

MEDIA RELEASE

Privacy Commissioner briefed on Police contact and trace system for returning travellers

3 April 2020

Privacy Commissioner John Edwards has been briefed by Police after concerns were raised about the software and website Police were using to contact, register and trace people returning from overseas during their self-isolation.

Concerns were raised with the Privacy Commissioner's Office over the authenticity of the text messages returning travellers received and the website where they could opt-in to the tracing scheme. Some individuals contacted by text said the website did not look official and wondered whether it was a scam.

Mr Edwards says Police have explained it was software previously used to a limited extent for search and rescue that has been repurposed and scaled up for the Covid-19 emergency. The website is currently being redeveloped to make it clear it is an official New Zealand government website.

Mr Edwards understands that Police are in the process of completing a privacy impact assessment and security review of the website.

He is reassured that the appropriate steps are being taken to ensure system is being used proportionately and is fit for purpose.

For further information, contact Charles Mabbett - 021 509 735.