



Occupational Therapy  
Board of New Zealand

TE POARI WHAKAORA NGANGAHAU O AOTEAROA  
FOSTERING FAITH AND CONFIDENCE IN THE PROFESSION



OTNZ - WNA  
Occupational Therapy New Zealand  
Whakaora Ngangahau Aotearoa

March 24 2020

## Occupational Therapy Board of New Zealand and New Zealand Association of Occupational Therapists Whakaora Ngangahau Aotearoa:

### Joint statement; COVID-19 update

Occupational therapists will be aware that the Prime Minister announced on 23 March 2020 that New Zealand is now at level 3 in response to the COVID-19 virus - **Restrict**. Level 3 is seen as heightened risk that COVID-19 is not contained. This means that community transmission is occurring and includes the possibility of multiple cluster break outs.

Occupational therapists now need to consider undertaking the following measures:

- Alternative ways of working – via telephone, skype or zoom;
- Avoid face-to-face meetings; and,
- Non-essential services should be deferred or suspended

It is important that occupational therapists work closely with their employers and follow local and national guidelines. The Ministry of Health maintains a website with all relevant up to date advice and can be accessed [here](#).

The scope of practice of occupational therapy is wide and diverse. This means that it is difficult to give “blanket” advice to cover all practice, employment and work situations. So at this time we ask occupational therapists to:

- consider the advice from the Ministry of Health, the Director General of Health and the Prime Ministers media conference.
- reflect on this advice and act in good consciousness within the bounds of your scope of practice, competencies, code of ethics and employment contracts.
- support colleagues within the profession and work collaboratively with other professions in health and social care agencies.

At 11:59 pm on Wednesday 25 March, New Zealand will increase to alert level 4 – **Eliminate**. This means that it is likely that the disease is not contained. The range of measures for level 4 include:

- People instructed to stay home
- Educational facilities closed
- Businesses closed except for essential services
- Rationing of supplies and requisitioning of facilities
- Travel severely limited
- Major reprioritisation of healthcare services.

The impact of these measures will affect the services provided by occupational therapists in different ways. For practitioners working in DHBs and NGOs, it is important to follow your employer's directions. For private practitioners you may wish to contact colleagues in national services offering assistance as reprioritisation of healthcare service takes place.

The Occupational Therapy Board remains open with staff working remotely.

Occupational Therapy Board of New Zealand

Email: [enquiries@otboard.org.nz](mailto:enquiries@otboard.org.nz)

Phone: 0800 99 77 55

Dr Mary Silcock, Professional Advisor, OTBNZ

Email: [Mary@otboard.org.nz](mailto:Mary@otboard.org.nz)

Phone: 04 9184747

Andrew Charnock, CE and Registrar, OTBNZ

Email: [andrew@otboard.org.nz](mailto:andrew@otboard.org.nz)

Phone: 04 9184745

Occupational Therapy New Zealand / Whakaora Ngangahau Aotearoa

Phone 04 473 6510

Email: [office@otnz.co.nz](mailto:office@otnz.co.nz)

Additional information and guidance:

MSD's information on the employer wage subsidy is available [here](#).

Ministry of health covid-19 available [here](#)

[linkedin.com/company/otbnz](https://www.linkedin.com/company/otbnz)

More information will be posted on our [website](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#) pages.