

## Lockdown v2.0 2021 – insights and experiences

CEOs connecting to make sense, share solutions and get back to business

We undertook five CEO Connection Calls in the first two weeks of lockdown. More than 40 CEOs joined these informal discussions, sharing concerns, questions and solutions. Below is a thematic summary of those *issues of the moment*.

### Muscle memory was there

Transition into AL4 was relatively smooth as protocols for essential work had been developed, refined and practiced. Remote working arrangements were largely in place and ICT capability was present. Those who had practiced and tested that capability did better.

CEO feedback that construction (via CHASNZ and Accord) and forestry (via FISC) sectors were swift at aligning industry and government expectations and developing useful playbooks.

### Delta changed the game

Increased transmissibility did impact some of the protocols. One business operating an essential service decided to strengthen their shift structures of splitting alternate A/B teams by creating A/B/C/D teams to double the resilience in case of Delta infections.

### Vaccines, vaccines, vaccines

Vaccines were the dominant theme across all Connection Calls, specifically:

- Difficulties in *knowing how* or being *able to access* vaccinations for essential workers
- Frustration at sluggish progression of the MoH Expressions of Interest process for on-site vaccinations or enabling private health providers to deliver vaccines
- Confusion and concern at lack of aligned messaging and advice on worker vaccination requirements given the policy *nexus between HSW Act, ER Act, Human Rights Act and Public Health measures*

### Vaccine access

- Many had success in booking groups of workers directly with local pharmacies (Forum has a list of national Unichem and Life Pharmacies open to taking direct bookings)
- Habit Health is also about to set up significant vaccination centres for essential workers, and the Forum can connect members to them for direct bookings
- Pop-up drive through vaccination centres are being trialled through construction and retail, initially in regional centres
- Some supply chain leaders have been facilitating vaccinations for their contractors
- An EAP provider noted that there has been an increase of calls from workers using the confidential service as a “safe” place to work through vaccine hesitancy questions.

### Vaccination policy

- Many CEOs are still at the early stages of developing a vaccination policy for their people.

- Some non-border facing organisations have required vaccinations for specific roles (undertook the risk assessment as per WorkSafe guidance), and experienced some blow back from certain staff, but not show stopping
- Some organisations are amending employment contracts for new roles, requiring vaccination as a condition of employment
- Some clients are requiring all contractors to be vaccinated as a condition of engagement
- Some trans-Tasman businesses talked about the way **rapid antigen tests** have been used to provide an additional detection and assurance control in a Covid critical risk management plan in their Australian operations. There were growing questions as to why NZ businesses are not permitted to have access to these tests
- WorkSafe have sound guidance for [undertaking an assessment of whether a specific role requires a vaccination](#) as mandatory.

#### Forum response

- The Forum is developing some simple guidance to support members who are developing or are keen to test their policy
- We are also advocating for a more aligned and consistent approach and messaging about vaccinations in work, in service of maximising and sustaining vaccination levels.

#### Mental well-being is a concern

A strong and shared challenge was that “there’s a different vibe to this lockdown”, with a range of views being given as to what could be driving that shift:

- increased anxiety about Delta
- family pressures
- surprise and uncertainty at being “here again”
- emotional fatigue.

Common experience was also that many business owners, CEOs and other senior leaders are under immense pressure to maintain business sustainability.

#### CEOs shared a range of approaches

- Vulnerable leadership from the top – with CEOs and senior leaders acknowledging the personal challenges of lockdown.
- “Virtual water cooler” – a Teams virtual meeting that stays open all day with one of the SLT always monitoring it and encouraging it as a place people can “drop into”
- Re-instigation of *regular and different virtual connection sessions* – Town halls, CEO sessions, morning stand ups
- Proactive and positive (for some businesses) that last year’s lockdowns demonstrated that they **defer, rather than destroy, economic activity**, to address spiking anxieties of job security
- Some members are paying for childcare to support workers with parents doing essential work
- Clear acknowledgement that not everyone is “working from home”, for many they “are at home in a crisis trying to work” – and therefore some KPIs and delivery expectations were moderated in the current context
- Encouragement of wellbeing apps
- Actively promoting the [Five Ways to Wellbeing](#).

