

# Briefing

## COVID-19 Vaccine Strategy – 2022 Pfizer Delivery Schedule

**Date due to MO:** 19 April 2022      **Action required by:** 26 April 2022

**Security level:** Commercially Sensitive      **Health Report number:** HR20220599

**To:** Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern, Prime Minister  
Hon Grant Robertson, Minister of Finance  
Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister for COVID-19 Response  
Hon Andrew Little, Minister of Health  
Hon Nanaia Mahuta, Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Hon Aupito William Sio, Minister for Pacific Peoples  
Hon Dr Ayesha Verrall, Associate Minister of Health  
Hon Peeni Henare, Associate Minister of Health

### Contact for telephone discussion

Name	Position	Telephone
Maree Roberts	Deputy Director-General, System Strategy and Policy	s 9(2)(a)
Allison Bennett	Manager, System Enablers, Public Health System Policy	s 9(2)(a)

### Minister's office to complete:

- Approved       Decline       Noted
- 
- Needs change       Seen       Overtaken by events
- See Minister's Notes       Withdrawn

Comment:

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## Purpose of report

1. This briefing seeks your agreement to the total number of additional doses of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine to purchase for the second half of 2022, and the preferred delivery schedule of these doses.

## Key Points

2. As previously agreed by Ministers, officials have been negotiating an amendment to the current agreement with Pfizer to secure an additional 5.33 million doses in the second half of 2022 [HR20220221 refers].
3. As part of these negotiations, there is an opportunity to work with Pfizer to optimise the delivery schedule of these additional doses. This ensures doses are available for those that need them, while minimising the risk of underutilisation and wastage.
4. There is also an opportunity to reduce the total amount of doses in this additional purchase, depending on the assumptions Ministers wish to make regarding the ongoing COVID-19 vaccine supply.
5. Updated forecasting has been carried out by the Programme to support this decision, with future uptake estimates in cohorts based off historical uptake rates rather than the previously used scenarios, which aimed to ensure doses were available for all New Zealanders within each cohort.
6. This forecasting approach has resulted in lower expected demand levels across cohorts, and a revised optimal delivery profile. Officials have subsequently developed options in this paper, including a recommended approach of reducing the total number of additional doses for delivery in the second half of 2022 to 3 million.
7. Following agreement from Vaccine Ministers on the preferred option, officials will progress with finalising negotiations with Pfizer, and the Director-General will be asked to sign the amendment to the APA on behalf of the Crown.

## Recommendations

- a) **Note** that Vaccine Ministers previously agreed to purchase an additional 5.33 million doses of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine at a total cost of s 9(2)(b)(ii) for delivery in the second half of 2022 to support New Zealand and Polynesia's ongoing immunisation needs, specifically [HR 20220272 refers]:
- primary courses for children aged 6 months to 4 years
  - booster doses for children 5 to 11 years
  - further booster doses for adults aged 12 and older
  - vaccines formulated for new variants
  - s 6(a)
- b) **Note** that following direction from Vaccine Ministers, officials have progressed negotiations with Pfizer, and there is now an opportunity to confirm and optimise the delivery schedule of these additional doses.
- c) **Note** that there is also an opportunity to reduce the total amount of doses, dependant on the assumptions Ministers wish to make regarding ongoing COVID-19 vaccine supply.
- d) **Note** that, in the changing context of the pandemic, the COVID-19 Vaccine and Immunisation Programme has carried out updated COVID-19 vaccine uptake forecasting based off historical uptake rates. This is opposed to the previously used scenarios which aimed to ensure doses were available for all New Zealanders within each cohort.
- e) **Agree** to one of the following options:
- Option 1** - maintain the initially negotiated 5.33 million additional doses, s 9(2)(b)(ii)  Yes  No
  - Option 2** - maintain the initially negotiated 5.33 million additional doses, s 9(2)(b)(ii)  Yes  No
  - Option 3 (recommended)**- reduce the total amount of additional doses to be purchased from 5.33 million to 3 million, s 9(2)(b)(ii)  Yes  No
- f) **Note** that regardless of the option selected, the allocation of additional paediatric doses (5 to 11 year olds) needs to be confirmed.

g) **Agree** to allocate 500,000 to 11 year olds vaccine, s 9(2)(b)(ii) s the paediatric (5  **Yes**  **No**)

h) s 9(2)(b)(ii)

Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern

**Prime Minister**

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Hon Grant Robertson

**Minister of Finance**

...../...../.....

Hon Chris Hipkins

**Minister for COVID-19 Response**

...../...../.....

Hon Andrew Little

**Minister of Health**

...../...../.....



Hon Nanaia Mahuta

**Minister of Foreign Affairs**

..26/..04/..2022

Hon Aupito William Sio

**Minister for Pacific Peoples**

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Hon Dr Ayesha Verrall

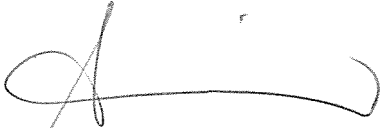
**Associate Minister of Health**

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Hon Peeni Henare

**Associate Minister of Health**

...../...../.....



Dr Ashley Bloomfield  
**Director-General of Health**

15.4.22  
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# COVID-19 Vaccine Strategy – 2022 Pfizer Delivery Schedule

## Background

*Pfizer's vaccine remains the primary COVID-19 vaccine in the Programme*

8. The four COVID-19 vaccines in our vaccine portfolio (supplied by Pfizer, Novavax, AstraZeneca, and Janssen) have been utilised in different ways to support our national COVID-19 response, and the global response to the pandemic.
9. Pfizer's vaccine was the first COVID-19 vaccine approved by Medsafe, and has been available in New Zealand through our COVID-19 Immunisation Programme (the Programme) since 20 February 2021.
10. To date, a total of 15.6 million doses of Pfizer's vaccine have been secured under our agreement with Pfizer, which includes both adult doses (for people aged 12 and over) and paediatric doses (for children aged 5 to 11).
11. As of 13 April, over 10.6 million doses of Pfizer's adult vaccine, and 360,000 doses of Pfizer's paediatric vaccine have been administered.
12. 290,000 doses of Pfizer's vaccine have also been donated to Polynesia to support the regional COVID-19 pandemic response s 6(a)
13. AstraZeneca and Novavax's COVID-19 vaccines are also available in the Programme as alternatives to Pfizer, however uptake of each vaccine has been low in comparison to Pfizer's vaccine (as of 5 April, 8,592 doses of AstraZeneca and 1,791 doses of Novavax's have been administered, primarily due to high levels of uptake of Pfizer's vaccine).
14. Janssen's vaccine has not been made available in New Zealand, with all 2 million doses under our advance purchase agreement (APA) with Janssen donated to the COVAX Facility to support the global pandemic response. In addition, 8.2 million doses of AstraZeneca's vaccine have also been donated to the COVAX Facility, although we understand that 3.5 million doses be written off due to global over supply of AstraZeneca and as developing countries reach health system capacity constraints.

*Officials are finalising an agreement to purchase an additional 5.33 million doses of Pfizer's vaccine*

15. The COVID-19 pandemic continues, with vaccination remaining a key part of the response, particularly for the protection of vulnerable population groups.
16. As directed by Ministers, officials have been negotiating an amendment to the current agreement with Pfizer to secure an additional 5.33 million doses in the second half of 2022 [HR20220221 refers].
17. The intention of this purchase is to ensure access to additional vaccines to potentially support:
  - a. primary courses for children aged 6 months to 4 years
  - b. booster doses for children 5 to 11 years
  - c. further booster doses for adults aged 12 and older
  - d. vaccines formulated for new variants
  - e. s 6(a)

18. As part of these negotiations, there is an opportunity to work with Pfizer to optimise the delivery schedule of these additional doses. This ensures doses are available for those that need them, while minimising the risk of underutilisation and wastage.
19. Before this delivery schedule is finalised, there is also an opportunity to reduce the total amount of doses in this additional purchase, depending on the assumptions Ministers wish to make regarding the ongoing COVID-19 vaccine supply.
20. **s 9(2)(b)(ii)**

## Forecasting

*Officials have carried out forecasting for the remainder of 2022*

21. The original figure of 5.33 million additional doses was established using assumptions of very high levels of uptake, based off the uptake seen for primary courses in the 12+ population.
22. However, the changing context of the pandemic has shifted the Programme's response. With a large number of New Zealanders having now been infected with COVID-19, restrictions such as vaccination certificates have been relaxed.
23. Forecasting has been carried out by the Programme, with future uptake estimates in cohorts based off historical uptake rates rather than the previously used scenarios, which aimed to ensure doses were available for all New Zealanders within each cohort.
24. This forecasting approach has resulted in lower expected demand levels across cohorts, and a revised optimal delivery profile. This is summarised in Table 1 below, with the assumptions outlined in Appendix 1.

*Table 1. Forecasted domestic vaccine demand across cohorts*

Cohort	<b>s 9(2)(g)(i)</b>	Q2 2022	Q3 2022	Q4 2022	Total
Adult doses (12+)		950,000	1,870,000	365,000	<b>3,185,000</b>
		700,000	1,440,000	255,000	<b>2,395,000</b>
Paediatric doses (5-11s)		150,000	85,000	40,000	<b>275,000</b>
		140,000	100,000	50,000	<b>290,000</b>
Infant doses (0.5-4s)		-	125,000	90,000	<b>215,000</b>
			120,000	90,000	<b>210,000</b>

## Delivery Schedule to support the Programme

*Current stock situation*

25. There are currently approximately 2 million doses of Pfizer's adult vaccine in central storage. **s 9(2)(b)(ii)** As noted in the forecasting, just under a million doses are expected to be administered across Q2 2022 (primarily as fourth doses in older population groups).

26. [REDACTED]

*A decision is required on the optimal delivery schedule for additional adult doses*

27. Forecasting suggests an expected 1.8 million adult doses will be used in Q3 2022, assuming a second booster for everyone aged 18 and up from 1 July 2022.
28. Accounting for wastage, donations to Polynesia, and a minimum supply buffer to manage any unexpected increase in uptake, officials recommend that we would need to receive an additional [REDACTED]
29. A further [REDACTED] would support forecasted domestic demand, as well as donations to [REDACTED] additional adult doses in the second half of 2022).

*Infant doses [REDACTED]*

30. Pfizer has been developing and trialling vaccines for children aged six months to four years of age. Indications at this stage are that this vaccine, if successfully developed, would not be available until 1 July 2022 at the earliest.
31. Forecasting for this age group has used assumptions that mirrors uptake seen in the 5 to 11 year olds cohort. Accounting for donation [REDACTED] it is expected that 500,000 doses would be sufficient to cover this population group.
32. [REDACTED]
33. Officials recommend [REDACTED] This would support high levels of uptake initially and then provide sustainable access to support ongoing uptake, including as children age into the eligible cohort.

*A decision is also required on the number of paediatric doses required*

34. Approximately 500,000 additional doses of Pfizer's paediatric vaccine, [REDACTED] would support the potential need for boosters in the 5-11 age group from 1 July 2022, including in Polynesia.
35. [REDACTED]
36. A summary of the overall expected supply needs is outlined in Table 2, below.



*Supporting Polynesia's ongoing COVID-19 immunisation needs*

- 37. New Zealand is committed to supporting Polynesia with its ongoing COVID-19 immunisation needs. Table 2 includes purchasing s 9(2)(b)(ii) doses for Polynesia will enable Polynesia to continue to access COVID-19 vaccines s 6(a)

### Options for negotiations

*Officials consider there are three options to approach the purchase of additional doses*

- 38. Following agreement from Vaccine Ministers [HR20220221 refers], negotiations with Pfizer began with a proposed 5.33 million doses s 9(2)(b)(ii)
- 39. As noted, this quantity accounted for very high levels of uptake (based on uptake levels seen for primary courses in adults aged 12 and over).
- 40. Continuing with this approach would enable revaccination of all population groups at very high levels, s 9(2)(b)(ii)
- 41. Additionally, as more data becomes available, the shelf life of Pfizer's vaccine is likely to be extended. This means doses purchased in the second half of 2022 are likely to support future needs right through until the second half of 2023.
- 42. **Option 1** is to maintain the initially negotiated 5.33 million additional doses, s 9(2)(b)(ii)
- 43. **Option 2** would be to maintain access to an additional 5.33 million doses, s 9(2)(b)(ii)
- 44. Option 2 would capitalise on the same benefits as option 1 but would extend the shelf life for a larger number of doses to support utilisation in 2023. s 9(2)(b)(ii)
- 45. s 9(2)(b)(ii)

46. However, the risks with both options are primarily cost and wastage. With the changing context of the pandemic and vaccine uptake, ordering the entire 5.33 million doses could result in vaccines not being used and unnecessary wastage. The total cost of 5.33 million doses is **§ 9(2)(b)(ii)**.
47. It should be noted that we will also have access to significant quantities of Novavax, with the current proposed delivery schedule outlined below in Table 3. Novavax is currently only approved as a primary course but expected to be available as a heterologous booster in the coming months.

**§ 9(2)(b)(ii)**

48. The context of purchasing is also changing. While COVID-19 vaccine purchasing continues in the form of APAs, the level of manufacturing and supply is now matching demand and in some cases exceeding it (as is the case with AstraZeneca's vaccine). This means that offers to secure supply are becoming less time-limited, and purchasers are likely to have more flexibility in adjusting delivery schedules to include additional doses moving forward.
49. Therefore **option 3 (recommended)** is to reduce the total amount of additional doses to be purchased from 5.33 million to 3 million **§ 9(2)(b)(ii)**
50. The evolving purchasing context means officials expect that additional doses could be purchased at a later date, either to support higher levels of uptake or use in 2023.
51. The total cost of this option would be **§ 9(2)(b)(ii)**
52. **Officials are also seeking your agreement, regardless of the selected option, to allocate 500,000 of the purchased doses as the paediatric (5-11 years) vaccine, § 9(2)(b)(ii)**

## Equity

53. Ongoing access to COVID-19 vaccines is essential to enable maximum protection for our population, particularly in the context of the omicron variant and the evolving threat of COVID-19.
54. Māori and Pacific populations have been most affected by COVID-19 in the community to date, making up a disproportionate percentage of cases and hospitalisations and have a lower uptake of the COVID-19 vaccine.
55. Ensuring there are safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines which are accessible in sufficient volumes enables the programme to continue, without delay and protect the most vulnerable groups at risk of harm from COVID-19. Providing a choice of vaccine through the Programme is likely to reduce hesitancy of some individuals and increase overall uptake.

## Next steps

56. Once Vaccine Ministers agree to the preferred option, officials will progress with finalising negotiations with Pfizer, and the Director-General will be asked to sign the amendment to the APA on behalf of the Crown.

57. s 9(2)(b)(ii)

ENDS.

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## Appendix 1 – Assumptions to support domestic uptake forecasting

Cohort	Q2 2022	Q3 2022	Q4 2022	Total
Adult doses (12+)	950,000	1,870,000	365,000	3,185,000
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First booster doses available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ for 16-17s from 7 April 2022</li> <li>○ for 12-15s from 1 May 2022</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Uptake of boosters for 16-17s and 12-15s was calculated by assuming they will follow the same uptake rates as 18-30s</li> <li>• Second booster doses available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ for 65+ (50+ Maori, Pasifika) from 1 May 2022</li> <li>○ for 18+ from 1 July 2022</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Second booster uptake for 65+ (50+ Māori/Pasifika) was calculated by assuming they will follow the same uptake rates as first booster doses, multiplied by an adjustment to account for expected reduction in uptake.</li> <li>• Second booster uptake for the remaining 18+ population was calculated by assuming they will follow the same uptake rates as first booster doses, multiplied by an adjustment to account for expected reduction in uptake.</li> <li>• Second booster doses available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ for 16-17s+ from 7 October 2022</li> <li>○ for 12-15s from 1 November 2022</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Second booster uptake for 16-17s and 12-15s was calculated by assuming they will follow the same uptake rates as first booster doses for 18-30, multiplied by an adjustment to account for expected reduction in uptake.</li> </ul>			
Paediatric doses (5-11s)	150,000	85,000	40,000	275,000
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boosters available for 5-11s from 1 July 2022</li> <li>• Uptake of boosters for 5-11s was calculated by assuming they will follow the same uptake rates as dose 2 uptake for 5-11s multiplied by an adjustment to account for expected reduction in uptake.</li> </ul>			
Infant doses (0.5-4s)	-	500	65,000	65,500

Assumptions

- Primary course (3 doses) available for 0.5-4s from 1 July 2022
- Primary course uptake for infants was calculated by assuming they will follow the same uptake rates as primary course 5-11s.

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