

# Briefing

## Actions to Increase QR Code Scanning Numbers

<b>Date due to MO:</b>	27 January 2021	<b>Action required by:</b>	N/A
<b>Security level:</b>	IN CONFIDENCE	<b>Health Report number:</b>	HR 20210036
<b>To:</b>	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister for COVID-19 Response		

### Contact for telephone discussion

Name	Position	Telephone
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### Minister's office to complete:

- |   |                                    |  |
|---|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Approved             | <input type="checkbox"/> Decline   | <input type="checkbox"/> Noted               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Needs change         | <input type="checkbox"/> Seen      | <input type="checkbox"/> Overtaken by events |
| <input type="checkbox"/> See Minister's Notes | <input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn |  |

Comment:

# Actions to Increase QR Code Scanning Numbers

**Security level:** IN CONFIDENCE

**Date:** 27 January 2021

**To:** Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister for COVID-19 Response

## Purpose of report

1. This briefing provides advice on what could be done to increase QR code scanning.

## Summary

2. New Zealand's elimination strategy is a sustained approach to keep COVID-19 out, prepare for it, find it, and stamp it out.
3. The Government's "Make Summer Unstoppable" campaign has been promoting the range of things we can all do to stay safe and protect ourselves and others.
4. It is important for people to keep a record of where they have been so that we can quickly contact them if they may have been exposed to the COVID-19 virus. The NZ COVID Tracer app (the app) is one of the tools available to support contact tracing. The app is not the only way for people to keep track of where they have been. People may use the Rippl App, physical diaries (including the Tracer Booklet), workplace calendars, Google Timeline, or taking photos to keep track of their movements. However, we recommend people scan with the app. We have made it easy for people to keep a digital diary by using the app and scanning QR codes.
5. Despite the "Make Summer Unstoppable" campaign, the app saw a reduction in QR code scanning rates over the Christmas/New Year public holiday period. Usage of the app saw a steady increase following the New Year holidays, returning to early December's level of scanning and app usage by January 23.
6. The community case of COVID-19 announced on 24 January resulted in a significant increase of app usage, including over 250,000 people enabling Bluetooth tracing and a return to the level of scanning seen during the previous community outbreak.
7. More than 860,000 New Zealanders have turned on Bluetooth tracing (about 31% of registered users) and the numbers continue to increase, particularly after the community case announced on 24 January. This has been a good response so far.
8. The Ministry of Health (the Ministry) is working to encourage the use of the app, through continued public communications, ongoing app improvements and increasing engagement by providing more information in the app and other techniques that could encourage usage.

9. Current and planned future work includes:
- Continued public communications including getting people to think about how well they can remember where they have been in the past 14 days and debunking myths that the Government is using the app as a tracking device.
  - Making it easier to use the app and improving its performance (making it faster to start up and scan a code) and adding new features.
  - Increasing engagement by providing more information in the app.
10. The Ministry is also working with the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) COVID-19 Group, which is crafting a new marketing plan. The key themes to this work are:
- Can you remember everywhere you have been for the last 14 days? NZCOVID Tracer helps you remember, by scanning or adding manual entries.
  - To enable Bluetooth Tracing, you need to enable Bluetooth Tracing in the app, not just enable Bluetooth on your phone
  - Celebrate businesses and services doing a great job displaying QR Codes, or encouraging customers to scan. Remind and refine our instructions on best QR Code placement
11. Potential future work that is currently being investigated includes:
- Continued public communications including targeted communications for specific high-risk locations, messaging and other activities that directly address the motivation to scan, specifically the "what's in it for me?", in other words "why should I do what you want?".
  - Increasing engagement by rewarding participation.
  - Reducing barriers to app usage and scanning including technology alternatives to QR code scanning.
  - Further research to better understand the use of the app and scanning behaviour.

## Recommendations

We recommend you:

**Note** the current and planned work to increase use of the NZ COVID Tracer app and potential future work that will be investigated further

**Note** that we will provide you with a further update on this work by 3 February 2021, and regular updates after that.



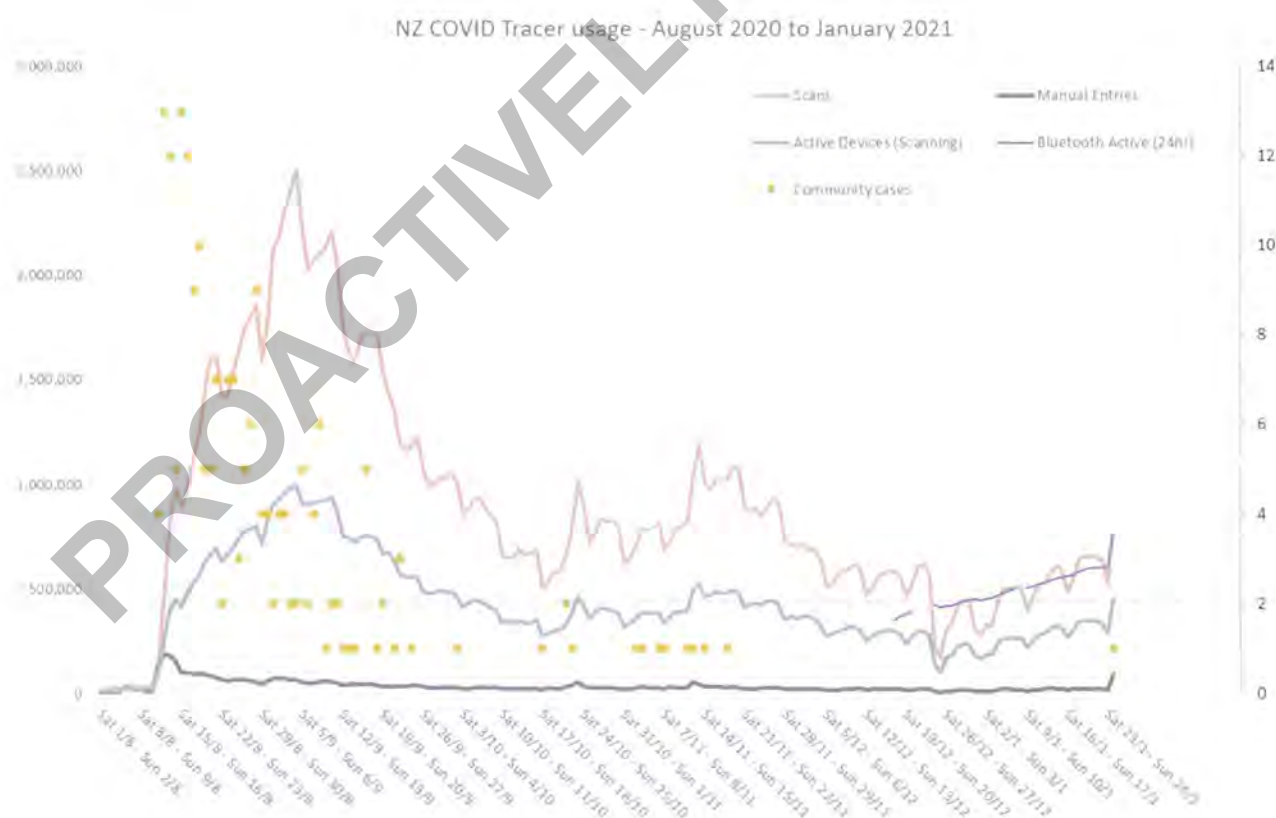
Shayne Hunter  
**Deputy Director-General**  
**Data and Digital**

Hon Chris Hipkins  
**Minister for COVID-19 Response**  
Date:

# Actions to Increase QR Code Scanning Numbers

## Background

12. New Zealand's elimination strategy is a sustained approach to keep COVID-19 out, prepare for it, and stamp it out. We do this through a number of measures including: controlling entry at the border; disease surveillance; physical distancing and hygiene measures; testing; identifying and isolating cases, and tracing and isolating their close contacts; broader public health controls depending on the alert level we are in.
13. The Government's "Make Summer Unstoppable" campaign has been promoting the range of things we can all do to stay safe and protect ourselves and others. It is important for people to keep a record of where they have been so that we can quickly contact them if they may have been exposed to the virus, and they can take steps to protect themselves and others. Encouraging people to download the app, scan QR codes and turn on Bluetooth tracing have been a key part of the campaign and we have seen good uptake of Bluetooth over the past few weeks.
14. The app was launched in May 2020 but had very limited usage until the August outbreak of community transmission in Auckland. Usage from the beginning of August 2020 to 25 January 2021 is illustrated below, with community cases of COVID-19 noted.



15. Usage peaked with 2,509,166 scans by 999,525 devices in a 24-hour period in September 2020, when New Zealand was at Level 2 and Auckland at Level 3 with additional restrictions. Usage has been lower when the country is at Level 1, periodically dropping on weekends and increasing whenever community transmission of COVID-19 is reported.
16. The lowest rate of scanning since the August outbreak was recorded in the 24 hours between 1pm on Christmas and 1pm on Boxing Day 2020, with 170,363 scans by 102,030 devices.
17. Bluetooth tracing was introduced to the app on 10 December. As at the date of this report over 860,000 devices had this feature active.
18. A significant public communications effort has been undertaken over the summer to remind New Zealanders to scan and to turn on Bluetooth tracing, alongside other public health measures. This included an email to all registered app users on 11 December, and advertising both scanning and turning on Bluetooth tracing through TV, outdoor, online, and in-person promotion at summer festivals.
19. On 24 January, a community case of COVID-19 was reported. The case was commended publicly for their usage of the app, both scanning regularly and enabling Bluetooth tracing, which meant that contact tracing and notifying contacts could be done rapidly and thoroughly.
20. A significant increase in app usage was experienced following this case being reported, as has occurred following the emergence of previous community cases. There was also an increase of over 200,000 people enabling Bluetooth tracing following the announcement of the case.
21. No specific target has been set for Bluetooth tracing use, but the Ministry is encouraging anyone who can use it to enable it, as it is a private and easy way to help protect themselves if there is a community case.
22. The app is not the only way for people to keep track of where they have been. People may use the Rippl App, physical diaries (including the Tracer Booklet, of which over 206,000 have been printed and despatched since September. This is over and above copies downloaded and printed by individuals), workplace calendars, Google Timeline, or taking photos to keep track of their movements.

## Considerations

23. Low scanning rates are consistent with previous reductions that we have seen over periods with no community transmission of COVID-19. While these metrics are low, they do not necessarily indicate that the app is not fit-for-purpose or that people are disengaging with the overall contact tracing process.
24. Rather, low usage reflects a public perception of low COVID-19 risk. When community cases occur, there is a steep increase in app usage. This is reflected internationally, for example, a report from Singapore shows that usage of contact tracing tools is correlated with other precautionary measures such as mask usage and hand sanitising.
25. Low scanning numbers may reflect people going less often to businesses that display QR codes. A periodic effect has been observed with lower scan rates on weekends, and many businesses are closed during the public holiday period. Although people travel

across the country during this period, there is a lower level of mobility as people spend time at home with their family, as visible on the Google mobility report.

26. Work is underway to reduce barriers to app usage and scanning and improve engagement through app improvements.
27. Between August and September 2020, the Ministry carried out research with academics from Auckland University of Technology and Victoria University of Wellington. The aim was to understand how best to improve user engagement with the app. This work identified a range of options to increase use of the app, including incentives, gamification of elements of the app, recognition of regular app use, and the involvement of influential figures.
28. Market research commissioned by the Ministry in October 2020 on New Zealanders' attitudes to contact tracing technologies identified a number of concerns and barriers but also found that people were willing to use technology for contact tracing if they felt the risk was real.
29. These reports paved the way for a further report commissioned by the Ministry in November 2020 and carried out by PwC. The PwC report considered the possible application of behavioural science research to use of the app and recommended various actions to drive uptake.
30. The Ministry has reflected aspects of the PwC advice in the planned next release (R6) of the app in early March 2021.

### **Current and planned activity to encourage use of the app**

31. The Ministry is working to encourage the use of the app. This includes:
  - a. Continued public communications, including reminding New Zealanders to scan and to turn on Bluetooth tracing, getting people to think about how well they can remember where they have been in the past 14 days and debunking myths that the Government is using the app as a tracking device.
  - b. Making it easier to use the app, improving its performance (making it faster to start up and scan a code) and adding new features.
  - c. Increasing engagement by providing more information in the app:
    - i. showing statistics about the country's app usage (showing that scanning is a social norm)
    - ii. showing metrics about your own app usage
    - iii. showing statistics about COVID-19 cases and tests (reminding people about COVID-19 and giving a reason to open the app regularly)
    - iv. showing where COVID-19 Testing locations are and the option to receive your negative COVID-19 test results (making the app the go-to place for all your COVID-19 information)
    - v. showing where COVID-19 immunisation locations are and the option to view/share your vaccination status (making the app the go-to place for all your COVID-19 information).
32. The Ministry is also working with the DPMC COVID-19 Group, which is responsible for the Unite Against COVID Response. The DPMC is crafting a new marketing plan and will

be working with advertising and media companies to get the campaign into the market. We are working closely with the DPMC to ensure that our policy and communications work is aligned.

33. There are three key themes to this work, which aligns with the PwC recommendations:
- Can you remember everywhere you have been for the last 14 days? NZCOVID Tracer helps you remember, by scanning or adding manual entries. Backfill your movements now while you can still remember, then keep scanning
  - To enable Bluetooth Tracing, you need to enable Bluetooth Tracing in the app, not just enable Bluetooth on your phone
  - Celebrate businesses and services doing a great job displaying QR codes, or encouraging customers to scan. Remind and refine our advice on best QR code placement to complement the current legal requirement to display QR codes near the entrance.
34. The Ministry understands that the marketing plan will be finalised by Friday 29 January. We will support this marketing plan with social media posts and media influencing, and ensure that our advice is updated to reflect these themes.
35. Working with businesses and services to improving QR code owner practice will include a range of actions, such as
- i. good and innovative placement of QR codes – multiple posters, visible and accessible including people with disabilities
  - ii. communications with QR code owners to remind them of their obligations, promote good practice, prompt them to refresh QR code posters and provide tips for making it easier for people to scan
  - iii. making it even easier for people to sign up for QR codes for private events or locations
  - iv. considering refreshed or targeted branding to provide a visual reminder and prompt of the need to scan.

### **Potential future activity to encourage use of the app**

36. The latest version of the app roadmap is attached. This illustrates the further planned improvements to the app itself. As well as this work, other activity that the Ministry is exploring includes:
- a. Continued public communications, including targeted marketing for specific locations such as mass events or high-risk venues, messaging and other activities that directly address the motivation to scan, specifically the “what’s in it for me?”, in other words “why should I do what you want?”.

- b. Increasing engagement, through actions such as:
    - i. providing a survey or prompt within the app, potentially triggered by low scanning rates, to ask people if they can remember where they have been in the last 14 days. This could be expanded to an “assess your readiness” test
    - ii. showing information to remind people why it is important to scan and enable Bluetooth, such as a checklist in the app informing people of the information they will be asked for by contact tracers if they test positive
    - iii. recognising or rewarding good scanning practice.
  - c. Reducing barriers to app usage and scanning, such as:
    - i. technology alternatives to QR scanning such as checking in through NFC (Near Field Communication) - tap to scan in
    - ii. technology alternatives for mass events such as use of Bluetooth beacons as trialled by the Rippl app
    - iii. integrating with other apps so that people can keep track of where they have been in the way that is easiest for them, which also enables a fuller picture of participation in the system.
  - d. Research to better understand:
    - i. other ways people are keeping track of their movements
    - ii. regional and demographic differences in scanning behaviour during Level 1 (this information is not collected through the current app due to the privacy-preserving nature of the app)
    - iii. attitudes towards contact tracing and towards the app.
37. We continue to receive public and expert commentary on ways to increase scanning, and we are assessing the suggestions on a case-by-case basis.

## Equity

38. The Ministry is aware that a substantial number of New Zealanders are not able to use the app, because they do not have access to a mobile phone that runs the app. This includes people with phones on operating systems older than Android 6.0 or iOS 11 or with broken cameras. This disproportionately affects vulnerable communities.
39. The Ministry can use the outcomes of the Rotorua Bluetooth card trial to inform further advice on how to better support vulnerable communities. You will be provided further advice on this in February.

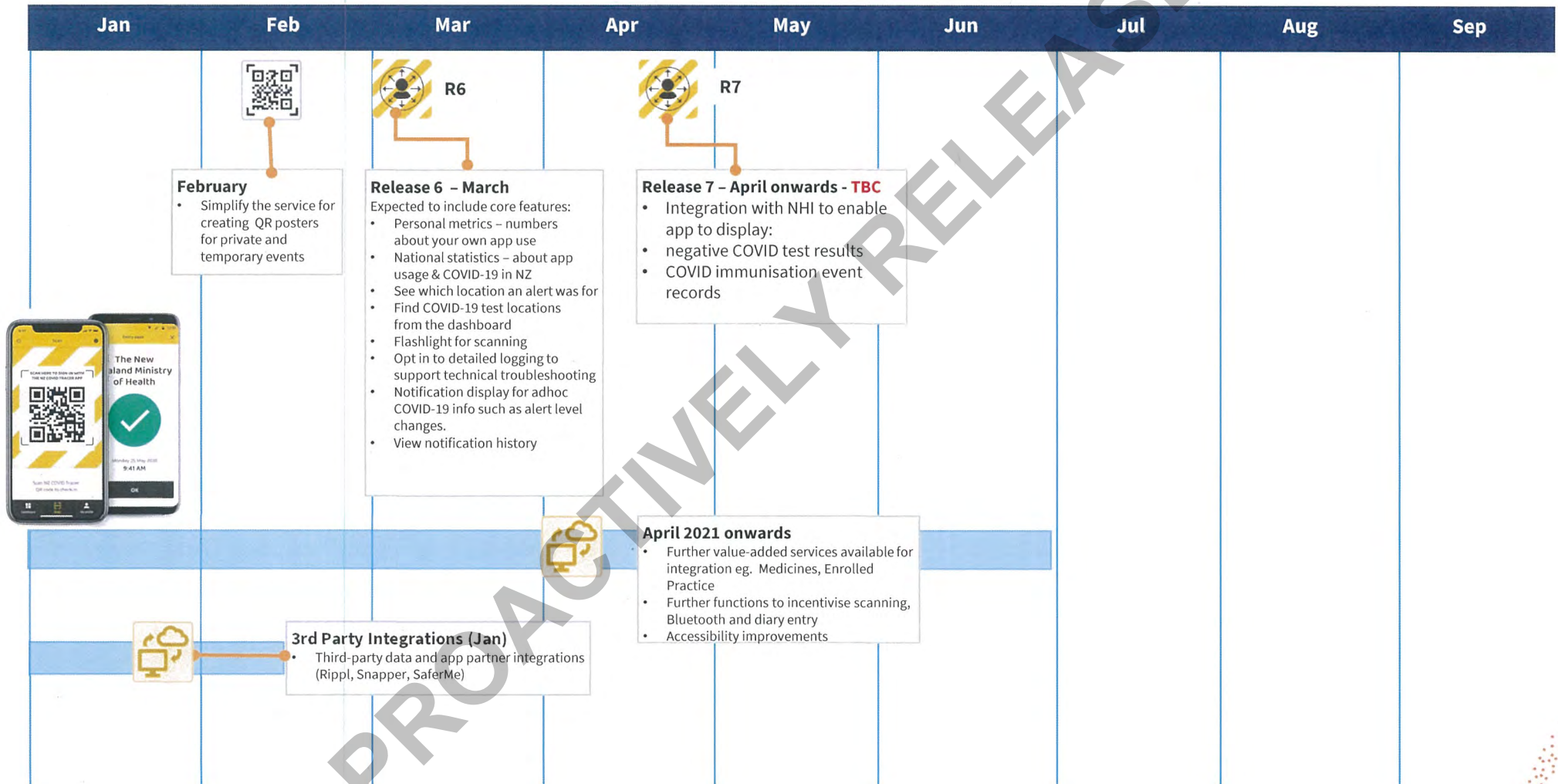
## Next steps

40. The Ministry will keep you informed about current and proposed work to increase use of the app by 3 February 2021, and regular updates after that.

ENDS.

# NZ COVID Tracer & Integrated Technologies Roadmap 2021

V4 Jan 2021



## NZ COVID Tracer high level milestones 2021

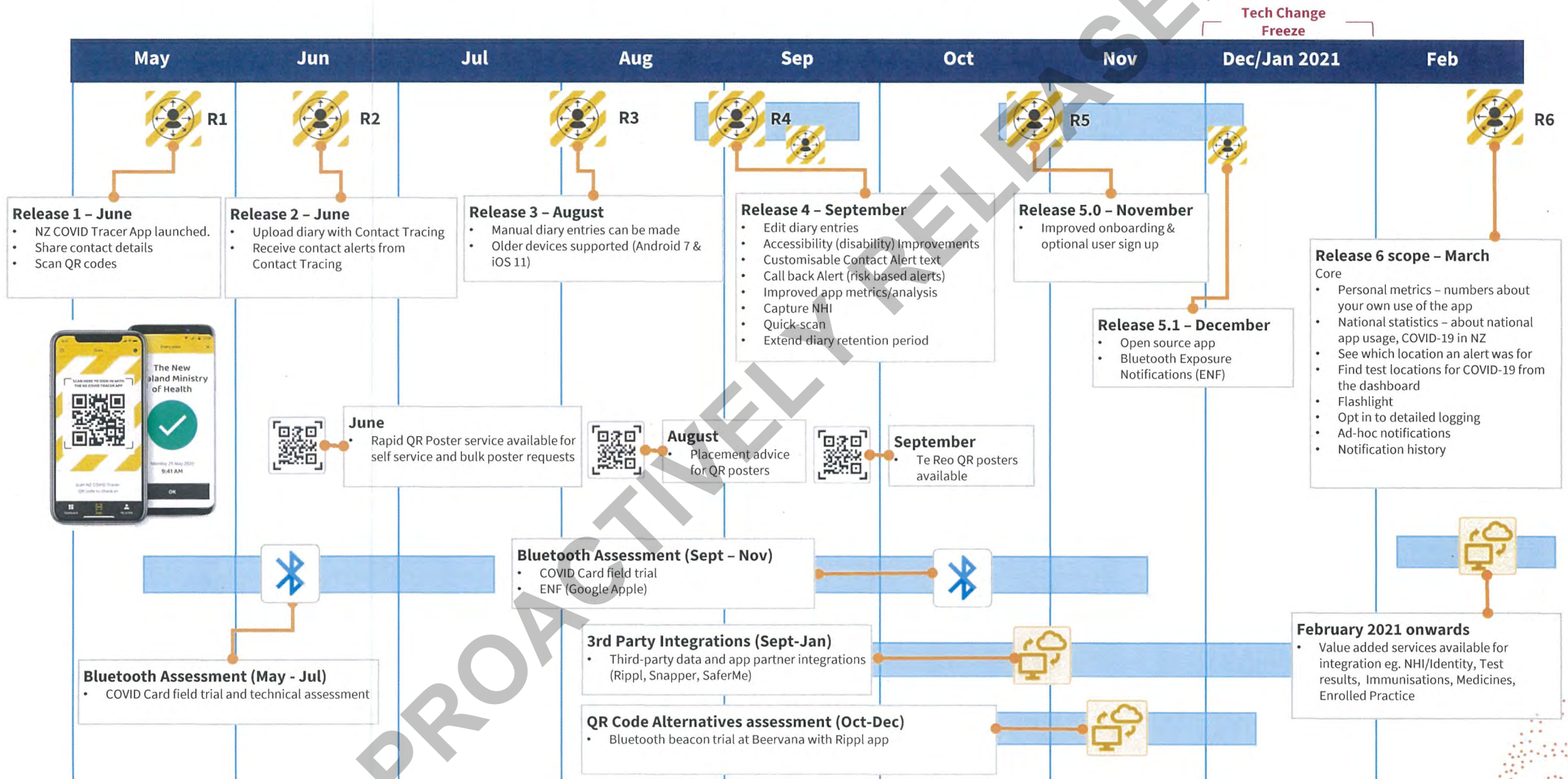
Milestone	Feature	Date(s)
Release 6	Features to reduce friction, promote engagement, improve alert and notification experience, and promote COVID test locations.	3 March (target)
Release 7	Exact scope to be confirmed. Candidate scope includes features to support immunisation, testing, and safe travel.	29 April (target)

PROACTIVELY RELEASED



# NZ COVID Tracer & Integrated Technologies Roadmap 2020

V3 Jan 2021



# NZ COVID Tracer high level milestones 2020

Milestone	Feature	Date(s)
Release 1	NZ COVID Tracer app launched. Allowed users to send their contact details to Contact Tracing team and scan QR codes.	20-May
Release 2	Release 2 launched. Allowed users to share their diary with Contact Tracing team and receive contact alerts if they have scanned into the same place as a confirmed case within specified date/time range.	10-Jun
Rapid QR	Launch of the Rapid QR Poster generation service for businesses. Self-service and bulk processing available.	13-Jun
Release 3	Release 3 launched. Users can make manual diary entries, app available to older device models (Android 7 and iOS11).	29-Jul
Rapid QR	Rapid QR Service includes poster placement instructions	7-Aug
Release 4	Release 4 launched. Users can edit their diary entries, enter their NHI, Contact tracing team can customise the contact alert message and offer to call user back if the location is considered high risk.	3-Sep
ENF	Bluetooth technology solution ready to support trial of the Apple/Google Electronic Notification Framework (ENF)	4-Sep
Rapid QR	QR Posters available in te reo	24-Sep
Release 5	Release 5 launched. Removal of registration to improve user on-boarding process, improved dashboard.	23-Nov
Open Source	NZ COVID Tracer App Open source code available.	8-Dec
Release 5.1 ENF	Release 5.1 launched. Bluetooth Tracing using Google/Apple Exposure Notification Framework (ENF)	10-Dec
ENF	Contact Tracing able to send Bluetooth Exposure Notifications	17-Dec

