



# Briefing

## Briefing to Incoming Minister: Border Executive Board

Date due to MO:	27 March 2023	Action required by:	N/A
Security level:	<del>IN CONFIDENCE</del>	BEB Report:	RPT 23-01
To:	Hon Meka Whaitiri, Minister of Customs		

### Contact for telephone discussion

Name	Position	Telephone
Christine Stevenson	Chair, Border Executive Board	s 9(2)(a) OIA
Fiona McKissock	Executive Director, Border Executive Board Secretariat	s 9(2)(a) OIA

### Minister's office to complete:

- Approved
- Decline
- Noted
- Needs change
- Seen
- Overtaken by events
- See Minister's Notes
- Withdrawn

Comment:

# Briefing to Incoming Minister: Border Executive Board

Security level: ~~IN CONFIDENCE~~ Date: 27 March 2023

To: Hon Meka Whaitiri, Minister of Customs

## Purpose of report

- This report provides you with an overview of the Border Executive Board as the incoming responsible Minister. The briefing covers:
  - key areas for your attention
  - the Board's priorities for the next six months, draft Border Sector Strategy, and 2022/23 work programme
  - ministerial engagement
  - background to the Border Executive Board.

## Summary

- The key areas for your attention in the short-term, outlined in this report, are:
  - seeking Cabinet agreement to refresh the Border Executive Board accountabilities and confirm the Border Sector Strategy
  - implementing the digital Arrival Card using the New Zealand Traveller Declaration - NZTD
  - supporting the airport system to operate efficiently, with a focus on Auckland International Airport.

## Recommendations

It is recommended that you:

- note** the briefing as the incoming Minister for the Border Executive Board
- agree** to meet with the governance board at a date agreed with your Office
- note** the briefing as an incoming Minister will follow the precedent of being proactively released.

Noted

Yes / No

Noted

s 9(2)(a) OIA

Christine Stevenson  
**Chair, Border Executive Board**  
 Date: 27/3/23

s 9(2)(a) OIA

Hon Meka Whaitiri  
**Minister of Customs**  
 Date: 28/3/2023

# Briefing to Incoming Minister: Border Executive Board

## Welcome from the Chair

1. On behalf of the Border Executive Board chief executives, I would like to welcome you as our responsible Minister. I look forward to meeting with you about the Border Executive Board and extend an invitation for you to meet all six chief executives at your convenience.
2. As you are aware through your Customs portfolio, effective border management is critical to New Zealand's wellbeing and future prosperity. New Zealand's border is a grouping of individual agency systems within an overarching national system. Inter-agency collaboration provides for more control, easier flows, greater efficiency, and improved customer experience at the border and beyond.
3. The Border Executive Board adds value to the border by ensuring collaboration and alignment. It is a new way of working, enabled by the Public Service Act 2020, to improve collaboration between agencies without structural change. There are five inter-departmental executive boards.
4. This briefing is intended to give you an overview of the Border Executive Board. Further information can be provided to you, as requested. The appendices include:
  - membership
  - border functions within each member agency
  - draft Border Sector Strategy
  - 2022/23 Border Executive Board Work Programme.

## Areas for your attention

5. The key areas for your attention in the short-term are:
  - seeking Cabinet agreement to refresh the Border Executive Board accountabilities and confirm the Border Sector Strategy ✓
  - implementing the digital Arrival Card using the New Zealand Traveller Declaration - NZTD ✓
  - supporting the airport system to operate efficiently, with a focus on Auckland International Airport. ✓

*Cabinet agreement to refresh Border Executive Board accountabilities and confirm the Border Sector Strategy*

6. Your agreement will be sought to ask Cabinet to refresh the Border Executive Board accountabilities and approve the Border Sector Strategy. The intent is to have Cabinet agreement by 30 June 2023, § 9(2)(f)(iv) OIA [REDACTED]

7. Cabinet made the Border Executive Board accountable for developing a border sector strategy. The Border Sector Strategy was developed in 2022 and updated in January 2023 to reflect the change in New Zealand's response to COVID-19. § 9(2)(f)(iv) OIA [REDACTED]

8. Developing the Border Sector Strategy involved reviewing the four accountabilities set by Cabinet (refer paragraph 26) when the Border Executive Board was established. The Board has agreed to refresh the accountabilities by removing reference to COVID-19. The intent of the Border Executive Board has not changed.

*Implementing the digital Arrival Card using the New Zealand Traveller Declaration - NZTD*

9. As the responsible Minister for Customs, you are familiar with the New Zealand Traveller Declaration and the commitment to digitise the Arrival Card for air by 21 June 2023 and maritime by 31 October 2023.
10. The New Zealand Traveller Declaration is a key border system that will change how agencies process arriving passengers and provide a platform for digital risk management. The Border Executive Board is the high-level governance board for the programme. It receives regular Programme updates, is involved in key decisions, and helps ensure agencies that use the system now, or into the future, are connected.
11. In November 2022, the Board agreed that the New Zealand Customs Service be the accountable agency for the New Zealand Traveller Declaration post project. Part of the transfer to business as usual will involve confirming the future role of the Border Executive Board in monitoring performance and setting the future use of the New Zealand Traveller Declaration.

*Supporting the airport system to operate efficiently, with a focus on Auckland International Airport*

Congestion

12. The ongoing disruption with Auckland International Airport (AIAL) operations is part of a wider domestic and international aviation industry issue. The disruption to air travel is having a negative impact on travellers and border services, particularly for the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI). MPI continues to allocate additional resources to process mishandled and therefore unaccompanied baggage.
13. The Border Executive Board provided advice to the Minister for COVID-19 Response on 4 November 2022, copied to you, relating to the processing issues at Auckland International Airport (AIAL) [BEB RPT 22-039 and BEB RPT 22-041 refers].
14. The report addressed passengers experiencing delays and congestion moving from the arrival gate to exiting the airport. Adjusting only border agency processing will not remove the queues caused by the volume of passengers arriving at the same time. Agencies continue to work with AIAL on managing incoming flights and processing capacity of government and non-government activities.
15. AIAL industry leaders wrote to joint Ministers on 15 December 2022 seeking Government help to manage the summer peak. The areas were COVID-19 isolation requirements, immigration settings, and staffing of aviation security screening and biosecurity activity. A Ministerial response was provided 28 February 2023 that indicated changes could not be made to current settings and that agencies will continue to work with AIAL.
16. The Board will continue to discuss whether there are operational, regulatory or policy options to help improve how the airport system is operating in recognition that Auckland is the main gateway to New Zealand.



Building works

17. The significant rainfall and flooding in Auckland on 27 January 2023 impacted AIAL. Border agencies have restored their border processing services and will work with AIAL to manage the residual issues, which are mostly “back of house”.
18. The Border Executive Board is engaged with AIAL on the upgrade to the international terminal. This includes the requirements for border services and staff and understanding the expected level of disruption during the construction period.

**Priorities for the next six months**

19. Key areas of focus for the Border Executive Board in the next six months are noted below.
  - *Cabinet approval of refreshed accountabilities and Border Sector Strategy* – seeking agreement from Cabinet to update the areas of accountability, as COVID-19 becomes managed as business as usual, and approve the Border Sector Strategy. Cabinet agreement is intended to be completed by 30 June 2023 s 9(2)(f)(iv) OIA
  - *Ready for the next health event* – ensuring border agencies are joined up in relation to a new COVID-19 variant or the next health event. This involves confirming the escalation pathway, decision points and decision makers, and the potential role of border measures.
  - *Digitising the Arrival Card* – implementing the digital Arrival Card for air by 21 June 2023 and maritime by 31 October 2023. Handing over the New Zealand Traveller Declaration to its ongoing owner, the New Zealand Customs Service, and confirming the future role of the Border Executive Board.
  - *Aligning air and maritime passenger expectations* – aligning, where practicable, the expectations of air and maritime passengers. This is linked to implementing the digital Arrival Card in maritime to strengthen risk management through pre-arrival information.
  - *Health at the border* – supporting development of the strategic approach to health at the border. This includes strengthening the coordination between health activities and the border, along with embedding health into the Integrated Targeting and Operations Centre (ITOC).
  - *Airport system performance* – meeting the increase in demand for air travel, ensuring effective border processes are in place, and supporting a positive experience for travellers with a focus on Auckland International Airport.
  - *Preparing for winter* – assurance that the border is ready for winter including supporting the wellbeing of the border workforce, potential health settings, and the increase in travellers at southern airports.
  - *Financial oversight* – maintaining oversight of the financial sustainability of border activity with particular attention to the cost recovery of services and the impact of cost pressures such as inflation. Continuing to consider border scenarios of traveller and cargo demand to inform agency planning.

## Ministerial engagement

- 20. The Chair meets regularly with the Border Executive Board chief executives. The Border Executive Board welcomes the opportunity to provide a weekly update. It is proposed to extend the weekly Customs Officials' meeting to discuss Border Executive Board matters.
- 21. In addition to your Customs portfolio, the other main ministerial portfolios for the border are shown below.



Hon Dr Ayesha Verrall Minister of Health



Hon Nanaia Mahuta Minister of Foreign Affairs



Hon Damien O'Connor Minister of Biosecurity



Hon Michael Wood  
Minister of Immigration  
Minister of Transport

- 22. The Border Executive Board has provided value to the Government and industry by providing a single point of contact for raising issues and opportunities that are progressed by working together and across more than one portfolio. Matters of interest to the Border Executive Board may be raised with you or through your ministerial border colleagues. Some topics of interest are noted below.

Area of shared ministerial interest	Related portfolios
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact of flooding and adverse weather on Auckland International Airport, travellers and cargo</li> </ul>	Minister of Transport Minister of Immigration Minister of Biosecurity Minister of Foreign Affairs Customs portfolio
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting the airport system to operate efficiently, with a focus on Auckland International Airport</li> </ul>	Minister of Transport Minister of Immigration Minister of Biosecurity Customs portfolio
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The border's contribution to responding to a new COVID-19 variant of concern or health event</li> </ul>	Minister of Health
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FIFA Women's World Cup Football significant event</li> </ul>	Minister of Immigration Minister of Biosecurity Customs portfolio
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementing the digital Arrival Card using the New Zealand Traveller Declaration and its use in maritime</li> </ul>	Minister of Transport Minister of Biosecurity Minister of Immigration Minister of Health Customs portfolio
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foot and mouth disease risk mitigation</li> </ul>	Minister of Biosecurity

## About the Border Executive Board

### *Establishment*

23. Members of the governance board are jointly responsible to you, as the responsible Minister, for the operation of the Border Executive Board. Chief Executives retain accountability for delivering services and functions of their respective agencies and to their respective Ministers.
24. The Border Executive Board started on 11 January 2021 to strengthen the existing collaboration of border agencies, with a focus on a strong COVID-19 response, and to ensure an enduring safe and smart border.
25. The governance board comprises the chief executives from the six member agencies:
  - Christine Stevenson, New Zealand Customs Service and Chair
  - Chris Seed, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
  - Carolyn Tremain, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment
  - Dr Diana Sarfati, Manatū Hauora Ministry of Health
  - Ray Smith, Ministry for Primary Industries
  - Audrey Sonerson, Te Manatū Waka Ministry of Transport.
26. Cabinet established the Border Executive Board's accountabilities as [CBC-20-MIN-0099]:
  - ensuring there are no gaps in the end-to-end border processes to integrate health risk management, particularly for a robust COVID-19 response while preparing to reopen our borders
  - ensuring any gaps or future risks from people, goods and craft arriving at the border will be addressed, where the risks are not already being managed by an existing agency
  - strategic border system improvements, including developing a Border Sector Strategy, monitoring performance and user experiences across the system, advising on investment decisions for the border system, and delivering joint initiatives to build a safer and smarter border, and
  - managing the significant and pressing fiscal challenges that the sector is facing as a result of decreased revenues from cost-recovery activities through the COVID-19 pandemic.

### *Administrative arrangements*

27. You will become the Minister responsible for the Border System Performance appropriation within Vote Customs. The Appropriation funds the Border Executive Board Secretariat and activity to support the Border Executive Board. The 2022/23 appropriation is \$2,188,000 and is funded by border agencies.
28. The Board is supported by a small secretariat team to provide continuity of service and support. The Secretariat is led by Fiona McKissock, Executive Director, and has four staff.
29. The Board intends to meet once a month in 2023 with fortnightly placeholders scheduled should an interim meeting be required.

30. A Deputy Chief Executive Group supports the delivery of the Border Executive Board work programme. A range of senior officials' groups also support the work of the Border Executive Board and Secretariat.
31. The Border Executive Board and the Secretariat work closely with agencies that form part of the border system but cannot be members as they are Crown entities. These are:
  - Te Whatu Ora Health New Zealand – represented by Manatū Hauora
  - Maritime New Zealand – represented by Te Manatū Waka
  - Civil Aviation Authority /Aviation Security Service – represented by Te Manatū Waka.

### Accountability

32. The Border Executive Board has accountability responsibilities and participates in activity like a department.
  - *Royal Commission of Inquiry COVID-19 Lessons* – the Board is preparing to respond to the Inquiry as its own entity in addition to responding as individual member agencies. The Secretariat will provide coordination support across the border agencies and the Board will regularly discuss progress.
  - *Strategic Intentions* – the Border Executive Board was granted a three-year waiver, when established, to produce its own strategic intentions document. It is timely to consider preparing the strategic intentions in 2023. Work will include developing success indicators for the Border Sector Strategy. These will build on the existing measures and indicators of the member agencies.
  - *Estimates Select Committee* – the Border Executive Board contributes to the Vote Customs estimates review.
  - *Vote performance measures* – appropriation financial and non-financial performance is reported as part of the New Zealand Customs Service Annual Report, as the vote administrator. The Border System Performance appropriation includes seeking the satisfaction of the responsible Minister with the provision of co-ordination, information and advice every six months.
  - *Annual Report* – each year the Border Executive Board produces an annual report for the year ending 30 June.
  - *Annual Review Select Committee* – the Border Executive Board attended a hearing in December 2022 before the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee for 2021/22. This included responding to the standard pre-hearing questions. It is anticipated this will continue for 2022/23 and ongoing years.
  - *Parliamentary Questions* – the Secretariat provides information to respond to any Parliamentary Questions received. The majority fall to the New Zealand Customs Service for response as the employer of staff, appropriation administrator, or servicing department.

### Attachments

- Appendix 1: Members of the Border Executive Board
- Appendix 2: Agency members and border functions
- Appendix 3: Draft Border Sector Strategy
- Appendix 4: 2022/23 Border Executive Board Work Programme



## Appendix 1 – Members of the Border Executive Board 27 March 2023



**Christine Stevenson**

Chair  
Comptroller of Customs

New Zealand Customs Service

Inaugural member



**Chris Seed**

Secretary of Foreign Affairs  
and Trade

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and  
Trade

Inaugural member



**Carolyn Tremain**

Chief Executive

Ministry of Business,  
Innovation and Employment

Inaugural member



**Ray Smith**

Director-General of Primary  
Industries

Ministry for Primary Industries

Inaugural member



**Dr Diana (Di) Sarfati**

Director-General of Health

Manatū Hauora  
Ministry of Health

Joined August 2022  
Appointed 1 December 2022



**Audrey Sonerson**

Secretary for Transport

Te Manatū Waka  
Ministry of Transport

Appointed 12 December 2022

## Appendix 2: Agency members and border functions

### Border Executive Board – The Six Agencies

#### New Zealand Customs Service

Te Mana Ārai o Aotearoa

Protect and promote New Zealand across borders

##### BORDER FUNCTIONS

- Passenger, goods, and craft clearance
- Revenue collection at the border
- Disruption to organised crime (especially drugs)

#### Ministry of Health

Manatū Hauora

Lead and shape New Zealand's health and disability system to deliver a healthy and independent future for all New Zealanders

##### BORDER FUNCTIONS

- Surveillance of, and response to, health risks at the border
- Health clearance for arriving craft
- Operationalisation of the International Health Regulations 2005

#### Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment

Hīkina Whakatutuki

Helping grow New Zealand for all to improve the wellbeing of New Zealanders

##### BORDER FUNCTIONS

- Verify right to enter New Zealand
- Disruption of people smuggling and trafficking
- Quarantine capability

#### Ministry for Primary Industries

Manatū Ahu Matua

Helping to seize export opportunities for our primary industries, improve sector productivity, ensure the food we produce is safe, increase sustainable resource use, and protect New Zealand from biological risk

##### BORDER FUNCTIONS

- Risk-informed screening and clearance of goods and craft for pests and diseases
- Biosecurity screening of all passengers' luggage

#### New Zealand Foreign Affairs & Trade

Manatū Aorere

Acting in the world to build a safer, more prosperous and more sustainable future for New Zealanders

##### BORDER FUNCTIONS

- Consular communications
- Support for border settings
- Trade facilitation

#### Ministry of Transport

Te Manatū Waka

Enable New Zealanders to flourish, reflecting transport's role in shaping our society, economy and environment

##### BORDER FUNCTIONS

- Policy advice, Crown entity governance, system leadership and stewardship including:
  - AvSec air security, passenger and baggage screening
  - CAA aviation safety
  - Maritime New Zealand regulatory activity

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As at January 2023



## Appendix 4: 2022/23 Border Executive Board Work Programme

	<b>Governance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Board performance</li> <li>Performance of the border system</li> <li>Accountability to Parliament and public</li> <li>System coordination</li> </ul>		<b>Ahumoni Hoahoa (Finance)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cost recovery – fees and levies to manage cost pressures and volume issues</li> <li>Multi-year view of border finance and collective investments</li> </ul>
	<b>Risk and Assurance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Risk monitoring</li> <li>Assurance plans and activity</li> </ul>		<b>Strategic Direction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Border sector strategy</li> <li>Success indicators</li> </ul>

### and joint initiatives with the six border agencies

that respond to current matters		Agencies involved
	<b>Air Border</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the airport system to operate efficiently and enable a positive traveller experience</li> </ul>	NZCS, MPI, MBIE, MFAT, MoT
	<b>Maritime Border</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maritime passenger strategy</li> <li>Maritime port infrastructure for processing passengers</li> </ul>	MoT, NZCS, MPI, MBIE MoT
	<b>Border System Readiness</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The next COVID-19 variant of concern or next health event</li> <li>Contribute to the Royal Commission of Inquiry (COVID-19 Lessons) and use insights for next border event</li> <li>Winter season including health settings and border workforce</li> </ul>	All All All
and improve the border for the future		
	<b>Digital Declaration</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Digitise the Arrival Card using the New Zealand Traveller Declaration</li> <li>Implement agency ownership of the New Zealand Traveller Declaration</li> </ul>	Lead: NZCS, MBIE, MPI With: MoH
	<b>Data Sharing and Privacy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data sharing support for priority projects</li> <li>Identify opportunities for addressing barriers to information sharing</li> <li>Strategic oversight and direction of border data sharing and privacy activities</li> </ul>	Lead: MBIE With: NZCS, MPI, MoT, MFAT, MoH
	<b>Digital Border – Airports of the Future</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop biosecurity and customs substance algorithms</li> <li>Airport trials for RTT Scanner, X-Ray, control room and radio frequency identification</li> <li>Oversight and alignment of digital border projects</li> </ul>	Lead: MPI, NZCS With: MoT, MoH
	<b>Integrated Targeting and Operations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase agency participation and representation at ITOC</li> <li>Support 24/7 operations</li> <li>Enhance ITOC's role in border operational coordination</li> </ul>	Lead: NZCS, MBIE, MPI With: MoH, MoT
	<b>Strategic Approach to Health at the Border</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrate health intelligence and risk assessment</li> <li>Regular health function at the border</li> <li>Ability to identify, monitor and escalate health measures</li> <li>Implement the Strategic Approach to Health at the Border (phased)</li> </ul>	Lead: MoH With: NZCS, MPI, MBIE, MoT
	<b>Infrastructure at Airports</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collective engagement with New Zealand's six largest airports</li> <li>Preparation for the enactment of RASU's under the CAA Bill</li> <li>Input into development of Auckland International Airport</li> </ul>	Lead: MoT, NZCS With: MPI, MBIE, MoH

Refreshed February 2023