



INNOVATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

Captaining a Team of 5 Million: New Zealand Beats Back COVID-19, March - June 2020

When the first cases of COVID-19 hit New Zealand at the end of February and beginning of March, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern moved decisively by adopting a "go hard, go early" lockdown strategy to stop the virus from spreading across the island nation. Behind Ardern stood a small cadre of civil servants and infectious disease experts who studied the rapidly evolving science of pandemic response---and the virus itself---and made policy recommendations to Ardern and her cabinet. Behind that response team stood a battalion of police, healthcare professionals, and other essential workers ready to implement the policies. And behind them stood everyday New Zealanders---whom Ardern referred to as "the team of 5 million"---who gave up personal freedoms for the greater good during a mandatory national lockdown. A far-reaching and comprehensive communication effort drove strong public acceptance as the government shifted health directives and policies in response to the fast-changing situation.

After May 1, the country went 102 days with no locally transmitted cases of the virus. However, a new outbreak of cases in August plunged Auckland, New Zealand's largest city, back into lockdown and made clear that extreme vigilance was necessary to protect New Zealanders from the pandemic raging abroad.

This case study profiles the pandemic response coordination system New Zealand adopted and adapted. The case study is part of a new series.

[Read More](#)

Our plan. Your plan.

You'll find both 'Our plan - the four Alert Levels' and 'Your plan - for staying home' on the inside of this leaflet. It's a good idea to attach it to your fridge with the two plans showing, so you and your family, whānau or flatmates are familiar with them.

The Alert Levels are precautionary measures, designed to help slow the spread of the virus.

Got symptoms? Call your GP first, or Healthline on 0800 358 5453.

If you're not sure who to contact for help, call the free government helpline on **0800 779 997** (8am-1am, 7 days a week).

Find out more at **Covid19.govt.nz**

New Zealand Government

Unite
against
COVID-19

COVID-19 notice posted in Wellington, New Zealand. Photo by Alan Tennyson / CC BY-SA
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