

Hon Chris Hipkins

MP for Remutaka

Minister for COVID-19 Response

Minister of Education

Minister for the Public Service

Leader of the House



To the border workers of New Zealand

Over the past year you have helped New Zealand to stay safe from a pandemic that has wreaked havoc across the globe. Your diligence and hard work has saved countless Kiwi lives and on behalf of the New Zealand Government, I want to thank you for everything you have done and continue to do for the team of five million.

Over the past weekend we embarked on the largest immunisation programme in Aotearoa New Zealand's history. You will make history as the first people to receive a COVID-19 vaccination in this country.

I want to take this opportunity to personally reassure you that we have made no compromises when it comes to your safety. We have followed a strict process through our medicines authority Medsafe and unlike other countries we have not allowed any vaccines in under special exemption. The Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine has been determined by the full Medsafe process as safe for use.

More than anyone, you and the wider border workforce understand the immense challenges that COVID-19 has presented us over the past year. What we have asked of you has not been easy, leaving your whānau every day to work at the frontline of our response, and in some cases being stigmatised or called out publicly for the work that you do. It is because of that sacrifice that our country has been able to enjoy the freedoms we have. I want you to know your efforts have not been taken for granted.

As we enter this next phase in our battle against COVID-19 I want to again acknowledge your role in leading our vaccination programme and let you know that New Zealand stands proudly behind you.

Kia kaha

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'CHH'.

Chris Hipkins
Minister for COVID-19 Response