

# Briefing

## COVID-19 Vaccine Portfolio Update – May 2022

**Date due to MO:** 26 May 2022                      **Action required by:** 3 June 2022

**Security level:** **Commercially Sensitive**      **Health Report number:** HR20220852

**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
<b>Maree Roberts</b>	Deputy Director-General, System Strategy and Policy	s 9(2)(a)
<b>Allison Bennett</b>	Acting Group Manager, Public Health System Policy	s 9(2)(a)

### 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 Withdrawn |  |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:

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## Purpose of report

1. This briefing provides an update on the COVID-19 vaccine portfolio, and seeks your agreement to s 9(2)(b)(ii) support the COVID-19 Immunisation Programme (the Programme).
2. This briefing also includes progress on the development of a COVID-19 vaccine strategy for the next 12 months and the transfer of portfolio management responsibilities to Pharmac.

## Key Points

*Officials are seeking agreement to update the delivery schedule for Pfizer in 2022*

3. Following direction from Vaccine Ministers to maintain an mRNA-based Programme, officials have been negotiating with Pfizer for the purchase of additional doses in the second half of 2022 to support potential ongoing immunisation needs [HR20220221 refers].
4. As negotiations have progressed, the changing context of the pandemic and the Programme's response has resulted in the original quantity of additional doses being reduced from 5.33 million to 3 million [HR20220599 refers]. Pfizer has also provided an indication of when new and updated versions of its vaccine will likely be available.
5. Forecasting has been carried out by the Programme, which in tandem with newly understood timelines around a potential updated version of Pfizer's vaccine, helps determine the optimal delivery schedule for the remainder of 2022.

**s 9(2)(b)(ii)**

- 6. Vaccine Ministers previously agreed to maintain access to Novavax's COVID-19 vaccine as New Zealand's primary non-mRNA option, which has since been made available through the Programme since March 2022.
- 7. New Zealand has access to significant quantities of Novavax, with 10.72 million doses secured under the APA in total, which means there is a high risk of underutilisation and wastage.
- 8. **s 9(2)(b)(ii)**
- 9. Work continues in the portfolio space to manage our agreements with Janssen and AstraZeneca, as well as progress on an updated COVID-19 Immunisation Strategy and the transfer of responsibilities to Pharmac.

## Recommendations

We recommend you:

- a) **Note** Vaccine Ministers previously agreed to maintain an mRNA-based Programme, and officials have been negotiating the purchase of additional doses from Pfizer in the second half of 2022 through an amendment to the existing supply agreement with Pfizer.
- b) **Note** that the changing context of the pandemic and the Programme's response has resulted in the original quantity of additional doses to purchase being reduced from 5.33 million to 3 million.
- c) **Note** that Pfizer has now provided additional information on the availability of new and updated versions of its vaccine, which influences the timing and optimal delivery schedule of these doses.
- d) **Note** that there are approximately 2.4 million doses of Pfizer's adult vaccine in storage that don't expire until September at the earliest, which is sufficient to support our immunisation needs in Q3 2022.
- e) **s 9(2)(b)(ii)**  Yes/No
- f) **s 9(2)(b)(ii)**  Yes/No
- g) **s 9(2)(b)(ii)**  Yes/No
- h) **Note** Vaccine Ministers previously agreed to maintain access to Novavax's COVID-19 vaccine as New Zealand's primary non-mRNA option, in order to support the longer-term vaccine portfolio approach to managing future potential immunisation needs.

f) **Note** that based on forecasting of domestic usage and demand for donations, the expected number of doses of Novavax's vaccine to be delivered in 2022 would result in significant underutilisation and wastage.

h) s 9(2)(b)(ii) [Redacted]  Yes/No

i) s 9(2)(b)(ii) [Redacted]

j) s 9(2)(b)(ii) [Redacted]  Yes/No

k) **Note** further advice will be provided in the coming months in relation to the updated COVID-19 Immunisation Strategy, the transfer of COVID-19 portfolio management functions to Pharmac, and whether there is an ongoing need to maintain access to AstraZeneca's vaccine in the Programme.

Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern  
**Prime Minister**

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Hon Grant Robertson  
**Minister of Finance**

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

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

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Hon Andrew Little  
**Minister of Health**

29.5.22

Hon Nanaia Mahuta  
**Minister of Foreign Affairs**

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

Hon Aupito William Sio  
**Minister for Pacific Peoples**

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

Hon Dr Ayesha Verrall

**Associate Minister of Health**

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Hon Peeni Henare

**Associate Minister of Health**

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Maree Roberts

**Deputy Director-General of Health,  
System Strategy & Policy**

27/05/2022

Proactive Release

# COVID-19 Vaccine Portfolio Update – May 2022

## Background

### *Vaccine Portfolio utilisation to date*

1. 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.
2. Pfizer's vaccine was the first COVID-19 vaccine approved by Medsafe, and has been the primary vaccine available in New Zealand through our COVID-19 Immunisation Programme (the Programme) since.
3. AstraZeneca and Novavax's COVID-19 vaccines have also been available in the Programme as alternatives to Pfizer's vaccine. Uptake of each vaccine has been low in comparison, primarily due to high levels of uptake of Pfizer's vaccine.
4. Janssen's vaccine has not been made available in New Zealand. All 2 million doses secured under our advance purchase agreement (APA) with Janssen have been committed for donation to the COVAX Facility to support the global pandemic response.

### *Pfizer's vaccine remains the primary vaccine in the Programme*

5. Vaccine Ministers previously agreed to maintain an mRNA-based Programme, including the purchase of additional doses to support potential ongoing immunisation needs [HR2022023 refers].
6. Following this direction, officials have been negotiating the purchase of additional doses in the second half of 2022 through an amendment to the current agreement with Pfizer. [HR20220221 refers].
7. The changing context of the pandemic and the Programme's response has resulted in the original quantity of additional doses being reduced from 5.33 million to 3 million [HR20220599 refers].
8. As negotiations have progressed, Pfizer has provided additional information on the availability of new and updated versions of its vaccine, which influences the timing and optimal delivery schedule of these doses. This is outlined further in this paper

s 9(2)(b)(ii)

### *Novavax's vaccines will remain available to support the Programme*

9. Vaccine Ministers also previously agreed to maintain access to Novavax's COVID-19 vaccine as New Zealand's primary non-mRNA option, in order to support the longer-term vaccine portfolio approach to managing future potential immunisation needs [HR2022023 refers].
10. Novavax has since been made available through the Programme, with 3,753 doses administered as of 25 May 2022. New Zealand has access to significant quantities of Novavax, with 10.72 million doses secured under the APA in total. Currently,

s 9(2)(b)(ii)

█ doses of Novavax's vaccine are scheduled for delivery across 2022, creating a high risk of wastage.

11. s 9(2)(b)(ii) █

## **Pfizer Delivery Schedule for the remainder of 2022**

12. Vaccine Ministers recently agreed to adjust the total amount of additional vaccines to be purchased from Pfizer to 3 million, s 9(2)(b)(ii) █ [HR20220599 refers]. This number includes s 9(2)(b)(ii) █ paediatric doses s 9(2)(b)(ii) █. The 3 million dose total and corresponding delivery schedule was based on forecasted levels of uptake and existing levels of supply at the time the advice was provided.

s 9(2)(b)(ii) █

13. However, Pfizer has since offered further information regarding the potential availability of an updated version of the vaccine. In addition, the forecasting and existing levels of stock have been adjusted as the timelines for the potential rollout of fourth doses for vulnerable population groups has shifted.

### *Current stock situation*

14. There are currently approximately 2.4 million doses of Pfizer's adult vaccine in central storage. s 9(2)(b)(ii) █ These doses do not begin to expire until September 2022, meaning they can be utilised throughout Q2 and Q3 2022.

15. As a result, we can expect to have over 2.5 million doses at hand at the start of Q3 2022, prior to the expected rollout of fourth doses to vulnerable population groups.

### *Forecasting for the remainder of 2022*

16. The intention of this purchase remains the same as initially agreed, which is to ensure access to additional vaccines to potentially support:

- a. primary courses for children aged 6 months to 4 years (infant doses)
- 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)

17. Forecasting has been carried out by the Programme, with future uptake estimates in cohorts based off historical uptake rates. The forecasting assumes a rollout of fourth doses for the vulnerable population from 1 July 2022, extended to the general population from 1 October 2022 (linked to the potential availability of a new version of the vaccine). Forecasted demand across cohorts is outlined below in Table 2:

Table 2. Forecasted domestic vaccine demand across cohorts

Cohort	Q3 2022	Q4 2022	Total
Adult doses (12+)	910,000	1,360,000	2,270,000
Paediatric doses (5-11s)	100,000	50,000	150,000
Infant doses (0.5-4s)	120,000	90,000	210,000

An updated version of Pfizer's vaccine may be available from Q4 2022

18. Pfizer has informed officials that while development is still dependant on clinical trial data and successful regulatory approval, an updated version of its vaccine that may provide better protection from the Omicron variant (and potentially future variants) could be manufactured and readily available from Q4 2022.

19. It is expected that should an updated version become available, most of the eligible population would prefer to receive it over the existing version. s 9(2)(b)(ii) we expect to have sufficient doses in stock to support the needs of the Programme throughout Q3 2022.

s 9(2)(b)(ii)

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



s 9(2)(b)(ii)

s 9(2)(b)(ii)

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

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

It is not yet clear what the shelf life will be of a potential updated version of the vaccine, but if similar to the current version's shelf life, this would likely support any immunisation needs in the lead up to winter in 2023.

23. Officials consider that the previously agreed approach to receiving 250,000 doses of s 9(2)(b)(ii)

24. Infant doses (for 6 months to 4 years), which are also still under development, are not expected to be available until 1 July 2022 at the earliest, likely later. s 9(2)(b)(ii)

Officials will communicate this intention clearly with Pfizer to maintain flexibility and support optimal access.

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

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

it is proposed that Vaccine Ministers delegate this decision making to the Director-General of Health, to ensure timely access to vaccines to support the needs of the Programme.

27. **Officials are seeking your agreement:**

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

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

c. to delegate the management of any future s 9(2)(b)(ii) to support finalising the amendment with Pfizer to the Director-General of Health.

## Novavax Delivery Schedule for the remainder of 2022

28. Novavax's protein subunit COVID-19 vaccine has been available from select vaccination centres around the country since 14 March 2022. Of the 10.72 million doses secured under our APA, 1 million doses were delivered in March to New Zealand to support the early rollout, and a further 252,000 were delivered in April 2022.
29. Due to manufacturing timing, the original 1 million doses had a short shelf life and expired at the end of April, with most expiring before they could be utilised. The 252,000 doses currently available through the programme expire 31 July 2022, though Novavax is working to provide Medsafe with data to extend this by three months.
30. The existing delivery schedule for Novavax is outlined below in Table 4.

Table 4. Current delivery schedule for Novavax's vaccine

s 9(2)(b)(ii)

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

*There is a risk of significant wastage and underutilisation*

32. As part of the original COVID-19 Vaccine Strategy portfolio approach in 2020, 10.72 million doses were purchased under the APA to provide full population coverage for New Zealand and Polynesia. s 9(2)(b)(ii)
33. Given the high uptake of Pfizer's vaccine to date, it is very unlikely that this quantity of doses will be utilised domestically and therefore the risk of wastage is high.
34. While information is currently limited, clinical data to date regarding the effectiveness of Novavax's vaccine is promising. The use of Novavax's vaccine as a booster dose (both as a homologous and heterologous booster) is currently being assessed by Medsafe, which could increase domestic utilisation.
35. Officials have been exploring options to reduce the risk of underutilisation. s 9(2)(b)(ii)

*Forecasting uptake of Novavax's vaccine for 2022*

36. Officials have modelled the possible uptake of Novavax's vaccine based on three scenarios, as shown in Table 5. Each scenario assumes a percentage of total uptake, with the 'Very Optimistic' scenario assuming a shift in clinical advice, should data emerge

supporting the use of Novavax's vaccine as an equal or preferred vaccine to Pfizer's vaccine.

Table 5. Forecasted demand for Novavax's vaccine in 2022

Cohort	Scenario	Q3 2022	Q4 2022	Total
Adult doses (12+)	Realistic – 10% of overall programme uptake	160,000	230,000	<b>390,000</b>
	Optimistic – 20% of overall programme uptake	320,000	470,000	<b>790,000</b>
	Very Optimistic – 50% of overall programme uptake	780,000	1,170,000	<b>1,950,000</b>

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

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

s 9(2)(b)(ii)

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

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

41. It is proposed that Vaccine Ministers delegate any decision making relating to <sup>s 9(2)(b)(ii)</sup> [redacted] Novavax to the Director-General of Health, to enable timely adjustments to support the needs of the Programme.
42. <sup>s 9(2)(b)(ii)</sup> [redacted]  
[redacted]  
[redacted]  
officials are also seeking agreement from Ministers to delegate the management of any future <sup>s 9(2)(b)(ii)</sup> [redacted] in 2022.

## **AstraZeneca & Janssen update**

### *AstraZeneca's vaccine remains available until September*

43. AstraZeneca has been available through the Programme since November 2021, with 8,768 doses administered as of 25 May 2022. AstraZeneca remains available until 5 September 2022, at which point the current doses in circulation expire.
44. Further advice will be provided in the coming months on whether ongoing access is required, or whether this vaccine option can be phased out of the Programme, and what would be required to support such a transition.
45. In addition, 8.2 million doses of AstraZeneca's vaccine have also been donated to the COVAX Facility, although we understand that <sup>s 9(2)(b)(ii)</sup> [redacted] doses will be written off due to global over supply of AstraZeneca and as developing countries reach health system capacity constraints [HR20220508 refers].
46. Officials are working with AstraZeneca on managing the remaining doses available through the APA, which includes reprioritising 100,000 doses to Australia, reciprocating the process which supported New Zealand's access in November 2021. If the remaining (approximately 900,000) doses under the APA are unable to be donated, New Zealand has opted not to take receipt [HR20220573 refers].

### *Janssen's vaccine has been donated entirely*

47. All 2 million doses of Janssen's vaccine have been committed for donation to the COVAX Facility to support the global pandemic response.
48. Of these, 1.5 million doses have successfully been donated through COVAX to Cameroon, Malawi, Niger, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, South Sudan, and Vanuatu.
49. Officials are working through the process for donating the remaining 500,000 doses with Janssen and the COVAX Facility.

## **Vaccine Strategy and Pharmac transfer**

### *Officials are progressing an updated COVID-19 Immunisation Strategy*

50. In December 2021, Cabinet [SWC-21-MIN-0223 refers], agreed to the need for an integrated National Immunisation Programme. An integrated programme would help manage the risk of an increase in vaccine preventable diseases, with the reopening of

the border in New Zealand. Cabinet also endorsed strategic approach to immunisation which aims to ensure immunisations are prevention focused, responsive, easily accessible and equitable in improving health outcomes for all New Zealanders.

51. To support work already underway within the National Immunisation Programme, officials are developing the Immunisation Strategy in three phases, initially focused on the COVID-19 immunisation approach for the next 12 months, as our response to COVID-19 provides the basis for an integrated national immunisation approach.
52. Officials are preparing a draft cabinet paper which will outline:
  - a. the objectives and approach for COVID-19 immunisation over the next 12 months; and
  - b. the governance and accountability mechanism to for the broader immunisation system.
53. Further advice will be provided in August 2022 that will set the scene for the broader immunisation strategy, focusing on system integration in 2022, with a longer-term Strategy to be developed in partnership and expected to be completed by mid-2023.

*Ministry of Health and Pharmac officials are working closely to manage the transfer of a number of responsibilities relating to the portfolio of COVID-19 vaccines*

54. In May 2022, Cabinet agreed in principle to transfer the responsibility for the ongoing management and purchase of COVID-19 vaccines from the Ministry to Pharmac from 1 July 2022 [SWC-22-MIN-0092 refers]. Through this transfer, Pharmac would take over:
  - a. responsibility on advising on purchasing and management decisions to support the Programme
  - b. supplier relationship management to support the Programme; and
  - c. advising on the utilisation, maintaining access to supply of COVID-19 vaccines and overall approach to purchasing and management.
55. To ensure the transition occurs smoothly, Cabinet has directed the Ministry and Pharmac to work closely before and after 1 July 2022. Work is underway to ensure the operational delivery of the COVID-19 programme is not disrupted, including the transition of the existing contracts, supplier relationships and portfolio management functions.
56. The Ministry and Pharmac are also developing a revised purchasing process should additional COVID-19 vaccine purchases be required. This approach is being developed to:
  - a. align with the developing COVID-19 vaccine strategy and Programme priorities
  - b. build upon the successes and established relationship in the Programme
  - c. integrate Pharmac's own processes and expertise in purchasing.
57. Further advice will be provided in late June 2022 outlining the progress on the transition, the development of the future purchasing process and seeking any required approval to enable the transition.

## Next steps

58. If you agree to the recommendations, officials will:
- a. s 9(2)(b)(ii)
  - b. s 9(2)(b)(ii)
59. Further advice and updates will be provided in the coming months in relation to the updated COVID-19 Immunisation Strategy, the transfer of COVID-19 portfolio management functions to Pharmac, and whether there is an ongoing need to maintain access to AstraZeneca's vaccine in the Programme.

ENDS.

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