stakeholders.

The National Disaster Risk Management Council (NDRMC), the Central Agency Committee (CAC), and the National Health Emergency Taskforce (NHET) will provide advice to Cabinet.

The NDRMC establishes the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) from which the National Response Executive (NRE) will direct and coordinate the response.

Various stakeholders will implement the Plan. They include: Religious Advisory Council (RAC); traditional leaders; government agencies; non-government organisations (NGOs); Rarotonga and Pa Enuā Puna; other community committees, international partners and the private sector.

The Disaster Risk Management (DRM) Act authorises the Prime Minister to declare a State of Emergency, and allows the Police Service Commissioner to become the National Controller if a State of Emergency is declared.



COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION

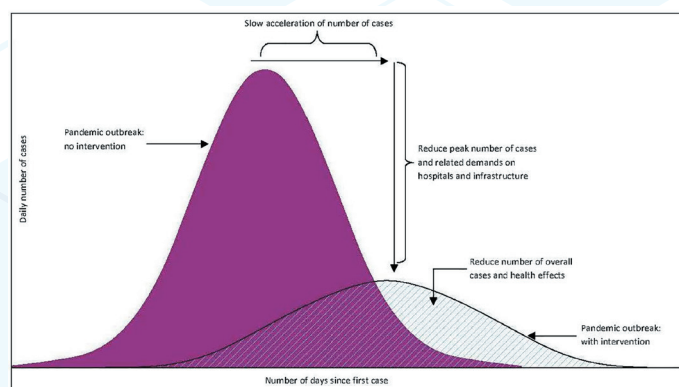
Nationwide consultations are ongoing and we are mobilising community action to protect vulnerable members of our society: our elderly, persons with non-communicable diseases (NCDs) or disabilities and others.

PUBLIC HEALTH AND NATIONWIDE RESPONSE

An epidemic occurs when new cases of a disease, within a certain population, during a certain time period, is higher than expected and exceeds the baseline.

An epidemic would see a steep rise in the number of people infected, reaching a peak and then a reduction.

Preventative measures implemented early in an epidemic can slow the transmission of infection and reduce the peak number of cases



This Plan seeks to flatten the epidemic curve and slow the spread of infection, and therefore alleviate the burden on the nation's health system, economy and society.

WHAT WE WILL DO

Targeted interventions:

- Optimise good hand hygiene practices and cough etiquette
- Social distancing practices in schools, work and other community settings
- For cases not requiring hospitalisation, self-isolation at home is critical, while close contacts will require self-quarantine

All stakeholders play a critical role in supporting positive community action.

WE NEED THE SUPPORT OF OUR:

- Traditional Leaders,
- Church Leaders
- Rarotonga and Pa Enua Puna Leaders
- Non-government organisations
- Development Partners
- Communities

Help us support those requiring quarantine or isolation for up to 14 days. They would need food, water, medicines and other essential supplies or services.

Government agencies will coordinate the mobilisation of govern-

ment resources, assets and finances to support the nationwide response.

Te Marae Ora will lead the health response, in collaboration with relevant community and international partners. The private sector will work alongside government to minimise disruption to business continuity and the daily lives of our people.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Response measures will address the following impacts:

HEALTH SYSTEM

- Reduced levels of service and care, to mobilise resources
- Influx of patients at hospitals and clinics resulting in patients with less urgent medical problems waiting longer for treatment
- Potential shortage of health professionals and frontline staff
- Shortage of medicines and consumables requiring prioritisation
- Difficulty maintaining normal operations
- Reduction in service capacity

ECONOMY

- High rate of absenteeism
- Business operations and provision of services affected
- Loss of employees due to prolonged period of illness; need to care for family members; fear of infection at work
- Limited access to foreign workers due to travel restrictions
- Tourism, transport, retail industry affected due to travel restrictions and reduction in business and tourist travel
- Ports affected due to slowdown in global trade
- Loss of public confidence
- Supply chains affected and low stock due to panic buying

SOCIETY

- Lasting psychological impact
- Loss of loved ones
- Social distancing measures
- Stigma and discrimination
- Home quarantine
- Potential school closures and cancellation of public events
- Cultural impact - no kissing when greeting people
- Potential civil unrest and crime
- Potential disruption of church services
- Managing burials for visitors and funeral gatherings
- Food supplies affected due to disruptions in imports or closure of food establishments
- Rationing certain food and essential products
- Economic slowdown affects overall employment and personal income
- Households requiring financial assistance



COOK ISLANDS EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN FOR COVID-19

The Plan has three stages, four codes and four phases as outlined below.

STAGES	CODE	PHASE
Initial Action Stage	Blue	Preparation and Readiness (Delay entry of disease)
Targeted Action Stage	Yellow	Alert (Delay widespread disease transmission)
	Red	Activation (Mitigate impact of the disease)
Stand-down stage	Green	Post-event (Recovery)

Within each of the action stages are targeted interventions under the following functions: governance and legislation; surveillance and intelligence; border measures; resources and logistics; communication and consultation; health clinical care and public health management; and social welfare and support.

STAGES, CODES AND PHASES OF AN EMERGENCY RESPONSE

There are four phases identified in the emergency response to COVID-19, across three stages:

STAGES	CODE	PHASE	THRESHOLDS/TRIGGERS
Initial Action Stage	Blue	Preparation and Readiness (Delay entry of disease)	Disease is severe and spreads easily from person to person but is occurring outside the Cook Islands. Measures focus on delaying entry of the disease through hand washing, cough etiquette and social distancing. Minimal disruption to society such as travel advisories and restrictions. Reducing business as usual.
Targeted Action Stage	Yellow	Alert (Delay widespread disease transmission)	Disease is severe AND spreads easily from person to person, but the disease is not spreading widely in the Cook Islands and is being contained. Moderate disruption to society such as quarantine and isolation.
	Red	Activation (Mitigate impact of the disease)	Disease is severe AND is spreading widely. The health system is unable to cope with the situation. Major disruption to society such as school closures, work from home notices and disruption of law and order in the community.
Stand-down stage	Green	Post-event (Recovery)	When the disease is declining, and can be managed under normal business arrangements. Transition from emergency response to business as usual.

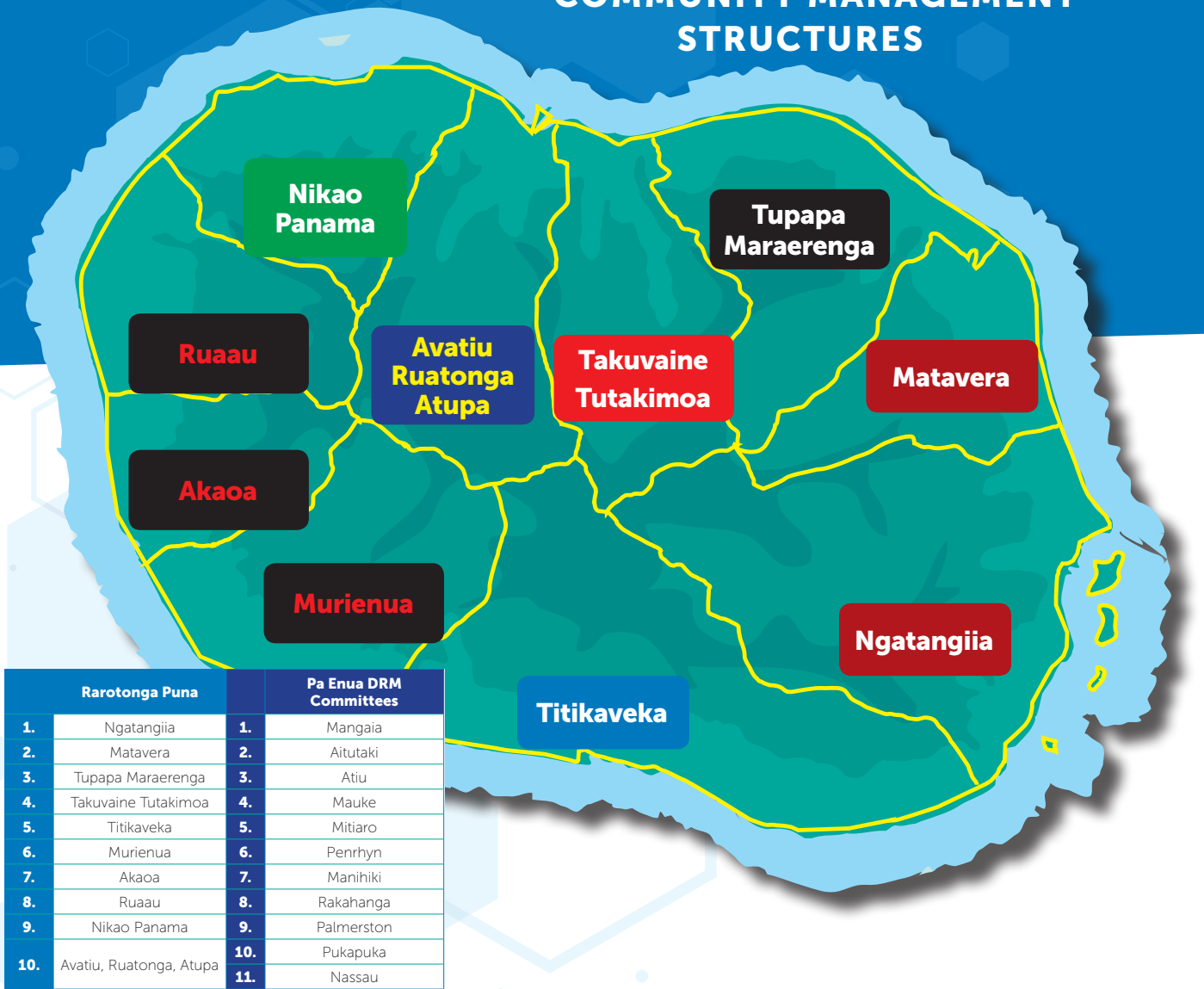


WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT COVID-19?

VISIT THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH WEBSITE AT
WWW.HEALTH.GOV.CK OR CALL +682 29667



COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES



INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The Incident Management System (IMS) structure provides a structured approach to managing a national response to COVID-19 through seven critical functions: Leadership; Partner Coordination; Information and Planning; Health Operations and Technical Expertise; Operations Support and Logistics; Finance and Administration; and International Expertise.

HEALTH EMERGENCY INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (IMS) STRUCTURE

MARCH 2020

