

#### **Proactive Release**

The following documents have been proactively released by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC):

#### **Annalect Social Media Listening Reports (April 2020 – April 2022)**

Early in New Zealand's pandemic response, a critical need was identified to understand how information provided about COVID-19 was being received and understood by the public. Public communications about the pandemic had to be effective to ensure that New Zealanders were able to comply with legal requirements and guidance on COVID-19 in order to stop the spread of the virus.

To this end, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) commissioned regular research focusing on sentiment and behaviours towards COVID-19. As part of this, in April 2020, Annalect, the data analytics division of OMD New Zealand, which is the media buying agency for the COVID-19 response, began undertaking social media analysis for the COVID-19 Group. We did not have this capability ourselves and it would not have been economic or timely to build it in-house. Therefore, external providers were sought. Commissioning this service was undertaken at pace, given the threat of the emerging pandemic in April 2020.

Organisations, including government departments, have monitored social media for many years in order to improve the quality of information they provide to the public

As the pandemic response evolved, tools such as this enabled the COVID-19 Group to be agile and adapt communications to address information gaps and the questions and concerns of New Zealanders about the COVID-19 response.

The analysis compiled by Annalect helped measure the effectiveness of the Unite Against COVID-19 communications and public information campaign as it sought to keep New Zealanders informed through the different phases of the response. It enabled the COVID-19 Group to identify if there were gaps in public understanding about restrictions and public health guidelines, and develop tailored communications to address those gaps.

The analysis also provided valuable insights into the impact of pandemic restrictions, New Zealanders' acceptance of them and their willingness to carry out COVID-19 related health behaviours. In this sense, the insights have been important in ensuring the safety of our communities and maintaining the public trust that is required for an effective response to COVID-19. Robust and easily understood public health information has been a key pillar of New Zealand's success in responding effectively to COVID-19.

In compiling the reports, analysts used the Brandwatch Consumer Research tool to observe prominent themes regarding the COVID-19 Response, analysing social and digital news content on public channels in New Zealand.

The reports provided mostly high-level insights into topics of conversation around COVID-19 online. This includes the volume of social conversation around a given topic and the sentiment of that conversation and how that sentiment changed over time. Annalect also provided analysis and commentary on the most prominent issue(s) of the week – for example, if there was an Alert Level change, they would analyse conversation around this. This analysis was a useful window into the impact of the virus and pandemic restrictions on New Zealanders.

The reports were refined and adjusted over time to reflect the changing language, landscape and focus of the COVID-19 response. In most cases, this was done proactively by Annalect. This included the occasional updating of the topics being tracked (for example, introducing 'Vaccine Rollout' when this became a relevant topic of conversation in New Zealand).

The social conversations that were analysed by Annalect came from two sources. The first was from engagement with Unite Against COVID-19 (UAC) and Ministry of Health (MoH) social media channels, and the second was from content posted publicly elsewhere online, from news media, Facebook pages, Twitter, Reddit and other public blogs and forums in New Zealand, pulled via keyword searches. Annalect also reported on publicly visible engagement with other government pages, such as those of Te Puni Kōkiri and the Ministry for Pacific Peoples, in order to understand the questions and concerns of different audiences.

The data analysed from UAC social media channels was, in large part, from publicly visible comments on UAC social media pages. For two periods in 2020 and 2021, Annalect provided a 'Frequently asked questions' report, summarising the most asked questions about the pandemic and the response online, which included an analysis of questions sent to UAC social media channels via direct messages. This was to understand what gaps in public understanding existed and what questions and concerns New Zealanders had about COVID-19, to improve the information being provided to the public via UAC.

During the initial stages of the COVID-19 Vaccine Campaign between May and August 2021, analysis of direct messages was also performed on MoH channels for the same reason it was on UAC channels, specifically for the vaccine rollout.

In analysing direct messages, Annalect used 'Sprinklr', the system the National Crisis Management Centre and then DPMC used for managing its social media accounts. Annalect were able to generate reports from the system's reporting dashboard to review sentiment and themes from comments and messages being received on the Unite Against COVID-19 and Ministry of Health social media channels.

Annalect summarised the most frequently asked questions, and gave examples of these questions and others which highlighted prominent themes or issues important to the overall response. The analysis of these direct messages to government websites looked at overall themes as a guide on which areas of public health information needed strengthening or clarifying

At no point in the COVID-19 response has DPMC or Annalect been able to monitor or review private conversations or messages between members of the public – nor would we have sought access or have means of accessing that information as part of our remit to provide high quality public health information about COVID-19 to New Zealanders.

The COVID-19 Group acknowledges the Unite Against COVID-19 website and social media channels could have been clearer that communications received may be used for reporting purposes. A disclaimer to this effect has been added to all Unite Against COVID-19 channels.

In places in the reports, screenshot examples of public-facing comments from social media users were provided by Annalect in order to provide context around the data and the themes that were being observed. Good practice required usernames to be redacted, and in later reports, so too were users' profile pictures as part of Annalect's continuous improvement of the reports, which involved refining of the design of the reports and introducing further privacy

measures. Otherwise, Annalect took steps to ensure that all data in the reports was anonymised before it was provided to DPMC.

In New Zealand, Annalect is a division of OMD and sits within OMD's New Zealand office with locally employed analysts. All work is done in New Zealand, by New Zealand-based analysts. In undertaking this work, OMD/Annalect were required to uphold New Zealand privacy laws when analysing and handling information found in the public domain or through direct messages. Annalect analysts all sign individual non-disclosure agreements in relation to this work, and OMD/Annalect have their own company-wide non-disclosure agreement that covered this work.

In their effort to support the Unite Against COVID-19 campaign by providing analysis of conversation online about the pandemic, Annalect made judgement calls as to what to provide in the reports, proactively including information they believed would be useful for officials to know.

In a small number of reports, Annalect included information not directly relevant to the COVID-19 response. On occasion, this included information about politicians and political parties. Information not useful to the COVID-19 response was disregarded and Annalect did not track the social media profiles of politicians or political parties for DPMC.

It may also be noted that the names of politicians and political parties sometimes appear highlighted in the reports. This is because they are listed in the base search query that Annalect uses when analysing issues and topics around COVID-19, and they happen to come up, from time to time, in the examples of conversations they provide in the reports. Annalect did not track mentions of these names for DPMC.

It is important to note the primary use of the reports was internal, informing the COVID-19 Group's communications approach. A summary of overall themes and observations were sometimes included in external updates and in policy documents, but the reports were not provided to Ministers' offices in full.

As it approached two years since the reports were originally commissioned, DPMC undertook a review of the reports and whether they were still required for the next phase of the pandemic response. The reports were discontinued in April 2022, as the insights they provided were considered to no longer be required as we moved to long-term management of the virus. In total, 231 reports were received between April 2020 to April 2022. The total cost of these reports was \$261,974.

Some parts of this information release would not be appropriate to release in full and, if requested, would be withheld under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). The information that has been withheld from this document has been withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act, to protect the privacy of individuals. No public interest has been identified that would outweigh the reasons for withholding this information.

Unite Against COVID-19: Social Conversation Analysis April 13 - 19, 2021 New Zealand

# **Update Summary:**

#### FAQs:

New Zealanders have questions about the vaccine rollout (50% of questions this week). People are wanting to know details about the trans-Tasman travel bubble. There are questions about the NZ COVID Tracer app's functionality and if those vaccinated will require to undertake MIQ in the future.

#### Engagement with news stories:

This week the average engagement per story dropped by 288 engagements. New Zealanders were engaged with stories about the trans-Tasman travel bubble. There was interest in the vaccine rollout and COVID-19 news internationally.

#### Conversation analysis:

Analysts have segmented conversation into categories reflecting New Zealanders' attitudes towards vaccines. This week we looked into Positive Access and Negative Access segments. Positive Access is a small category currently at <1% which we will monitor as the rollout continues Negative Access is at 3% and this is a drop of 2% from the previous week.

# What's in this report:

#### 1. FAQS

Identifying frequently asked questions and conversation from users on Ministry of Health's owned pages.

- Engagement with News Stories
   Understanding what matters to New Zealanders by exploring engagement with news stories about COVID-19.
- 3. Measuring Categories of Conversation Identifying New Zealanders' key concerns and monitoring shifts in sentiment and emotion.
- 4. Social Listening

New Zealanders' attitudes towards the COVID-19 vaccine.



# Unite against COVID-19

#### **VACCINE (50%)**

- When will frontline social workers be getting their COVID vaccine?
- I'm going to have the flu jab. Is there a good time to have this bearing in mind I will get the COVID vaccine?
- Why have people had both jabs and still got COVID?
- How many registered vaccinators are there?
- I'm a backpacker from Germany in NZ. Is the vaccination also destined for foreign people or just for NZ residents?

#### **TRAVEL (25%)**

- When the trans-Tasman bubble opens are there any issues flying in and out of Brisbane at the moment?
- What form do we need to fill out when going to Australia?
- Would it be possible to get some insights into the rationale behind cancelling all "red" trans-Tasman flights coming from Australia to NZ once the travel bubble opens?
- Is Queenstown now included in the NZ travel bubble?

#### NZ COVID Tracer app/QR code (7%)

- Have you added a check out option yet, when you leave a place you scanned into?
- Is there no backup facility within the app?
- Can I transfer my data if I upgrade my phone?
- Are tourists coming from Australia being asked to download the app while they are here?

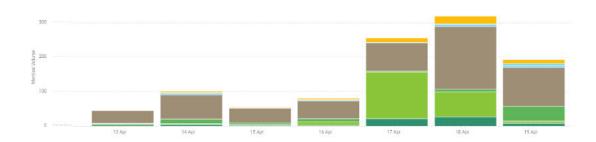
#### MIQ (3%)

- Are those overseas who will be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and intend to return to New Zealand still required to stay at MIQ? Any thoughts about this?
- Any plans in the pipeline to update the system for vaccinated returnees?

**SUMMARY:** New Zealanders have questions about the vaccine rollout. People are wanting to know details of the trans-Tasman travel bubble. There are questions about the NZ COVID Tracer app's functionality and if those vaccinated will require to undertake MIQ in the future.

## Conversation on UAC19 Facebook page April 13 - 19, 2021

**CATEGORIES OVER TIME** 



Time	Total vol. on page	Average posts per day	Highest vol.
Date range: April 13 - 19	2,113	301	April 18

Average vol. on page	Average posts on page per day	Highest vol. on page
L4 (March 25 – April 28)	904	March 25
L3 (April 29 – May 14)	697	May 11
L2 (May 15 – June 10)	349	Jun 8
L3 (August 12 – 31)	1,596	Aug 12



#### Safety

This conversation indicates a call for safety for the nation, and a need to maintain vigilance. Dobbing, complying, concern, #stayhomeNZ, asking for guidelines on social distancing and

#### Health

operating safely.

This conversation expresses a need for more support around general health and individuals' wellbeing. Mental health, mentions of abuse, violence, concern about suicide.

#### Households

This category expresses the needs of New Zealanders to maintain a happy and healthy household and home. Includes custody queries, heating and appliance queries, caring for people in your household.

#### Medical / testing (overlap with Safety)

This conversation is a subcategory of 'Safety' but expresses calls for specific guidance and information. Queries and seeking guidance about testing, symptoms and cures.

#### Leisure (overlap with Autonomy)

New Zealanders' are expressing their need for leisure activities. Seeking guidance on leisure activities including surfing, fishing, boating and more recently team sports.

#### Personal finance

This conversation consists of concerns about financial needs. Commentary and questions around individual's financial stability. Wage subsidy guidance.

#### **Business support**

This category is a more general conversation about the economy and business-owners expressing a need for more governmental support. Talk about the economy, and support for businesses.

#### Autonomy

This conversation illustrates New Zealanders' need for freedom and autonomy. Restrictions on way of life. Travel and border restrictions. Questions and comments about what is permissible at different Alert Levels and what the timeframe for shifts might be.

## What are people reading, engaging with and sharing on social media?

Analysis is based on the top 100 stories that received highest engagement (likes, comments, shares & reactions on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest & Reddit in NZ). Content is categorised into themes. This measurement reflects New Zealanders' awareness and interest in a topic.

#### SUMMARY:

This week the average engagement dropped by 288 engagements. New Zealanders were engaged with stories about the trans-Tasman travel bubble. There was interest in the vaccine rollout and COVID-19 news internationally.

#### TOTAL ENGAGEMENT PER CATEGORY:

Travel: 8,356 Vaccine: 6,719 International: 6,418 #NZPOL: 6.395 Cases: 4,605

Testing: 3,389 Virus: 1.014

Misinformation/conspiracy: 660

Way of life: 491

#### TOP CATEGORIES OF INTEREST

#### TRAVEL

Covid 19 coronavirus: Family, friends reunite on day one of transtasman bubble - NZ Herald

By Nzherald Journalist NEW Apr 18, 2021 nzherald.co.nz

■ 3.2K ■ 21 0 0 0 0



#### VACCINE

Coronavirus: New Zealand first to donate COVID-19 vaccines to poor countries at latest fundraise

By Dan Satherley Apr 15, 2021 newshub.co.nz

II 1K ≥ 20





#### INTERNATIONAL

High-profile Norwegian conspiracy theorist who said COVID-19 was a hoax dies from the virus after hosting illegal house parties

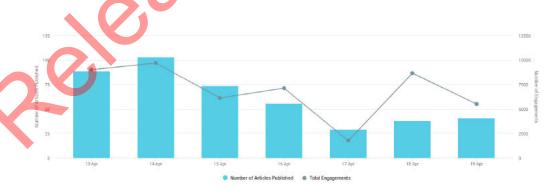
newshub.co.nz



#### By Caitlin Ellis F Journalist New Apr 19, 2021

#### 1.4K ¥416 Ø0 💆0

#### CHART: ARTICLES PUBLISHED ON COVID-19 (BAR) AND ENGAGEMENT (LINE)



Date range	Articles analysed	Total engagement	Average engagements
April 13 - 19	430	47,917	111
April 6 – 12	509	203,265	399
March 30 – April 5	339	52,372	154

## **Category Definitions**

We access data through keyword queries. We update these queries as the language used to describe a topic or theme evolves. In this report, keywords have been updated to align with changes in conversation we've observed.

#### **Business & consumers**

The impact COVID-19 has had on how businesses operate and how consumers' behaviour has adjusted to ensure retail / hospitality / workplaces run safely.

#### **Enforcement**

Responses to the role of official enforcement and stories about how infringement is dealt with.

#### **Domestic violence**

How are we discussing family violence and abuse. How are the domestic violence services, agencies and wider community responding during this period.

#### **Environmental issues**

How are we talking about environmental issues including pollution, sustainability/waste and water preservation during this time.

#### SOCIAL CONVERSATION CATEGORIES OVER A WEEK



#### **Economy**

Conversations New Zealanders are having about the economy, economic decisions and upcoming recession and recovery.

#### **Contact tracing**

What conversations are New Zealanders having about contact tracing and the use of apps and other contact tracing methods.

#### Virus

This conversation looks at the virus itself. This may include discussion about vaccination, medical response, health advice, symptoms of COVID-19 and number of cases/deaths in New Zealand and globally.

#### **#NZPOL Decisions**

The nation's response to and perception of New Zealand's leadership and decisions surrounding the response to COVID-19.

#### Team of five million / Unite against virus

Encouraging the nation to rally together, comply with the rules and cheerleading the cause.

#### Way of life

The impact COVID-19 has had on New Zealanders' everyday life, including remote working and schools, socialising, and changes that people have made to adapt to life in the pandemic.

#### Mental health

What conversations are New Zealanders having about their own mental health and that of their families and communities. What support is being offered and how are people coping and what are their stresses/anxieties.

#### **Timeframe**

Discussion about how long it will take before Alert Level restrictions are lifted or when life returns to normal.

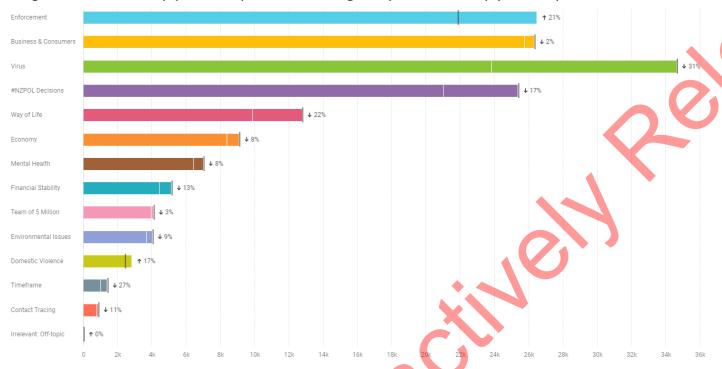
#### **Financial stability**

The impact COVID-19 is having personally on New Zealanders in relation to their employment situations and personal and/or business finances.

Data source: public Facebook pages, Twitter, blogs, forums, Reddit in New Zealand.

## Category change: week on week

Categories current week (April 13 - 19) benchmarked against previous week (April 6 - 12)



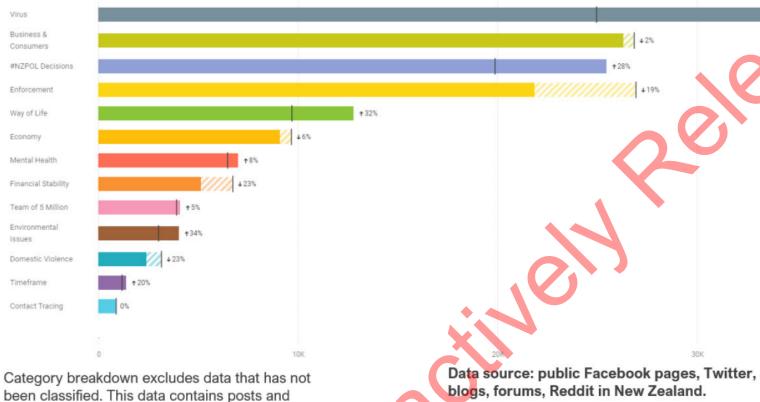
Category breakdown excludes data that has not been classified. This data contains posts and comments outside our key word query for example tagging friends, one-word responses and so on. Data source: public Facebook pages, Twitter, blogs, forums, Reddit in New Zealand.

**Total volume of conversation:** 

April 13 – 19: 368,452 April 6 – 12: 435,487 March 30 – April 5: 363,732

## Category change: week on week

Categories current week (April 6 - 12) benchmarked against previous week (March 30 - April 5)



blogs, forums, Reddit in New Zealand.

Total volume of conversation:

April 6 - 12: 435,487 March 30 - April 5: 363,732

March 23 - 29: 438,036

comments outside our key word query for

and so on.

example tagging friends, one-word responses

## Net sentiment of each category per week.

All categories decreased in negative sentiment aside from Team of 5 Million, Enforcement and Domestic Violence. Comparing current week (April 13 - 19) & previous week (April 6 - 12)



Data source: public Facebook pages, Twitter, blogs, forums, Reddit in New Zealand.

COVID-19 Awareness Study / Confidential / Annalect 2021

# Vaccine Attitudinal segmentation:

Analysts have segmented social conversation into categories that reflect New Zealanders' attitudes towards the COVID-19 vaccine.

Segments we have defined:

#### **Positive**

Vaxx advocate = Advocating for New Zealanders to have the vaccine.

Back to normal = Motivated by returning to a sense of normality.

Positive Access = The ease and accessibility of getting vaccinated, having a positive experience of vaccination.

#### Negative

Vaxx sceptics = Hesitancy or distrustful of the vaccine.

**Rushed development** = Uncertainty due to the speed the vaccine was created.

**Conspiracy and misinformation** = Anti-vaxx and conspiracy theories. **Negative access** = Barriers and blockers to accessing the vaccine, having a negative experience of vaccination.

#### Neutral

Vaxx development and approval news = Development and approval of the vaccine

**Politics** = conversation about how governments are dealing with the vaccine.

**Roll out and planning discussion** = How the vaccine rollout is progressing.

# Vaccine conversation summary:

For April 13 -19 we have looked further into Positive Access and Negative Access conversation. Both of these segments represent a small percentage of the total conversation about vaccines. Analysts will monitor these categories as the rollout progresses.

The Positive Access category volume was stable from last week, remaining at <1% of the total vaccine conversation. People are sharing positive experiences of receiving the vaccine.

The Negative Access category volume dropped 2% from last week to 3% of total vaccine conversation. Themes of conversation remain the same with people and employers expressing difficulty in making appointments and finding out information.

Note: Analysts have checked in on conversation about the **Travel Bubble. S**entiment about the trans-Tasman bubble has remained stable with slight changes in sentiment from the previous week.

# People are sharing personal experiences of receiving the COVID19 vaccine with others expressing frustration at trying to organize vaccinations.

The volume of conversation in the Positive Access remained stable from last week at <1%. In this category there are people talking about getting the vaccine or discussing family members' receiving the vaccine. There was a small amount of conversation where people shared information that may help others be able to access the vaccine.

The Negative Access category dropped 2% this week to 3% of total conversation. Noted themes are people are expressing frustration and confusion at pace of the rollout and finding it hard to find out how and when people will be able to have vaccinations.

## Sharing frustrated experiences of trying to access the vaccine for themselves/family/colleagues

Same experience for me regarding my staff who work at Port Otago. No response to phone call enquiries to the Ministry of Health and Southern DHB regarding vaccination requirements/access. Not really good enough.

3:27 PM - Apr 16, 2021

My mum is 71 with major health issues and she lives with me in south Auckland and we have had no contact about getting a vaccine. We asked her doctor and they said the DHB would contact us.

Like Reply 6 d

Why does the graph show vaccines begin for group 3 in mid April, yet your rollout plan indicates we cannot get vaccinated until mid May?

## Concern about NZ vaccine rollout/uptake

The hermit nations. NZ/AU vaccine take up even worse than europe and that is saying something. Closing borders made sense so long as a vaccination policy was planned suspect domestic complacency is now in place. In reality, sitting ducks, ourworldindata.org/grapher/conter... @jacindaardem

The dumb part is that there just isn't any reason to try to make it up... just say it isn't to scale and is an example... Obviously it is a huge undertaking, and exact dates times/rates of vaccination are unknowable.

The ONLY place where we need to 110% know is the border.

Sharing experiences of having the vaccine or others who have received the vaccine

I just got my vaccine Thursday evening & today I spent over an hour on the treadmill. Feeling pretty damn good now. 

11:04 AM - Apr 19, 2021

2 days ago
I know 5 people who got the vaccine today :D (All work for Ambulance Services)

12 Reply Share Report Save

I know lots of folks with autoimmune issues are worried about the covid vaccine. This is official word from rheumatology dept here in BOP.

Get it in ya.

In autories.

1. All patients should receive the Covid vaccine. It is not a live vaccine.

2. Patients on methotrexate should consider skipping the methotrexate dose immediately following each vaccine shot.

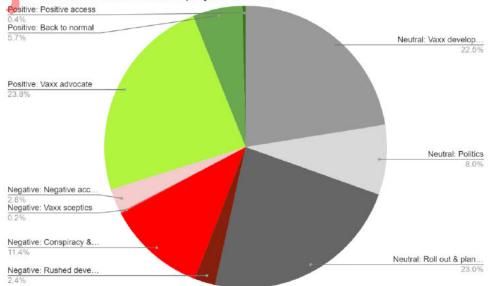
3. Patients on rituximab should attempt to receive their Covid.

vaccination in the fifth month after their infusions (i.e. one month

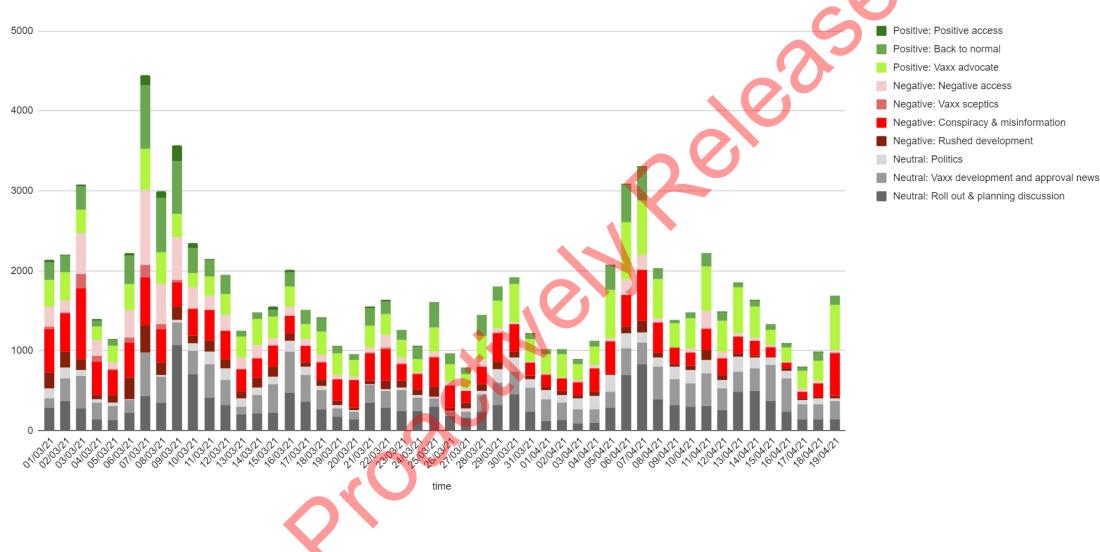
11:44 AM - Apr 15, 2021

before their next infusion)

#### Total vaccine conversation, April 13 - 19



## Graph illustrating vaccination segments over time March 1—April 19, 2021



# Thank you

Contact



Unite Against COVID-19: Social Conversation Analysis April 20 - 26, 2021 New Zealand

## **Update Summary:**

**FAQs:** This week there were 166 questions on owned channels. New Zealanders have questions about the vaccine rollout (58%). There are questions about the trans-Tasman travel bubble following the Perth lockdown (11%). People had questions about testing (5%) and recent cases (4%).

Engagement with news stories: New Zealanders were engaged with stories about international COVID-19 news, specifically India, Fiji and Perth. There was interest in stories about the Auckland Airport case.

#### Conversation analysis:

As New Zealand's COVID-19 vaccine roll out progresses some vaxx advocates are stepping forward to share their positive experiences in receiving their first and second Pfizer vaccine, however often this positive sentiment is being challenged in the social space. Some New Zealanders are discussing risk and weighing up the risk to an individual presented by the COVID virus vs the COVID vaccine.

# What's in this report:

#### 1. FAQS

Identifying frequently asked questions and conversation from users on Ministry of Health's owned pages.

# Engagement with News Stories Understanding what matters to New Zealanders by exploring engagement with news stories about COVID-19.

3. Measuring Categories of Conversation Identifying New Zealanders' key concerns and monitoring shifts in sentiment and emotion.

#### 4. Social Listening

New Zealanders' attitudes towards the COVID-19 vaccine, how we are discussing side-effects and how we are talking about risk.



# Unite against COVID-19

#### **VACCINE (58%)**

- Are you able to get the flu jab and the COVID-19 vaccine?
- How does someone who is housebound get the vaccine?
- Why have nurses and GPs not yet received the vaccine?
- A member of my household works for Department of Corrections. Do we belong in the same group as them?
- In terms of "free to everyone" does it matter with their nationality or immigration status?

#### **TRAVEL (11%)**

- Will flights to Perth resume once they have come out of lockdown?
- Are you working on the risk assessment for Perth and Melbourne?
- If this is an issue why are those entering from Australia not being quarantined?
- What happens with the travel bubble now an airline worker in NZ tested positive today?

#### **TESTING (5%)**

- Are people still being tested before they come to NZ?
- Can you tell me if antibody tests are available?
- If I get a COVID test tomorrow at 9am in Hamilton, will I get my results back within 72 hours?
- Why do we not have rapid testing?

#### **CASES (4%)**

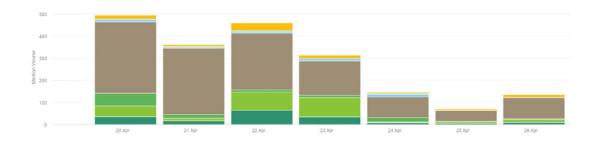
- Why is the border worker being classified as a border case?
- How did we go from 80 cases to 32 in 24 hours?
- What if we were at the airport on Saturday 17 at the same time as the case – should we be worried?

**SUMMARY:** This week there were 166 questions on owned channels. New Zealanders have questions about the vaccine rollout (58%). There are questions about the trans-Tasman travel bubble following the Perth lockdown (11%) There are questions about testing (5%) and recent cases (4%).

**NOTE:** This week following our manual read there were no dominant themes of vaccine questions, instead people had specific questions relating to their own concerns and situations. The above selection is representational.

### Conversation on UAC19 Facebook page April 20 - 26, 2021

**CATEGORIES OVER TIME** 



Time	Total vol. on page	Average posts per day	Highest vol.
Date range: April 20 - 26	4536	648	April 20

Average vol. on page	Average posts on page per day	Highest vol. on page	
L4 (March 25 – April 28)	904	March 25	
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#### Safety

This conversation indicates a call for safety for the nation, and a need to maintain vigilance.

Dobbing, complying, concern, #stayhomeNZ, asking for guidelines on social distancing and operating safely.

#### Health

This conversation expresses a need for more support around general health and individuals' wellbeing. Mental health, mentions of abuse, violence, concern about suicide.

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This category expresses the needs of New Zealanders to maintain a happy and healthy household and home. Includes custody queries, heating and appliance queries, caring for people in your household.

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This conversation is a subcategory of 'Safety' but expresses calls for specific guidance and information. Queries and seeking guidance about testing, symptoms and cures.

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New Zealanders' are expressing their need for leisure activities. Seeking guidance on leisure activities including surfing, fishing, boating and more recently team sports.

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This conversation illustrates New Zealanders' need for freedom and autonomy. Restrictions on way of life. Travel and border restrictions. Questions and comments about what is permissible at different Alert Levels and what the timeframe for shifts might be.

## What are people reading, engaging with and sharing on social media?

Analysis is based on the top 100 stories that received highest engagement (likes, comments, shares & reactions on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest & Reddit in NZ). Content is categorised into themes. This measurement reflects New Zealanders' awareness and interest in a topic.

#### SUMMARY:

New Zealanders were engaged with stories about international news, specifically India, Fiji and Perth. There was interest in stories about the Auckland Airport case.

#### TOTAL ENGAGEMENT PER CATEGORY:

International: 26,132 Cases: 14,483 #NZPOL: 3,401

Travel: 3,053 Vaccine: 2,350

Misinformation/conspiracy: 1.020

Way of life: 966 Testing: 851 MIQ: 767 Alert level: 331

#### TOP CATEGORIES OF INTEREST

#### INTERNATIONAL

Covid 19 **coronavirus**: India's families forced to keep their dead at home; hospitals turn away critically ill patients

By Nzherald Journalist NEW Apr 25, 2021 nzherald.co.nz

#### 

#### **CASES**

Coronavirus: Positive Auckland Airport worker genomically linked to known imported case of COVID-19 - Chris Hipkins

By Dan Satherley Apr 20, 2021

newshub.co.nz



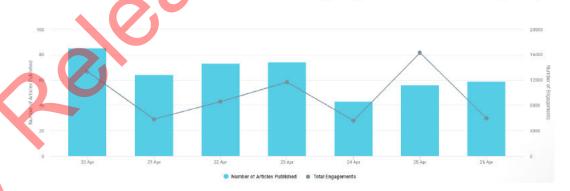
#### #NZPOL

Coronavirus: Simon Bridges predicts India ban will stay due to 'incompetently run' borders

Sy Dan Satherley Apr 22, 2021 newshub.co.nz

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#### CHART: ARTICLES PUBLISHED ON COVID-19 (BAR) AND ENGAGEMENT (LINE)



Da	ate range	Articles analysed	Total engagement	Average engagements
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Aj	oril 6 – 12	509	203,265	399

## **Category Definitions**

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The impact COVID-19 has had on how businesses operate and how consumers' behaviour has adjusted to ensure retail / hospitality / workplaces run safely.

#### Enforcement

Responses to the role of official enforcement and stories about how infringement is dealt with.

#### **Domestic violence**

How are we discussing family violence and abuse. How are the domestic violence services, agencies and wider community responding during this period.

#### **Environmental issues**

How are we talking about environmental issues including pollution, sustainability/waste and water preservation during this time.



#### **Economy**

Conversations New Zealanders are having about the economy, economic decisions and upcoming recession and recovery.

#### Contact tracing

What conversations are New Zealanders having about contact tracing and the use of apps and other contact tracing methods.

#### Virus

This conversation looks at the virus itself. This may include discussion about vaccination, medical response, health advice, symptoms of COVID-19 and number of cases/deaths in New Zealand and globally.

#### **#MZPOL Decisions**

The nation's response to and perception of New Zealand's leadership and decisions surrounding the response to COVID-19.

#### Team of five million / Unite against virus

Encouraging the nation to rally together, comply with the rules and cheerleading the cause.

#### Way of life

The impact COVID-19 has had on New Zealanders' everyday life, including remote working and schools, socialising, and changes that people have made to adapt to life in the pandemic.

#### Mental health

What conversations are New Zealanders having about their own mental health and that of their families and communities. What support is being offered and how are people coping and what are their stresses/anxieties.

#### **Timeframe**

Discussion about how long it will take before Alert Level restrictions are lifted or when life returns to normal.

#### Financial stability

The impact COVID-19 is having personally on New Zealanders in relation to their employment situations and personal and/or business finances.

Data source: public Facebook pages, Twitter, blogs, forums, Reddit in New Zealand.

## Category change: week on week

Categories current week (April 20 - 26) benchmarked against previous week (April 13 - 19)



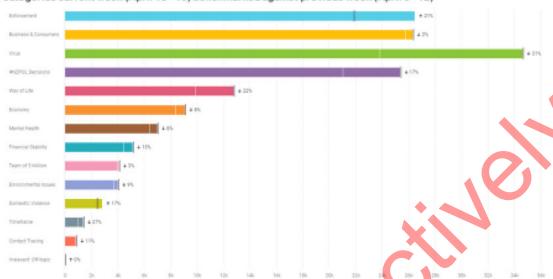
Category breakdown excludes data that has not been classified. This data contains posts and comments outside our key word query for example tagging friends, one-word responses and so on. Data source: public Facebook pages, Twitter, blogs, forums, Reddit in New Zealand.

**Total volume of conversation:** 

April 20 – 26: 366 089 April 13 – 19: 368,452 April 6 – 12: 435,487 CATEGORY OF CONVERSATION: BREAKDOWN & GROWTH

### Category change: week on week

Categories current week (April 13 - 19) benchmarked against previous week (April 6 - 12)



Category breakdown excludes data that has not been classified. This data contains posts and comments outside our key word query for example tagging friends, one-word responses and so on.

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Data source: public Facebook pages, Twitter, blogs, forums, Reddit in New Zealand.

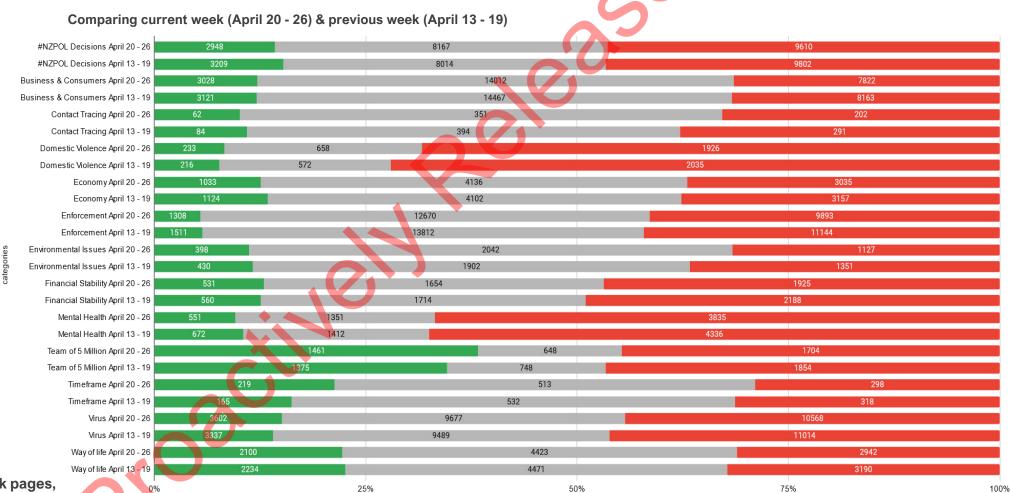
Total volume of conversation:

April 13 – 19: 368,452 April 6 – 12: 435,487 March 30 – April 5: 363,732

annalect

Net sentiment of each category per week.

Most categories became more positive or remained stable this week.



Data source: public Facebook pages, Twitter, blogs, forums, Reddit in New Zealand.

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# Vaccine conversation summary:

Mentions of "side-effects" was a trending topic within the vaccine conversation dataset.

As New Zealand's COVID-19 vaccine roll out progresses some vaxx advocates are stepping forward to share their positive experiences in receiving their first and second Pfizer vaccine. However, in many cases (particularly on Facebook) this is countered by antivaxx comments, resulting in a polarized and 'toxic' environment.

A common theme in this debate is weighing up the risk of a vaccine vs the risk of COVID-19. People's approach to considering risk is varied and individualistic with little evidence of an understanding of herd immunity.

**NOTE:** Total volume of mentions of "side-effects" was low, however a sharp increase in mentions prompted our text processor to mark the phrase as trending.

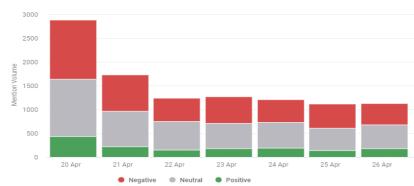
### As the COVID19 rollout continues some New Zealanders are discussing sideeffects along with potentially stronger side-effects after receiving the second dose of the Pfizer vaccine.

- Trending phrases within this conversation include "vaccine access", "intellectual property", "global south" and "vaccine production" all pertain to the emerging topic of (in NZ) about the potential for the "global south" to be able to address demand for vaccine by producing vaccine themselves.
- Total volume of mentions about sideeffects is relatively low, however a sharp increase has made it a trending topic over the past 2 weeks.



- Total conversation about the COVID vaccine in New Zealand decreased by 17% this week (12832 to 10650).
- Sentiment has remained at similar levels, with slight decrease in negative (-3%) and increase in neutral (+2%) and positive (+1%) sentiment.

Volume and sentiment: Total conversation about vaccines 20 – 26 April in New Zealand.



# Conversation mentioning side-effects is wide ranging in terms of sentiment. There continues to be debate between those who are pro and anti-vaxx.

Vaxx advocates are proactively sharing positive experiences of receiving their Pfizer vaccines.

Analysts note that antivaxx commenters are particularly active on news sites' Facebook walls and are often directly targeting commenters who are vaxx-advocates or vaxx-skeptics.

## Advocates sharing positive experiences of receiving the vaccine.

Just read that a % of people are skipping 2nd vaccine bc they fear side effects. Reading Twitter one would think everyone gets side effects. So for a little balance, hubs & I have ~zero effects from 2nd Pfizer. He's a little tired. I scrubbed the tub and made muffins today.

7:04 AM · Apr 26, 2021

I had no side effects from my 2nd Pfizer vaccine. My 93 year old mother had no side effects from her 2nd Pfizer vaccine. So please everyone go get your second shot. You'll be fine. 3:14 PM - Apr 26, 2021

Had my first one 2 weeks ago. Only had a sore arm that night. Easy as!

Like · Reply · 1 d

Got my second right on time and no side effects at all ether time

#### Sharing about side-effects

Was so excited for the trekking this weekend but I had to cancel cos of the vaccine side effects. Bloody hell! Should've taken the 2nd dose later in the month instead.

Active trolling of vaxx advocates where individual suggest long-term side-effects will be an issue.



Those voicing anxiety about side-effects online are at risk of encouragement by anti-vaxxers.



Voicing concern for those who are potentially turning down the vaccine out of fear.

I believe there should be a big campaign to get this people to change their mind. They fear the vaccine could be bad for their bodies, but in most cases around the world there was no big side effects.

This is the perfect moment to raise awareness on how the vaccine is necessary

6:10 PM - Apr 26, 2021



# Commenters understanding or approach to considering risk is varied and does not engage with the concept of herd immunity.

Discussing risk is a common topic in this area. These commenters understanding or approach to considering risk is varied, often focuses on the individual and does not engage with the concept of herd immunity.

#### Themes include:

- Belief that as COVID-19 poses less risk to healthy individuals (non-immunocompromised) than the COVID-19 vaccine and therefore these people should not receive a vaccine and instead selfisolate.
- The risk of COVID-19 is higher than the risk of the COVID-19 vaccine and therefore the safest option for an individual is to be vaccinated.

#### Weighing up risk

Apr 19, 2021 12:05:25 PM

wow, you just made the case for not taking the vaccine, not sure if you see that. Yes, there is risk, albeit very low re covid. So should we wear a helmet every time we get out or it bed, or cross the road. Because that is what is being asked of us. Nother FDA or Medsafe have endorsed or certified the vaccine. Instead laws have been used to bypass their bafety protogols. Even though 900 million doses have been administered. What are the jong term risks? Thugs isn't a reputable health organization to come out and state it is totally safe and zero risk for the future. In fact, the potential side effects list is quite large, and growing. Just look up Pitaet's own warnings on their website. And last, there seems to be a lot of confusion around wether this vaccine will actually stop future infections. So again, I don't think it's unresonable for the major majority of the population who are at a incredibly low risk to say, slow down, let's make sure we don't mess this up. Vaccinate the elderly, sick, high risk humans. By all means. Just stop glying the rest of us a hard time for deciding that we are confortable with the risk of Covid. Just like getting up or crossing the pedestrian crossing.

I've heard of a very small proportion of populations having adverse reactions but not unusual with anything we put in our bodies. Cost benefit risk assessment just like past vaccines which have been successful

'm not going to jab myself with something I know nothing about. With that in mind and after looking at the side effects my vaccination is booked for next week because I personally think the pros outweigh the cons, and that's okay, and people are allowed to make different choices



The vaccine reduces the risk of symptomatic disease by about 95% 2) No medicine in the entire history of medicines, has ever guaranteed to be 100% effective for all people in all circumstances 3) Why would you prefer a disease with a 2% chance of death, over a vaccine with a 0.000004% chance of side effects?

## There is risk in everything - trust the experts

Apr 26, 2021 09:20:34 AM

I doubt you know much about the approval process for medicine. I think you are confusing numbers you heard in the media with what is actually happening. The technology the vaccines are based on has been used for a while and is safe. Usually the development of the technology would take along time. In this case we already had the technology and it had to be adjusted for this virus which was easier and went way faster than usual because millions were put into the development and basically every scients in that field dropped everything. The vaccines have been tested and have been approved. Millions worldwide have received the vaccine are monitored for side effects. Most medicine will not be tested on millions before being approved. So taking the vaccine is as safe as it can be to take any medicine or step on a plane, drive your car, plug in any appliance. In all cases your are relying on experts approving something that you afterwards put your trust in. Trust the experts, the scientist, the doctors, you are doing it on a regular basis every day.

#### Acceptance of some risk is not new

15/

Pointing out that birth control pills have a worse **blood clot** rate than any vaccine isn't saying 'blood clots are fine' but rather that it's amazing what we won't tolerate for the general population but will tolerate for mostly women for 60 years completely unchecked.

# Vaccine Attitudinal segmentation:

Analysts have segmented social conversation into categories that reflect New Zealanders' attitudes towards the COVID-19 vaccine.

Segments we have defined:

#### **Positive**

Vaxx advocate = Advocating for New Zealanders to have the vaccine.
 Back to normal = Motivated by returning to a sense of normality.
 Positive Access = The ease and accessibility of getting vaccinated, having a positive experience of vaccination.

#### Negative

Vaxx sceptics = Hesitancy or distrustful of the vaccine.

Rushed development = Uncertainty due to the speed the vaccine was created.

**Conspiracy and misinformation** = Anti-vaxx and conspiracy theories. **Negative access** = Barriers and blockers to accessing the vaccine, having a negative experience of vaccination.

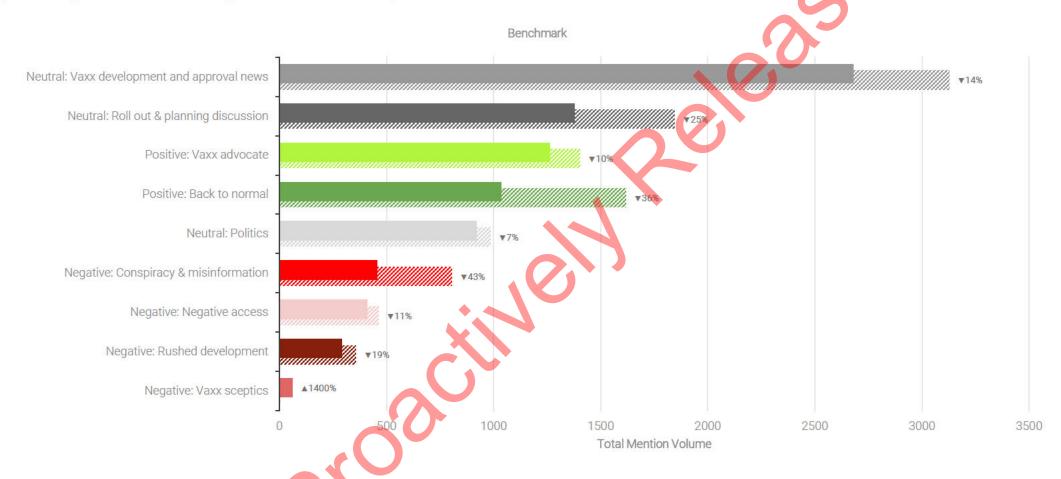
#### Neutral

**Vaxx development and approval news** = Development and approval of the vaccine

**Politics** = conversation about how governments are dealing with the vaccine.

**Roll out and planning discussion** = How the vaccine rollout is progressing.

Volume across all vaccine-related attitudinal categories fell this week (compared to April 13 – 19)





Contact



Unite Against COVID-19: Social Conversation Analysis April 27 – May 3, 2021 New Zealand

## **Update Summary:**

FAQs: This week there were 326 questions on owned channels. The majority of questions were about the vaccine rollout (62%). There were questions about travel, particularly the trans-Tasman bubble (19%). People were asking about the New Zealand border regulations (4%) and there were questions about the use of, and functionality, of the NZ COVID Tracer app (2%).

#### Conversation analysis:

A series of news stories about nine Customs workers being dismissed as they had refused the COVID-19 vaccine generated conversation around community safety and the rights of an individual to refuse a vaccination.

# What's in this report:

#### 1. FAQS

Identifying frequently asked questions and conversation from users on Ministry of Health's owned pages

2. Measuring Categories of Conversation

Identifying New Zealanders' key concerns and monitoring shifts in sentiment and emotion.

#### 3. Social Listening

New Zealanders' attitudes towards the COVID-19 vaccine, how we are discussing vaccines.

#### **FAQs** April 27 – May 3, 2021

#### VACCINE (62%) see subthemes below

- Access/How (57/202) e.g., logistics how/where/when can I get/who will contact me
- Access/Group (34/202) e.g., Group which group am I in/how can I find out which group
- Risk/Side-effects (25/202) (what are/how many side effects/long term)
- Rollout/Policy (18/202) e.g., policy for residents/when can 16-year-olds and under have it
- Risk/Medical (17/202) Can I get vaccine if I have xyz/take xyz medication
- Rollout/Progress(13/202) e.g., timings, timeline, speed
- Effectiveness (13/202) how effective/what does 95% mean, mutations? Will I need to wear a mask when vaccinated?
- Effectiveness/MIQ (10/202) Will MIQ be needed if vaccinated/will vaccine have influence on MIQ stay
- Risk/Flu shot (6/202) e.g when can get/how long between

- Risk/Pregnancy (5/202) Can I get/is it a risk
- Access/Choice (2/202) (do we have a choice)
- Objection (2/202) e.g., objection to vaccine – Don't want tax dollars spend on vaccine plan leaflet – who to complain to?

#### **TRAVEL (19%)**

- Do you have an approximate time a decision will be announced regarding travel from WA?
- Why does the MoH pre-travel online form not ask if people have been to Perth?
- Anyone in NZ can go? I'm here on a working holiday visa.
- How is the government currently ensuring that people from WA don't go through other states to get to NZ?

### IMMIGRATION/BORDER CONTROL (4%)

- Why is there not a total ban on travellers from India?
- When will the borders for work visas be opened?
- When will New Zealand open its border for India?
- WilLINZ be extending visa expiry dates by the duration of the travel ban once we are permitted entry again?

#### NZ COVID TRACER APP (2%)

— If everyone was scanning at every premises entered what sort of 24hour numbers do you reckon we'd expect?

against

COVID-19

- Can I use my tracer app in Aussie, or do I need to download a separate app?
- I'm trying to download the COVID app onto a smart phone, but it says the phone does not accept the version available. Is there a way around this?

SUMMARY: This week there were 326 questions on owned channels. The majority of questions were about the vaccine rollout (62%). There were questions about travel, particularly the trans-Tasman bubble (18%). People were asking about the New Zealand border regulations (4%) and there were questions about the use of, and functionality, of the NZ COVID Tracer app (2%).

#### **Category Definitions**

We access data through keyword queries. We update these queries as the language used to describe a topic or theme evolves. In this report, keywords have been updated to align with changes in conversation we've observed.



#### **Business & consumers**

The impact COVID-19 has had on how businesses operate and how consumers' behaviour has adjusted to ensure retail / hospitality / workplaces run safely.

#### Enforcement

Responses to the role of official enforcement and stories about how infringement is dealt with.

#### Domestic violence

How are we discussing family violence and abuse. How are the domestic violence services, agencies and wider community responding during this period.

#### **Environmental issues**

How are we talking about environmental issues including pollution, sustainability/waste and water preservation during this time.

#### Economy

Conversations New Zealanders are having about the economy, economic decisions and upcoming recession and recovery.

#### Contact tracing

What conversations are New Zealanders having about contact tracing and the use of apps and other contact tracing methods.

#### Virus

This conversation looks at the virus itself. This may include discussion about vaccination, medical response, health advice, symptoms of COVID-19 and number of cases/deaths in New Zealand and globally.

#### **#NZPOL Decisions**

The nation's response to and perception of New Zealand's leadership and decisions surrounding the response to COVID-19.

#### Team of five million / Unite against virus

Encouraging the nation to rally together, comply with the rules and cheerleading the cause.

#### Way of life

The impact COVID-19 has had on New Zealanders' everyday life, including remote working and schools, socialising, and changes that people have made to adapt to life in the pandemic.

#### Mental health

What conversations are New Zealanders having about their own mental health and that of their families and communities. What support is being offered and how are people coping and what are their stresses/anxieties.

#### **Timeframe**

Discussion about how long it will take before Alert Level restrictions are lifted or when life returns to normal.

#### Financial stability

The impact COVID-19 is having personally on New Zealanders in relation to their employment situations and personal and/or business finances.

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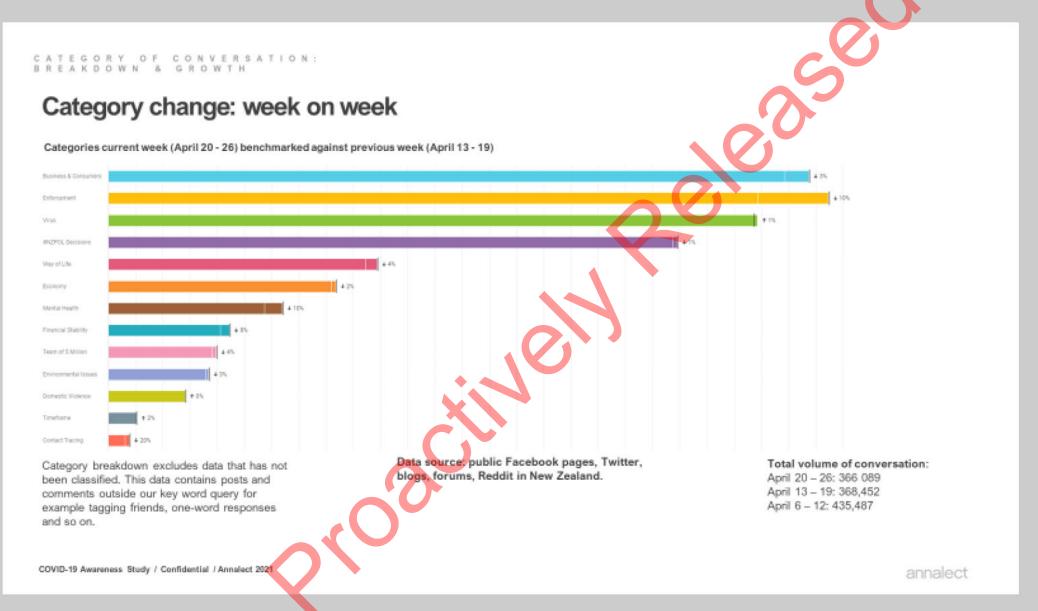
#### Category change: week on week

Categories current week (April 27 –May 3) benchmarked against previous week (April 20 - 26)



Category breakdown excludes data that has not been classified. This data contains posts and comments outside our key word query for example tagging friends, one-word responses and so on. Data source: public Facebook pages, Twitter, blogs, forums, Reddit in New Zealand.

**Total volume of conversation:** April 27- May 3: 308,015



Net sentiment (tone) of each category per week.

Categories remained stable this period. Slight decreases in negative sentiment in Enforcement, and Mental Health categories.



Data source: public Facebook pages, Twitter, blogs, forums, Reddit in New Zealand.

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# Vaccine conversation summary:

Conversation spiked on May 2, 2021 due to a series of news stories about the nine Customs workers who lost their contracts due to refusing the COVID19 vaccine.

This is the first incident in New Zealand where vaccine refusal has resulted in termination of employment despite the vaccine not being mandatory. Some New Zealanders are grappling with the details of the issue and reflecting on community safety and an individuals right to refuse a vaccine.

Conversation in response to the stories focused on:

- Protecting an individuals' right to choose not to be vaccinated.
- The importance of preserving the safety of the frontline workers and their colleagues.
- There was an uplift in the category 'Vax advocate' (see slide 13) as this moment prompted people to reassert their views about what a vaccine or herd immunity enables for the country.

There seemed to be a general lack of understanding about the detail of the dismissal which was likely compounded by headlines that used strong language like "sacked".

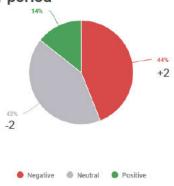
# "Human rights" was a developing topic within COVID19 vaccine related conversation due to news stories about Customs workers who refused the COVID vaccine losing their contracts.

- The sentiment of COVID19 vaccine related conversation continues to be predominantly negative & neutral in tone with little positive sentiment\*. Overall sentiment remained stable with a slight increase in negative sentiment (+2%).
- Total volume of conversation increased by 17% from the previous period (10,572 to 12,350 total posts). Volume spiked on May 2 due to press stories about nine customs workers losing their jobs due to refusing the COVID19 vaccine.
- Trending phases\*\* reflect discussion about the Customs workers story with "human rights" a developing topic.
- \*This sentiment analysis quantifies the tone of conversation and does not account for the topic. E.g. Vaccine Advocates who are expressing frustration towards anti-vaxxers will read as negative sentiment even though we may see this as a positive outcome.
- \*\*Trending phrases do not necessarily reflect high volume of conversation about that topic, rather they signal an abrupt increase.

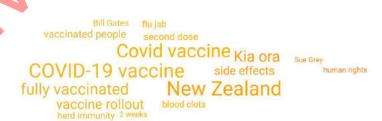
Volume and sentiment (tone): Total conversation about vaccines 27 April - 3 May in New Zealand. Total sentiment breakdown



Total sentiment breakdown for period



Trending phrases - COVID Vaccine conversation 27 April - 3 May in New Zealand.



Trending

## This event provided an opportunity for New Zealanders to discuss views about community safety vs an individuals' right to refuse a vaccine.

#### Unprecedented circumstances calls for strong measures.



#### Front line staff must be vaccinated to preserve the safety of the individual, their colleagues, and wider community.



both believe in and implement a policy of bodily autonomy. If border workers choose not to vaccinate, they are moved into less risky positions away from the 'front line' for both their safety and that of our inbound travellers

5:59 PM - Apr 28, 2021

#### Grappling with the detail of the how the story has unfolded.



fair enough, BUT to use the word "FIRED" is not right, the term "laid off" or "dismissed" would have been more appropriate Like Reply 2 d

#### Some discussion of human rights is moving into anti-vaxx territory

May 01, 2021 09:41:29 PM

9 Workers in New Zealand were fired this week (26/04/2021) because they refused to take the vaccine for personal reasons and rightly so. This shit is going to fly. Where are their rights? This is against the employment law and human rights law as well as the NZ Bill of Rights which states that any medical treatment requires consent and vaccination is a medical treatment as per the Bill of Rights? NZ government is fast becoming a police state and a dictator at the top. Thank God I still have control over my own mind.

Forced or coerced vaccination is a violation of: 1) Nuremberg Code 2) UNESCO Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human 3) UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 4) UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (art. 3).

#### Breach of human rights.

I mean you could insist new staff were as a part of their employment contract despite being a slippery slope. However to sack pre existing staff for refusing a vaccine or medical procedure is a breach of their human rights. It's not about being an anti vaxxer or pro vaxxer.. it's basic human rights. Pretty sure employment law will come into play...

they are protected under the bill of rights They have every right to refuse the vaccine and retain employment. The employer has broken their human





Unite against COVID-19 restrictions on any person not having the vaccine is against our human rights and I think the govt and health department will find a class action in court re this if

## Vaccine Attitudinal segmentation:

Note: analysts have updated categories to remain instep with evolving conversation.

Analysts have segmented social conversation into categories that reflect New Zealanders' attitudes towards the COVID-19 vaccine.

Segments we have defined:

**Vaxx advocate** = Advocating for New Zealanders to have the vaccine. **Enabling change** = Future focused discussion about what a vaccinated population will enable.

**Positive Access stories** = The ease and accessibility of getting vaccinated, having a positive experience of vaccination.

Vaxx sceptics = Hesitancy or distrustful of the vaccine.

Conspiracy and misinformation = Anti-vaxx and conspiracy theories.

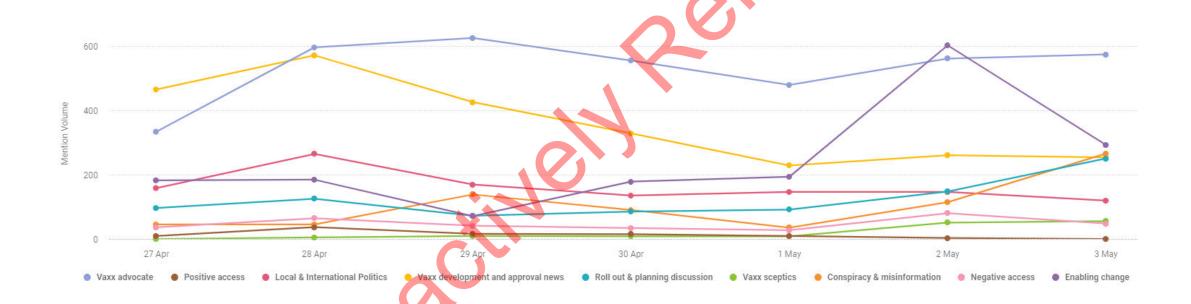
Negative access stories = Barriers and blockers to accessing the vaccine, having a negative experience of vaccination.

**Vaxx development and approval news** = Development and approval of the vaccine

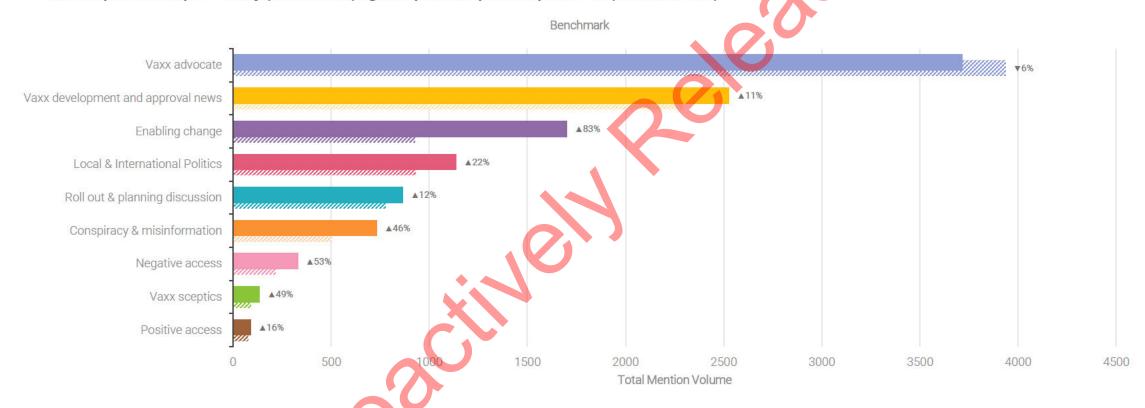
**Politics International and local** = conversation about how governments are dealing with the vaccine.

**Roll out and planning discussion** = How the vaccine rollout is progressing.

There was an uplift in the category 'Enabling change' on May 2<sup>nd</sup> as the conversation surrounding the nine Customs workers dismissal included those who were taking the pragmatic view that having vaccinated border workers is necessary to keep the community safe.







# Thank you

Contact

