



TE KAHU O TAONUI

Me mahi tahi tātou

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MEDIA RELEASE

“TE KAHU O TAONUI REQUIRE 90% VACCINATION RATES FOR ALL MĀORI IN TĀMAKI MAKAUROU AND TE TAI TOKERAU BEFORE OUR NORTHERN BORDER IS OPENED”

Yesterday the Crown announced people will be able to travel freely to and from Auckland from the 15 December to January 17, 2022 with proviso that they have received two doses of the Covid-19 vaccination, or returned a negative test within 72 hours of leaving Auckland.

Te Kahu o Taonui oppose the opening of the Tai Tokerau border to Aucklanders until such time that Māori in Auckland and Tai Tokerau reach the 90% vaccination rates. Until that time, the iwi of the North require the borders to stay closed.

“We have grave concerns with the opening of the Northern border to Aucklanders on the 15 December as our communities are still vulnerable knowing we have yet to reach the 90% vaccination rate that Auckland has. Why should Tai Tokerau be opened up when there are no clear safety provisions in place to ensure that those entering our rohe have adhered to the double vaccination message or testing within 72hrs” states Wallace Rivers, Chair of Ngāi Takoto Iwi.

Professor Mākere Mutu, Chair of Ngāti Kahu and Auckland resident affirms “It is not the responsibility of Te Kahu o Taonui to check the vaccination status, Tai Tokerau will not be the collateral damage – you might as well send body bags.”

Tai Tokerau Iwi alongside the District Health Board, Primary Care and Māori Providers are working hard to accelerate Māori vaccination rates at this time. It is premature to open the North to Aucklanders when we do not have our own people protected at the same levels as Auckland.

Te Kahu o Taonui affirm a willingness to work with the government on a strategy to open the Northern borders as we progress our Māori vaccination efforts towards the 90%.



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“Ngātiwai are a coastal iwi and our kainga are some of the most popular summer hotspots in the country. We know if the borders open in December our tribal rohe will be saturated with Auckland holiday makers which poses a significant risk to our whole community. We believe this significant risk needs to be managed to ensure the safety of our people. There is nothing in place to ensure those coming after the 15th of December are tested and double vaccinated. Ka nui te awangawanga a Ngātiwai ki wēnei tuwhai āhua” says Aperahama Edwards, Chair of Ngātiwai Trust Board.

Te Kahu o Taonui are concerned that there is little security for the North with the opening of the borders “random Police checks are not enough to assure iwi of the North that Aucklanders coming into the North are double vaxxed or have been tested prior to entry. We need a longer conversation on what opening the borders looks like” says Wallace Rivers, Chair Ngāi Takoto.

Te Kahu o Taonui are united to support vaccination efforts across Te Tai Tokerau. “Kia atawhai te iwi - We want to be able to powhiri our people back home to their haukāinga when we all reach the 90% vaccination rate” says Abe Witana of Te Rūnanga o Te Rarawa.

As part of the sacred and enduring partnership agreement as guaranteed by Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Te Kahu o Taonui demand appropriate negotiation with the Crown before we, as a Confederation of Chairs approve opening the Northern borders into our respective Territories.

ENDS

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