

## Coronavirus: Government still pursuing CovidCard

Marc Daalder · 08:03, Jun 22 2020

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### Morning Report

Auckland Covid-19 testing  
and tracing times not meeting  
'gold standard'



RNZ

Covid-19 testing times and contact tracing in Auckland have failed to meet the 'gold standard' set by the Ministry of Health.

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The Government is seeking tech experts to conduct an independent review of the \$100 million CovidCard proposal, indicating that the scheme could still be rolled out in the future.

A tech sector participant told Newsroom on condition of anonymity that they were contacted by government officials to carry out a third-party review of the proposal.

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trialled in Nelson Hospital from May 7 to 12.

A spokesperson for the Nelson and Marlborough District Health Board confirmed to Newsroom the trial had taken place.

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Nelson and Marlborough District Health Board has confirmed the trial took place.

A spokesperson for the Department of Internal Affairs, which health officials say is now in charge of the programme, did not answer Newsroom questions about the trial or independent review.

"Officials are currently examining a number of technological options to add to existing contact tracing systems. Further details will be made available once any decision has been made," the spokesperson said.

Newsroom around whether businesses should be required to contact trace.

"We've always kept that option open, as you will have heard me say. We've kept it as it is at the moment, but we're also, of course, continuing to look at alternatives that may have greater uptake or more success."

Newsroom first reported on the proposal to manufacture and distribute five million CovidCards in April.

At the time, a spokesperson for the All of Government Covid-19 response team said the technology was one of "a wide variety of technological solutions to contact tracing".

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Ardern appeared to allude to the card in comments around whether businesses should be required to contact trace.

The continued pursuit of the CovidCard also comes as other jurisdictions look to wearable contact tracing devices to supplement or supplant existing apps.

Around the world, contact tracing apps have had low uptake - in New Zealand, just one in nine people has downloaded and registered the official app.

"The appeal of the CovidCard approach is that you have purpose-built hardware that can't, like an app, lead to scope creep. It is being built for one task, and the task is proximity contact tracing," Brainbox Institute public policy and technology expert Tom Barraclough told Newsroom.

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