COVID-19 and CRVS
the show must go on!

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Registrar-General of Births, Deaths and Marriages,
General Manager, Services and Access

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Te Tari Taiwhenua
Internal Affairs

New Zealand Government
New Zealand Context
New Zealand Context

Population of 5 million – annually 60,000 births, 30,000 migrants become citizens, 30,000 deaths

Over last 7 years moved to 95% births and deaths registered online. MCCD fully online last year.

2050 COVID cases, 25 deaths, 69 border isolation cases, 0 community cases (at 30 November 2020)

Prime Minister Ardern – “Flattening the Curve”
Maintaining high registration levels

- Civil registration deemed an ‘essential service’ under any emergency situation
- Business Continuity Plans in place and updated for pandemic response in February
- Understood staffing capacity needed to maintain core services
- Before lockdown started clearing work queues and split teams as infections increased
- Pushed stakeholders and customers online
- During lockdown maintained split teams and 2metre desk distancing. Stopped non-essential tasks.
Growth of online MCCD

Certificates completed on-line compared to total deaths certified on HP4720 certificates as at 02/11/2020 (NB: total deaths for October 2020 is an estimate based on October 2019 deaths)
Responding to the crisis

- Registrar General a key member of the COVID-19 Mass Fatality Response Team
- Daily reporting of all NZ deaths to predict storage capacity problems
- New database of all funeral directors and their storage capacity
- Daily reporting of storage occupancy and staff availability
- Regular e-newsletter to funeral directors
- Online MCCD reporting - www.deathdocs.services.govt.nz

Longer-term benefits
- Now have weekly death statistics on the StatsNZ website – administrative data at its best!
- Now have complete dataset for funeral sector with regular updating through to industry body
- Significant uptake of online DeathDocs, changes to delivery – appointment only and cash-free
Daily reporting to Mass Fatality Response Team

Please be aware of the following caveats:
- Daily Registrations and Estimates will change over time as DIA and MoH are notified of Deaths. Estimates are expected to increase the most during the first 3 days from Date of Death, stabilising 5 days from Date of Death. We are currently looking into alternative methods of calculating Estimates.
- The data provided has been collated to the best of our ability and may have a small variance to any alternative publications.
- Death Estimates are based on the average daily variance (1st Jan 2020 - 17 Mar 2020) between Online Death Documents and Death Registrations Received by day of the week.

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Now weekly StatsNZ data – not quarterly
Plan not needed – curve flattened

Cases (including those in border isolation) – 25 February to 15 November
(source Wikipedia)
Key lessons

• Ensure business continuity plans always up-to-date.
• Online, cloud-based systems give resilience in a crisis.
• Important to have civil registration categorised as an essential service in emergency plans and legislation.
• Administrative data can be provided quickly, is hugely valuable and popular with the public.
• Never miss the opportunity that a crisis brings.
Questions?