



## **Media release**

Wednesday November 24, 2021

### **MetService adopts Vaccinated Premises policy**

From Monday November 22, MetService offices in Auckland, Raglan, New Plymouth, Paraparaumu, Wellington, and Christchurch became vaccinated premises. As a result, only employees, directors, contractors, and visitors fully vaccinated against COVID-19 can enter any MetService office in New Zealand.

MetService Chief Executive Stephen Hunt says, "MetService provides an essential service to Kiwis. Our weather forecasts help people stay safe and make informed decisions. Keeping our highly-skilled people safe from the risk of infection and transmission in the workplace, while continuing to provide weather forecasts Kiwis rely on is of utmost importance to our organisation."

"Fortunately, we've had no cases of COVID-19 in our offices to date, but with the safety-critical nature of our operations, and the specialised skills of our staff, we need to be prepared. Should cases be prevalent, the accuracy of the meteorological and oceanographic services MetService provide could be impacted, as sustaining fully-staffed work shifts 24 hours a day would be a challenge," say Hunt.

The MetService forecasting system and New Zealand's Severe Weather warning service are reliant on the expertise of meteorologists and oceanographers, data scientists and technical experts who provide support and expertise. These teams are responsible for ensuring New Zealanders and organisations that rely on up-to-date forecasts and severe weather information have access to the safety-critical information they need.

Consultation with New Zealand-based MetService staff on the vaccinated premises policy began in October, with suppliers and contractors of MetService informed of the proposal shortly after.

MetService Board Chair Sophie Haslem adds, “While MetService encourages all our people to get vaccinated, we are committed to making suitable arrangements for any staff who choose not to. We have worked with a small number of employees that chose not to be vaccinated or to divulge their vaccination status, and we’ve equipped those members of our team with the tools and resources they need to work efficiently and safely.”

MetService is committed to implementing the Government COVID-19 Protection Framework and will adapt and review the newly adopted vaccinated premises approach once the 90% national vaccination rate target is achieved.