

**POST-CABINET PRESS CONFERENCE: MONDAY, 5 JULY 2021  
HANSARD TRANSCRIPT**

**PM:** Kia ora koutou katoa. Good afternoon, everyone. Forgive us for being slightly tardy this afternoon. I'm joined by Minister Hipkins to set out the latest on quarantine-free travel to Australia. But, first, a look at the week ahead. Tomorrow and Wednesday, I'll be in Wellington for Cabinet committees and the House. On Wednesday, I also have a meeting with Henry Puna, the Secretary General of the Pacific Island Forum. On Thursday, I have an electorate day in Auckland.

You will have seen the arrival of 150,000 doses of the Pfizer vaccine late yesterday. There is now sufficient vaccine in stock, which, together with the planned deliveries for each week of July, enables DHBs to confidently plan and deliver vaccinations for the four-weeks ahead.

The first deliveries of the new doses will start tonight, with a consignment dispatched to the South Island on a 7 p.m. flight. The new doses will start arriving at vaccination centres tomorrow, ahead of schedule. This is our largest shipment of the vaccine to date, the first of four shipments this month that will total 1 million doses all up, and signals the ramp up of our vaccination programme.

Now to the Australian travel bubble. The past week has been the most challenging since the bubble was established 2½ months ago. Multiple states imposed lockdowns as community cases popped up, and at one point around half of the Australian population was in some form of lockdown. In response, we've taken a cautious approach, given those circumstances.

Our decision to close the border was about protecting New Zealanders' health as well as protecting the long-term interests of our economy and the ability for businesses to stay operating without lockdowns here. We only need look at the case of the Australian tourist in Wellington to see the enormous disruption cases within our border can cause.

The closure of the border was a temporary measure to help us get a better handle on the situation as well for the Australian health authorities to respond to their various outbreaks. As of midnight last night, quarantine-free travel resumed with South Australia, ACT, Tasmania, and Victoria. That was on the basis of health advice that it was safe to do so.

As part of that advice, and as an added precaution, last week we announced that all travellers from Australia must now have a pre-departure test within 72 hours before leaving Australia. This is a key part of strengthening the trans-Tasman border.

Today, Cabinet considered advice in relation to reopening travel to remaining states. Health advice is that the situation in Western Australia and Northern Territory is contained, and the pause here can be lifted. Cabinet's view is that we were comfortable with this taking place from 11.59 p.m., July 9. Again, pre-departure testing continues to be required.

For New South Wales and Queensland, the pause remains. However, we recognise New Zealanders have been stranded for some time in these states. We are comfortable that we can safely allow those ordinarily resident here to return to New Zealand from 11.59 p.m. on July 9. Again, subject to similar pre-conditions as those who returned from Victoria during the June lockdown, including that they will need to meet all the standard public health requirements. This includes making a declaration that they have not been in a location of interest in the past 14 days, are not symptomatic, are not a close contact, and are not awaiting the results of a COVID-19 test. Any of those things would rule them out from being able to travel. These pre-conditions will be further refined and released tomorrow.

Traveller eligibility criteria will be consistent with those who recently returned in June from Melbourne, which include: New Zealand citizens and holders of residence class visas; holders of temporary visas, and Australian citizens who'd last departed New Zealand after 5 April 2021; holders of current permanent residence visas, including a resident return visa, issued by the Government Australia, who last departed New Zealand after 5 April 2021; and relevant family members of people in these categories. Our intention is to review the pause

for Queensland on Wednesday, but for New South Wales to remain paused for the near future.

As I've said, our priority is strengthening the bubble in order to protect it because we want it to be viable for the long term. The recent outbreaks and lockdowns across the Tasman, along with the recent scare in Wellington, have served to highlight the risks that remain very much real when it comes to COVID. We need to stay vigilant and strengthen protection measures where appropriate.

Happy to now take questions.

**Media:** How did you weigh up whether you were going to bring those people back, because it was pretty clear that when you sent them over there they would have to do their own thing?

**PM:** Yeah, and, look, I think we've been clear all the way through that it is flyer beware, and I think people expect that now. They know that there is an element of risk. We do our best, of course, to maintain the flows, but if there is a risk to New Zealand, we won't hesitate to shut down those borders. We based the decision, though, on similar factors to the decision we used for Victoria. For New South Wales, by the time we'll be bringing those New Zealanders back to New Zealand, essentially, we would've had a lockdown in place for a 14-day period. We're also requiring pre-departure testing, and we're also saying to those who are in any way linked to a location of interest or a close contact that they cannot return. So those are the preconditions that are in place and, we believe, give that extra layer of comfort.

**Media:** Minister, can I just ask a question about saliva testing. Why is it not commonplace when you were told to do it urgently in September last year?

**Hon Chris Hipkins:** At a ministerial level, we've given all of the relevant approvals that need to be given in order to allow saliva testing to take place. I would like to see saliva testing being rolled out more quickly. One of the pieces of feedback that I've had so far is that given the choice between sticking with a weekly nasal swab or going to an every second or third day saliva test—many of the workers who that's been discussed with have indicated they'd prefer to stick with the once a week nasal swab. There are some additional requirements around saliva testing, including that you can't have cigarettes for a reasonable period beforehand, you can't eat beforehand, and so on. That makes that less desirable for some of the people who have been offered that choice. But yes, I would like to see it more widely used, and I'll continue to lean on the team implementing that to see if they can get that more widely deployed faster.

**PM:** As a Cabinet, we frequently discuss the range of options around testing that are emerging and that may be available to New Zealand, now and in the future. I think what will be a real game-changer will be high-quality rapid testing, because when you get that rapid testing, that changes up some of our options, as long as we maintain the reliability of those tests, and we are very interested in continuing to explore those options.

**Media:** Are you considering rethinking the threshold for pausing the travel bubbles? So perhaps one community case in a state in Australia, and that would make a definite pause?

**PM:** Yeah, by and large, you'll see that we have been relatively consistent. Where we varied our approach was once you saw that outbreak from Brisbane that then found its way in Northern Territory, which then affected up to 600 people and potentially could've spread. So although we knew the origin of that case, which usually would give us comfort, the sheer scale of those affected, their likely travel across Australia, and their potential travel to New Zealand did cause us to act differently, and I think New Zealanders want us to be flexible when we see risk.

**Media:** And there's been a pause on the bubble almost every fortnight since it opened. Is the risk of the bubble outweighing the benefit?

**PM:** Right from the beginning, when we made the decision to wait quite a long period of time before opening, it's because we knew we need to build in systems that allowed us to be flexible if we saw issues like this. I think we went into it knowing this could happen, and

you've seen us respond as we said we would. It would mean, potentially, travellers being stranded, but we will always make sure that we do everything we can to prevent the bubble arrangement coming at a cost to New Zealand.

**Media:** How risky is it allowing those people from New South Wales and Queensland to return, because it seems like a fairly trust-based model, doesn't it? So does that pose a risk to New Zealand, the fact that they're not isolat—

**PM:** There's layers here. So not only are those who are in affected parts of New South Wales have been in a lockdown now for 14 days, we're requiring them to get a pre-departure test, and we have listed that they cannot travel if they are in any way connected to the current outbreak. So there are layers there that we require of them to give us extra, added satisfaction that they pose minimal risk to New Zealand.

**Hipkins:** I mean, by way of analogy, when we reduce our alert levels here in New Zealand, we don't require everyone to get a negative test before they're allowed to go out into the community again. So we are applying a higher threshold to those who are in that position in Australia, where they've been isolating for two weeks, but they still have to have that negative pre-departure test before they can come back to New Zealand.

**Media:** After the Wellington scare, you were talking about mandatory mask wearing, potentially, and mandatory scanning. Has Cabinet looked at that again? Have any decisions been made?

**PM:** We've received some initial advice on increasing the use of masks when we move into higher alert levels, and also the use of QR codes in high-risk venues. There is still a bit more advice that we need to receive, and also there are some conversations we do want to have with those who'll be most affected by potential changes in that area. We want to make sure that it is as easy to implement as possible, and there are questions over whether or not the obligation sits on a venue versus the individual. As we work through that, we expect that we'll be in a position to make further announcements next week.

**Media:** With masks, would more mandatory mask wearing, more widespread, be more likely than expanding QR code scanning, for example, or are you—

**PM:** We're looking at both, but at this stage QR code use in high-risk environments is really where we're focused in on, and wanting to be really sensible about where it makes sense for mask use to be more widely used.

**Hon Chris Hipkins:** One of the things we'll look at—when we established the four alert levels, of course, masks weren't really part of the equation at that point. So we're looking at what should the mask use requirements be at all of our different alert levels. We've got some mask use at alert level 1, but we can also use greater mask use as part of our escalation. So we're working through all that.

**Media:** Are you looking at potentially expanding it under level 1 further than public transport?

**PM:** Yeah, so of course when it comes to QR code use, ideally you want that to be really consistent even when you're in a situation where there is no obvious threat, because, of course, once we find a case, we're always backward looking. We want to find people who have been in contact with that person in the lead up, and that means it's really important at level 1. For mask use, we tend to ramp that up as we have a wider and known threat rather than as a precautionary tool, and that's really the approach we've been taking as we've been looking at these two options.

**Media:** Will Cabinet have to meet again? You said you were making some reassessments around Queensland on Wednesday. Will you be meeting again, or would that be more of a captain's call for yourself and Minister Hipkins?

**PM:** We have a group of border Ministers, who have delegated power to act from Cabinet to make decisions around the trans-Tasman arrangements. And those are the

Ministers that predominately we've been using, but given we had the ability to use all of Cabinet for these decisions, we have done that. But we tend to tap into the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Transport, the Minister for COVID-19 Response, myself, and the Deputy Prime Minister.

**Media:** On Fiji, obviously the cluster there has got quite bad—there's now more deaths associated with that cluster than there was in New Zealand throughout the entire pandemic, from COVID. Obviously, there's a hold up on the vaccines because Medsafe need to approve any extra vaccines, if they can go to Fiji, but has New Zealand been asked for, and is New Zealand sending anything else over, things like PPE, possibly actually doctors to help out? Have you had any contact with—

**PM:** So I actually spoke to the Prime Minister of Fiji last week. And that was the second call that we've had in recent weeks. As you'll be aware, we have provided Fiji with \$40 million worth of aid and support in recent times. We have provided support in the form of PPE and, of course, the commitment we've made around AstraZeneca vaccines, which is what Fiji are using for their roll-out. We made Fiji aware some time ago around the likely time that we would be able to release AstraZeneca doses, based on when Medsafe approves in New Zealand. So they've been aware of that, but when we did that we also contacted Australia and said, "What help can you provide around AstraZeneca doses whilst ours is going through approval, and can we make sure that Fiji is no worse off by any potential delay within New Zealand?" And that's been what has been happening to date. Certainly the feedback that I got from the Prime Minister was that that had been working well. He also acknowledged that we had sent over one member of the New Zealand Defence Force and another medical officer to support their work on their infection control.

**Media:** Just on the vaccine arrivals, critics say our supply is precarious.

**PM:** No, no. So Pfizer have a commitment and a contract with New Zealand, which they have been fulfilling. At no point have they said to us, "Here's what you can expect in the next four weeks" and not delivered on that. And there is no reason for us to believe that that won't continue to be the case. The issue has been that because we've continued to ramp up our vaccine programme, we have not kept anything back. We've distributed everything. And so if we had a scenario where there was a plane late or delayed, then that could have caused us an issue. Thankfully, it's arrived early.

**Media:** So when is the next shipment due, and how many doses is it?

**Hon Chris Hipkins:** It will be early next week. Usually, they've been coming in on a Tuesday. We were able to get this one in about 48 hours earlier than normal. I think we've been really upfront with New Zealanders about the fact that we are cutting it fine in this period where supply is constrained.

**Hipkins** I would far rather have vaccines out of the freezer and in people's arms than sitting in the freezer as a contingency, and we do know that our quantities in delivery over the next month—they increase. Each delivery gets a little bit bigger than the last one.

**PM:** So whilst we're somewhat constrained on what we're able to say about the exact deliveries we receive, what I have said is that the next delivery will be similar to the one that we received today, and then, of course, overall in July we're looking to receive a million doses, so those bigger deliveries will come in the latter part of the month.

**Media:** And what's your message to those 75 and older with health problems who are yet to get the vaccine?

**PM:** Well, of course, we've been advised that at least they have received information around what they can expect and when they can expect to be able to be vaccinated. And so I keep checking in to see that that's occurring in all DHBs. With the odd exception of the odd primary health organisation where there may have been some issue with communicating with their patients, by and large the report that we're getting is that people are getting that information, but they'll hear, from seeing that those doses are arriving, that

that puts us in a position to really ramp up with a million doses being received over the course of July.

**Hon Chris Hipkins:** If I could perhaps add to that, if people are over the age of 65 and they haven't heard about when they're going to be invited to book, the first port of call would be to get in touch with their GP practice, their primary healthcare provider, and make sure their contact details are up to date, because we have been working off the contact details supplied by primary health providers. And so if those contact details aren't up to date, then that could be the reason why people haven't heard.

**Media:** Prime Minister, can I return to the trans-Tasman bubble. Can you just set expectations around a New South Wales reopening or perhaps that's impossible at the moment. I mean, there are so many cases; it's plainly uncontained. It's realistic that it might not open all of July, right?

**PM:** So what we're trying to do is give a clear signal to those who are ordinarily resident in New Zealand the pathway for them to get home. It will mean that they have been waiting more than two weeks, but we believe this is the safest way that we can see their return in the near future, and that will be from 11.59 on 9 July with those preconditions I outlined. When it comes to reopening with New South Wales, at the moment we have no clear date in mind. So long as there are extensive restrictions in place, you can expect that we will not change our position, which is a pause. But even if those restrictions were to lift, we will very much make our own assessment. It won't be a matter that New South Wales has lifted and therefore New Zealand automatically will. We always determine, based on our own risk assessment, whether we're ready.

**Media:** Can I also draw you on the four-stage plan that Australia's national Cabinet announced last week. I guess I'd just ask for a general comment from you on anything that caught your eye as being important to New Zealand and whether you will adopt some sort of strategy like that in the near-term future, like a road map out of—

**PM:** Well, you would've heard me in a pre-Budget speech that I gave, obviously not too long ago, broadly setting out the parameters for our reopening; so talking to, in these early stages while we're unvaccinated, the fact that we'll have these quarantine-free arrangements, that we'll look to see whether there were additional arrangements we could safely explore. But then, obviously, while we're vaccinating the New Zealand public, we'll continue to see there being limitations at the border. But you'll also have seen that I set out that we'll continue to look at the research and evidence around transmission of vaccinated passengers to see whether or not that then allows us the ability to create additional movement for particularly New Zealanders but potentially others. So broadly those parameters, we set out in May. We will, however, continue, as the vaccine rolls out in New Zealand, to provide the latest thinking we have around our reopening, but in terms of detail, I think every country at the moment—Australia, New Zealand, Canada; every country—continues to look at the evidence of what's happening around us when it comes to the impact of the vaccine.

**Media:** Just on the vaccine, are you confident the health system can deliver all 1 million doses of Pfizer we get in July?

**PM:** Yes. Do you mean in July, because obviously they're being received at the end of July, so, no, I wouldn't have an expectation that would all be done at once. I have an absolute expectation and belief that we can fulfil our commitment, which is to offer every New Zealander a vaccine and the ability to be vaccinated by the end of the year. That continues to be our goal. That has been from the very beginning of the roll-out.

**Media:** Just on Samoa, have you received any briefings or updates in recent days given the state of the political landscape there at the moment, and at what point is there going to be some sort of intervention required by other countries?

**PM:** No, I haven't in the last 24 hours. But, look, we've been really consistent. Our view is that all individuals, all political parties, we would have encouraged and hoped would

be upholding the decisions of the judiciary. You know, we hold great faith in the systems of Samoa—their electoral system, their judicial system, the rulings of the court, and their ability to use those institutions to resolve the impasse that they've reached. And if you look to those institutions, they have very clearly delivered a path for Samoa.

**Media:** Because there has been a deadline of sorts in the last 24 hours.

**PM:** Yeah.

**Media:** It's obviously not happened. So are you having conversations with others in the Pacific—Australia, etc.; you know, the international community. When do you actually step in and say, "Look, you guys"—

**PM:** Actually, when it comes to—you know, our relationship with Samoa is such that, actually, it is very much that I confer with the members of our Cabinet and our Ministers and wider caucus in making those determinations. Yes, absolutely interested in what other Pacific Island nations do, but we do have a very close relationship, and it's my view that we can establish our position, on that basis. I will be looking to talk particularly to our Minister for Pacific Peoples and Minister Mahuta in the next 24 to 48 hours.

**Media:** Do you have an update on the ransomware attack on the 11 schools and businesses?

**PM:** Well, perhaps, actually, from an education perspective, I'll have Minister Hipkins speak and then pick up anything more general that he doesn't—

**Hon Chris Hipkins:** The Ministry of Education has been working with those schools. I understand it's 11 schools and there are some kindergartens also that may have been affected by that, although not the kindergarten head office—it's individual centres. So the Ministry of Education is working with them. I understand that further risk has been isolated, and we are working closely, and we have been for several weeks now—just looking very closely across the schooling system, given the diversity of different systems that are used in schools, to make sure that we're working with them to isolate any potential risk there.

**Media:** So have you come across any other vulnerabilities in any of the other systems?

**Hon Chris Hipkins:** Of course, if I had, I wouldn't say that, because I think the last thing you'd want to do is alert the people who might exploit that to the fact that those vulnerabilities exist. But there are a variety of different systems used across schools. We've actually got a good capability to help schools with providing secure IT systems through the Network for Learning, and we'll be making the very best use of that that we can.

**Media:** An Australian general is investing \$1.4 billion into cyber-security. Are we looking at doing anything similar here, or what's our response to—

**PM:** Obviously, we've had considerable investment across our security and intelligence agencies, including the GCSB, in recent years. But it has become a particular focus for New Zealand, as it has other countries—our cyber-security protocols and support for those that do hold critical infrastructure for New Zealand. And so this is something that we want to continue to reinforce that we at the centre are doing as much as we can to support those organisations that are critical, but also encouraging the private sector to make sure that they are up to date in all of their cyber-security protocols, to ensure that they're well protected against what are not just State actors but, actually, criminal actors.

**Media:** Prime Minister, Kiri Allan returned to Parliament today. What's it like having her back?

**PM:** Fantastic. You know, to have her just walk back into Cabinet and take her seat and just resume the position that she had was a really fantastic moment for everyone, and all of her colleagues were very, very pleased to see her back.

**Media:** Did you help to hold her back from emergency management—did she want to get in there and get active.

**PM:** I think she's made clear that that was my decision. So the national emergency management portfolio, which Minister Allan is absolutely exceptional at, is also a very demanding on-call portfolio. So at any time of day or night, a Minister can be called to action, as we've seen in the past. My intention is that that portfolio absolutely return to Minister Allan. But as this is the first day back, my suggestion to her was that we just hold off on handing that portfolio back over, for a good couple of weeks, to ensure that just, you know, getting back into the swing of things without having that on-call role on top of everything else.

**Media:** Does she inspire you?

**PM:** Yes, she does, actually. But she inspired me before her diagnosis as well.

**Media:** Just as a follow-up on Ben's earlier question about the border, and your answer about mentioning Canada as well, so Canada's ending all border restrictions—

**PM:** That wasn't just for you; it's because I've been reviewing their border changes recently.

**Media:** They're ending them tomorrow.

**PM:** Well, I wouldn't quite call it an end.

**Media:** For fully vaccinated travellers.

**PM:** Yeah, so for fully vaccinated travellers, they're allowing them to enter into Canada, but they have to have a certain vaccine and they also have some obligations around their contact tracing, and so on. So there's an opportunity for us, when we've got a country that isn't necessarily what everyone would call fully vaccinated, is opening up its borders to certain travellers—for us to get a bit of a sense of the likely transmission from those travellers, because they are including testing as part of that. So that, again—almost everyone at some point is undertaking something that is experimental for the rest of the world, and this gives us the opportunity to look at what those experiments produce and the outcomes of that. And we keep a very close eye on all of that and we learn from it.

**Media:** But that's quite a, I guess, attractive thing to hold out for people, that if you're fully vaccinated and you're willing to follow just a couple of rules—

**PM:** Yeah.

**Media:** —you can skip 14 days or three days, if it was. And then you can just travel, just like normal. Do you have any sense of when you might be able to do the same thing here?

**PM:** Whilst we have not put a time line on it, we've always said that we want to look at the evidence of how vaccination reduces transmission, and use that as a way that we can safely look to vary up what we're doing. At the moment, though, again, we are still waiting for some of that evidence. We saw, unfortunately, that those who have not been fully vaccinated still pose a risk—our traveller from Australia—but we have the opportunity now that some countries are starting to experiment a bit in this space, to look and see what they learn from those experiments.

**Media:** In terms of the long-term kind of expectation setting on that, though, obviously not opening up to everyone who's been offered a vaccine, but once everyone's offered a vaccine, you won't get full herd immunity, you won't get 97 percent, just because children can't take it. At that point, would you be OK with some kind of a [*Inaudible*], every now and then, like a seasonal flu, killing maybe [*Inaudible*] people a year, something like that. It's around, but it's not an endemic problem. Or are you in a position that if we eliminated it, it has to stay eliminated for everywhere in New Zealand, and you could be allowed in?

**PM:** So different countries are taking different choices. At the moment, I'd say our thinking has been "Let's continue on a path that preserves as many options for New Zealand as possible.", particularly as we see variants emerging. Variants do pose a new risk. We have to keep seeing what effect variants have on vaccination programmes. So New Zealand has always been in the position where, thankfully, we've been able to make the decisions we

have and pick the path that we travel down, having watched and seen what other countries have done often first. That has proved to be of real benefit to New Zealand. So we will continue to watch and observe. I will also continue to set out our expected path as we go. We've got a period of time now, while we're vaccinating, where we can consider all of those options, and we will continue—as we make those decisions and use Professor David Skegg to help inform our decisions, we will continue to share how we expect to change up our settings while continuing to protect New Zealanders.

**Media:** Would you ever accept having a bit of COVID in the country, though? I mean, if we had a high vaccination rate, there are still going to be some people who are, for whatever reason, not vaccinated. Would you accept it from being herd immunity?

**PM:** And, again, as we consider these issues, and that's where I would put that discussion at the moment—as we consider these issues and these options, the priority for me is how do we continue to preserve what New Zealand has managed to gain and give ourselves options, because this is virus is not done with the world yet. And if we preserve our options, that enables us to make choices that are good for our economy and good for our health. But, of course, what we also want to see is a bit more movement at our border. And I think there are ways we can safely do both.

**Media:** Prime Minister, Treasury just released a draft, like, long-term fiscal positions document, and it says, "Net debt is likely to be on an unsustainable trajectory if expenditure and revenue follow historical trends." And then it said that it thinks it's a good idea if the Government starts looking to—I guess, looking now at small and gradual changes in the near term that can minimise the cost of fiscal pressures across generations. So, basically, it's saying, you know, fiscals are not looking that great, looking longer term, and the Government needs to start acting now. What is your thinking on that? I know we're still in the middle of a crisis, but at what point do we start—

**PM:** That's a fair caveat to add, I think, to that statement. I would say that we are doing just that. I would acknowledge that Bernard sitting just behind you, if he was able to pose that question, would argue that we're not doing enough to invest as part of our economic recovery. So in my view we've struck that balance. And you will have seen in the last Budget, we were very careful to make the decisions that in our view would help support the recovery whilst being very mindful about our long-term debt. And our debt trajectory has actually, based on where we were in the previous Budget, fallen away relative to where economic commentators, but indeed Treasury, was forecasting we would be.

**Media:** Are you comfortable with the human rights—

**PM:** I might—sorry, Jason, if I can—in front of you, given that you've had a question.

**Media:** Prime Minister, what do you make of Louisa Wall's comments this morning around China, criticising they've got what she called slave labour and harvesting of organs from political prisoners, and New Zealand needing to do more, I guess, around that?

**PM:** Labour and the Government already has a position that we do need to move on modern slavery, and in fact it was part of our election manifesto. We also have established within MBIE an advisory group to help support the potential update of legislation in this area. So it's something that we've already started work on, and I expect Minister Wood will have more to say on this issue over the coming months.

**Media:** [*Inaudible*] in light of human rights abuses in China, does that need to be sped up and brought forward?

**PM:** Well, of course, we need to make sure that, when we're looking at modern slavery legislation, we get those settings right, just generally. And so we do want to make sure that we use the input of those who will likely be affected by the law, and that's what that advisory group is all about—helping us get that right, because it affects supply chain, and so on.

**Media:** Would you be looking at some of the same legislation that they have overseas, such as trying to make businesses more accountable to looking into their supply chains?



**PM:** And so it is—you're right to pick up that what we're also interested in, of course, is exploitation in supply chains, and so that's why getting the drafting of that legislation right is really important. We always, as a matter of course, when we're drafting or considering new legislation or amendments to new legislation—we do look at like-minded countries where they have managed to implement something similar. But, equally, as I've said, we do have some members of our business community, the likes of Business New Zealand, who are part of that advisory group helping to support the work we're doing in this area.

**Media:** Louisa says enforced organ harvesting is occurring to service a global market where people are wanting hearts, lungs, eyes, and skin. Do you agree with her? And what evidence is she basing that on?

**PM:** And so I think, probably, it's important that we look from New Zealand's perspective. We do not import organs from any country except as part of donor arrangements with Australia. We have raised, as a Government, the issue of organ transplantation with China, and we have sought updates on this issue and policy reforms for consent and transparency. So this is something that we've raised at that level. When it comes to the wider issue here, again, keeping in mind where the member here has spoken with her IPU hat on rather than as a member of the Government in that regard.

**Media:** But why wouldn't the New Zealand Government condemn—in as strong a term as one of your backbench MPs would—China for this practice?

**PM:** Well, again, I've already pointed out what the New Zealand Government has done. And I'd also point out that particularly on the issue of modern slavery issues we signed up in April, I believe it was, of this year to an ILO statement on this very issue as well.

**Media:** Has she spoken out of turn, then?

**PM:** No, look, as I've said, obviously we speak as Ministers and as representatives of the Government; that doesn't curtail any member who's part of the IPU from speaking with that hat on as well.

**Media:** Prime Minister, do you—

**PM:** I'll take the last question, I think, there, Jenna—Oh, Mark hasn't had one. We'll finish with you, Mark.

**Media:** Do you think it's acceptable that it's taking more than six months to house the top 1 percent of neediest people looking for a State house?

**PM:** You know, I would prefer that we didn't have anyone waiting for suitable housing in New Zealand. But, of course, our priority has to be to making sure that those who are in the most chronic situations, getting them into safe housing as soon as possible. Some on our housing waiting list are in chronic situations. Some will be housed, but not appropriately. But what we do need to do is keep building the houses that enable them to be in those safe houses and those affordable houses.

**Media:** Specifically that 198 in the most chronic category—207 days is too long, isn't it?

**PM:** Yeah, and so particularly, you know, in some cases, as you're well aware, in some cases we have people who are in temporary forms of accommodation. We want that to be for the shortest time possible, but when we move them out we want them to then go into their long-term option. Rather than moving people multiple times, we want the next move to be the long-term move and for them to have safe, stable, affordable housing. We know, though, that this is an issue that has persisted well beyond us. The reason we have hotels being used is because it emerged as a chronic issue under the last Government. Now we have to build our way out of it. Mark.

**Media:** Are you [*Inaudible*] Climate Change Commission, are you open to adopting emissions budgets that are more ambitious than those recommended by the commission or are you sort of tied to what they've put out there?

**PM:** Well, look, you know that I am under obligation, as is the Minister for Climate Change, under the zero carbon Act to give full consideration to what the Climate Commission has produced and also consider whether or not they've undertaken adequate consultation in the advice that they've given us. I need to let that process happen. And so once we've considered that process in full, as we're obliged to do, then we'll be able to comment on some of the detail of your question.

**Media:** Are you comfortable with the \$200—

**PM:** That's very sneaky. I called time on Mark. Thanks to everyone.

**conclusion of press conference**