

Super Saturday and Vaxathon

Proactive Release of information

Purpose of this document

1. Super Saturday was a national day of action for vaccination against COVID-19 that took place on Saturday 16 October 2021. Everyone in Aotearoa was asked to: either get vaccinated or support someone to get vaccinated.
2. New Zealand's first-ever 'Vaxathon' was the main event on Super Saturday, calling on every remaining eligible New Zealander to get their shot. Simulcast on Māori Television, TV2 (TVNZ) and TV3 (Discovery) it was an eight-hour telethon-like live broadcast.
3. Super Saturday and the Vaxathon were the culmination of a 10-day campaign launched by Minister Hipkins at the [1pm stand-up on Wednesday 6 October](#). The campaign aimed to increase uptake across this time period by encouraging New Zealanders to get vaccinated 'today, this week, or on Super Saturday.'
4. A particular focus of the Vaxathon campaign was equity and driving uptake of the COVID-19 vaccine for Māori, in light of the lower uptake figures for Māori seen at that time.
5. On Super Saturday, more than 120 extra vaccination sites opened, and more than 130,000 people were vaccinated. Of the 130,002 doses administered on Super Saturday, there were 39,025 first doses and 90,977 second doses. 10,825 Māori received their first dose on the day, and a further 10,877 Māori received a second dose.
6. Super Saturday alone saw the proportion of New Zealand's population to have received one dose increase by 2 percent (to 85 percent), with the proportion fully vaccinated increasing by 3 percent (to 65 percent).
7. Multiple requests for information relating to the Vaxathon and Super Saturday events have been received by the Ministry of Health. Given the level of public interest in this subject, the Ministry has decided to proactively release the information. This document collates the key facts and information into a single document for ease of access. Given the pace and importance of the response to the global COVID-19 pandemic, much of the information about the organisation of the Super Saturday and Vaxathon events involves a high volume of emails that would have taken substantial collation.
8. This document is in three sections, covering:
 - a. Super Saturday
 - b. Vaxathon
 - c. COVID-19 Public health measures, and travel exemptions

Super Saturday

Throughout 2021, the Ministry of Health considered a wide range of possible initiatives to maximise the uptake of the COVID-19 vaccine. At different times throughout the vaccination rollout, the idea for a national day of action for vaccination against COVID-19 had been discussed as a potential event to boost vaccination rates once initial supply constraints had been overcome and sufficient capacity was built into the COVID-19 vaccination system.

The ultimate decision to schedule Super Saturday in mid-October 2021 was based upon a number of factors, with one major consideration being the objective to drive first dose uptake while there was still time for people to receive their second dose and be 'fully vaccinated' before the summer holidays. In addition, this timing was approximately two months after the large increase in first dose uptake seen in late August 2021 as a result of the Delta outbreak. Super Saturday therefore represented a good opportunity to encourage anyone yet to receive their second dose to do so as part of this day of celebration.

National marketing and communication

The Ministry of Health developed a national, multi-channel campaign in the lead up to Super Saturday. This included advertising promotion (television, press, radio, out of home, and digital) as well as enlisting support from other government agencies, councils, community groups and national and local businesses.

Examples of the Super Saturday advertising campaign can be seen in Appendix 1.

The Ministry of Health developed a range of tools and resources to support these organisations to promote vaccinations to their staff, customers and communities. People were encouraged to get vaccinated, or support friends and whānau to get vaccinated in the days leading up to Super Saturday or on that weekend, and to get their second shots three weeks later.

Example of the resources made available for agencies, organisations and businesses are included in Appendix 2.

In the lead up to Super Saturday, the Ministry also partnered with television networks (TVNZ, Discovery, Māori TV) with a paid vaccination forecast promotion to highlight vaccination rates around the country (during the news broadcast). This promotion highlighted, in a positive way, areas that achieved vaccination goals and supported gentle competition between areas.

The Super Saturday campaign promotion and forecast ran from 11-17 October 2021, with a press ad also run on Monday 18 October 2021. The campaign included Māori and Pacific audiences and supported the work done by Karawhiua and the Ministry of Pacific Peoples. Campaign materials were translated into multiple languages, particularly on radio.

The awareness and momentum created by Super Saturday, and the encouragement for the vaccinated to support the unvaccinated to get the vaccine, had benefits well beyond Super Saturday. Many groups or businesses which promoted Super Saturday also continued activity with their customers and communities for extended periods after the day.

The Super Saturday communications and marketing campaign was funded from within the existing COVID-19 Vaccine and Immunisation Programme communications budget. Details are in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Super Saturday communications and marketing campaign costs

Communications & Marketing costs	Excl GST
<u>Production and development costs</u>	\$61,074.50
<u>Media costs</u>	\$776,221.00
<i>Digital incl social, video on demand, Youtube</i>	<u>\$142,427.00</u>
<i>Digital out of home</i>	<u>\$129,174.00</u>
<i>Press inc communities</i>	<u>\$254,620.00</u>
<i>Radio inc CALD stations</i>	<u>\$205,000.00</u>
<i>Television</i>	<u>\$45,000.00</u>
<u>Vaccination forecast promotion</u>	\$237,289.00
<i>Production and development costs</i>	\$48,710.00
<i>Media costs (television)</i>	\$188,579.00
TOTAL	\$1,074,584.50

VAXATHON

The Vaxathon was an eight-hour television event that took place on Super Saturday. It was broadcast live from Avalon Studios in Wellington, with regular live crosses from regional hubs across the country. More than 50 presenters were involved, anchoring live highlights from local communities. Vaxathon featured live appearances and pre-recorded messages of support from a large number of prominent New Zealanders, including musicians, actors, sportspeople, and politicians from major political parties.

Businesses, iwi, hapū, councils, District Health Boards, Hauora Māori, Primary Health Organisations, sport clubs and Non-Government Organisations all contributed their support.

Vaxathon production

Pango Productions was contracted by the Ministry of Health to produce the eight-hour broadcast, and were responsible for all aspects of the production, including arrangements with the television networks. A selective procurement approach was utilised when contracting Pango Productions for this work. This approach was required due to the complexity of the production, including the need for a strong equity focus for the production, the short-timeframe to deliver, and the constraints resulting from the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak at that time.

From within the Ministry of Health, Vaxathon and Super Saturday was organised by existing staff within the COVID-19 Vaccine and Immunisation Programme (CVIP). Super Saturday was a primary focus of CVIP in the fortnight leading up to the day. Additional support to organise the day was given by teams across the Ministry of Health, including a number of Ministry of Health staff who volunteered their time on the day itself to ensure everything went smoothly.

TV3 (Discovery) was the first network to confirm broadcast of the first six hours of the Vaxathon (12noon – 6pm). They were followed by TV2 (TVNZ) and Māori Television.

Blackout Media was also contracted to produce Vaxathon and deliver in-show and social media content. This included promoting the Vaxathon (and vaccination) to a younger Māori audience via the Hahana web and social channels.

The Vaxathon was live-streamed on the Hahana Facebook page from 12noon to 8pm.

Funding

Specific funding of \$960,000 was approved by CVIP to support the cost of running the Vaxathon campaign. This \$960,000 was sourced from the existing allocation to the Māori COVID-19 Vaccination Fund, which had initially received \$39 million in funding to be spent on initiatives that support vaccine uptake for Māori.

As noted above, the production of Vaxathon was contracted to Pango Productions, who were responsible for all aspects of the production of Vaxathon, including arrangements with the television networks.

A breakdown of the budget for the production of Vaxathon is provided in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Breakdown of budgeted costs for running the Vaxathon campaign

Costs	Budget
Production	\$249,000
Technical support, livestream, regional crosses <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Porirua- Otara- Manurewa- Rotorua- Christchurch	\$283,300
Picture post (titles, editing, video inserts)	\$86,500
Experience design	\$100,000
Marketing and advertising	\$18,200
Travel and location	\$32,500
Music and Royalties	\$35,000
Production and Administration	\$2,200
Contingency (19%)	\$153,300
Total	\$960,000

COVID-19 Public Health Measures

As a result of the Delta outbreak in August 2021, vaccination sites across New Zealand adapted their approaches in order to be able to continue to operate safely under Alert Level Three and Alert Level Four conditions. At the time of Super Saturday, the majority of New Zealand was in Alert Level 2, with Northland, Auckland, and parts of Waikato remaining at Alert Level Three. Vaccination sites across the country operated within the requirements of their respective Alert Levels.

For the Vaxathon broadcast at Avalon Studios, public health measures were followed in accordance with Alert Level Two. The following steps were taken to ensure the health and safety for all those involved.

- Onsite nurse for health screening and temperature checks on arrival
- Face masks required where possible
- Physical distancing required where possible
- Compulsory QR sign in
- Onsite capacity was limited

Essential worker exemptions

Seven essential workers travelled from Auckland to Wellington to work on the Vaxathon event. The standard process for essential worker exemptions was followed, and exemptions for each of the seven essential workers were granted by the Director-General of Health in accordance with requirements at the time. All seven essential workers returned a negative COVID-19 test result before departure, as well as on return to Auckland.