



## Declaration of Public Health Emergency Order No. 6 of 2022

### Unofficial Consolidated version

In exercise of the powers conferred on me by sections 21A and 21C of the Public Health Act [CAP 234], I, the Honourable SILAS BULE MELVE, Minister of Health, on the recommendation of the Director after the Director has received advice from the Committee, make the following Order.

#### 1. Declaration of Public Health Emergency

Due to the continuous global impact of COVID-19, a Declaration of Public Health Emergency is declared throughout the whole of Vanuatu.

#### 2. Period of Public Health Emergency

The Declaration of Public Health Emergency commences on the 1st of February 2022 and ceases to have effect on the 31<sup>st</sup> July 2022.

#### 2A. Definition

For the purposes of this Order, unless the context otherwise requires:

**Essential services** means the following services:

- (a) Health services;
- (b) Television and broadcasting network;
- (c) Air and sea transport;
- (d) Bakery;
- (e) Public road transport;
- (f) Supply and distribution of fuel and petrol;
- (g) Supermarkets and shop selling groceries;
- (h) Financial institutions;
- (i) Vanuatu Police Force including its policing, maritime and mobile elements;
- (j) All staff employed by the Department of Correctional Services as correctional centre managers, correctional officers or to other positions within a correctional centre;
- (k) Judicial services including judges, magistrates, court personnel and lawyers that are required to appear before a court;
- (l) Any other services approved by the Minister of Health.

**Condition or restriction** includes a prohibition, a curfew and any other public health measures required to be taken under this Order.

#### 3. Conditions relating to the conduct of responds to the declared public health emergency

The following are the conditions relating to the conduct of responds to the declared public health emergency:

- (a) A person must:
  - (i) Follow the public health and social measures recommended by the Ministry of Health in accordance with COVID-19 Alert Level at their location based on the Vanuatu COVID-19 Outbreak Alert System as outlined at [www.covid19.gov.vu](http://www.covid19.gov.vu). This includes:
    - (A) At all COVID-19 Alert Levels, the 6 hygiene and prevention measures: wash hands; do not touch eyes, nose and mouth; practice respiratory hygiene; clean and disinfect surfaces; stay home when sick; get vaccinated when available; and

- (B) Depending on the COVID-19 Alert Level, the additional measures: physical distancing; avoiding crowds, wearing a mask in public, staying at home when directed, quarantine, travel restrictions, curfew; and
  - (C) Other measures as indicated by the Committee.
- (ii) Follow the quarantine and isolation requirements as provided by the Health Emergency Advisory Committee, including sampling for testing and quarantine for inbound international travellers;
- (b) A government department and a private sector delivering an essential service must continue to function as appropriate for the COVID-19 Alert Level whilst implementing COVID-19 safe protocols, unless an individual is at risk of COVID-19 or other hazards;
  - (c) A government department and a private sector must ensure that there are COVID-19 safe operational plans (or adapted Workplace Health and Safety plans) that guide workforce and workplace requirements in line with the COVID-19 Health Sector Preparedness and Response Plan;
  - (d) A government department and a private sector on the advice of the Committee, may operate on normal business hours, partially or close, based on the COVID-19 Alert Level, business category and protocols;
  - (e) A government department and a private sector must implement the business measures outlined in the Safe Business Operations guidelines and all COVID-19 Alert Level at their location. This includes:
    - (i) At all COVID-19 Alert Levels, conduct self-verification, certification and audit, as well as establish Workplace Health and Safety plans and appoint a COVID-19 Safe Focal Point; and
    - (ii) Depending on the COVID-19 Alert Level, hand-washing stations, regular cleaning of facilities, risk communication to customers, and customer registries as required; and
    - (iii) Other measures as provided by the Committee;
  - (f) Entry to Vanuatu for all inbound international travellers is limited to returning citizens, residents, students and essential workers and must be approved by the Committee and must be in line with the Ministry of Health requirements including pre-departure testing and advance full vaccination;
  - (g) The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in coordination with overseas missions, is to provide prioritized lists of potential inbound international travellers to the Committee for review and approval;
  - (h) All inbound travellers must complete all requirements of the Ministry of Health including pre-travel testing, pre-travel advance full vaccination and health clearance to obtain final travel approval through the Vanuatu Electronic Travel (VET) at outlined at [www.covid19.gov.vu](http://www.covid19.gov.vu).
  - (i) The Port Vila Bauerfield International Airport is to remain open for inbound international travellers. All other Vanuatu ports of entries are to remain close to inbound passengers travelling from overseas. These closures must remain in place until otherwise advised by the Committee;
  - (j) The Port Vila Bauerfield International Airport, the Port Vila Harbour and the Luganville Harbour are to remain open for inbound cargo from overseas;
  - (k) A person working at an open international port of entry accepting international travellers and cargo or cargo only, and all staff supporting the quarantine operations, including transport, security and hotel staff, must follow the endorsed COVID-19 procedures and protocols at all times as related to their task, including correct use of personal protective equipment, physical distancing, use of masks, and routine testing for SARS-CoV-2 as required;
- (ka) all retired health workers must be re-engaged to assist with the COVID-19 operations;

- (l) The following persons supporting the repatriation, quarantine or isolation operation must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19:
  - (A) a healthcare worker; and
  - (B) a person who works at the Ministry of Health; and
  - (C) a frontline worker; and
  - (D) the Chairperson and the members of the Teaching Service Commission; and
  - (E) the employees of the Teaching Service Commission; and
  - (F) the Commissioner and members of the Police Service Commission; and
  - (G) the members of the Vanuatu Police Force; and
  - (H) the Chairman and members of the Public Service Commission; and
  - (I) the employees of the Public Service Commission; and
  - (J) the members of the Vanuatu Chamber of Commerce and Industry.
- (m) The Vanuatu Police Force must provide COVID-19 security protocols and security services for quarantine and isolation facilities in line with Ministry of Health requirements, and also provide police escorts at the request of the Committee;
- (ma) the Vanuatu Police Force including its policing and mobile elements must establish check points at all sites approved by the Commissioner, on a 24 hour basis, to ensure compliance with the provisions of this Order and the Declaration of Public Health Emergency (Specific requirements, Offences and Penalties) Order No. 43 of 2022.
- (n) The provincial government must, in line with Ministry of Health guidance, identify and prepare suitable community facilities and resources for community isolation centres for asymptomatic, mild and moderate cases, in the event where there is a community transmission;
- (o) A government department must contribute its human resources and assets for COVID-19 preparedness and response activities as requested by the Committee;
- (p) The provincial government, a development partner and a private sector must support the ongoing COVID-19 vaccination operations and COVID-19 preparedness and response under the coordination of the Ministry of Health;
- (q) A person must not give incorrect or misleading information relating to COVID-19, the Public Health Emergency, or in connection with the Order;
- (r) All essential services that operate must enforce social distancing and all COVID-19 protocols at all times;
- (s) A person must wear mask at all times;
- (t) In the case of public transport owners and drivers – they must ensure that strict COVID-19 protocols are adhered to for all public transport services.

### **3A. Conditions relating to inbound and outbound travelling**

(1A) A person travelling domestically into or out of Vanua Lava, Gaua or Pentecost either by sea or air must comply with the approved travel health guidelines and the approved Standard Operating Procedures for Sea Ports and Civil Aviation.

(1) Subject to subclause (3), any international travelling into Vanuatu by sea or air is prohibited.

(2A) Despite subclause (2), the repatriation of citizens, residents and special category visa holders, including Recognised Seasonal Employers and Seasonal Worker's Program may commence under the following conditions:

- (a) Travellers must comply with pre-travel requirements as approved by the Health Emergency Advisory Committee; and
- (b) Travellers from Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and New Caledonia must be quarantined for 3 days and be subject to a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) on day 3 of the quarantine period; and
- (c) Travellers transiting from countries or continent outside Australia and New Zealand (such as Africa, Asia, Europe, America or other Pacific Islands) must be quarantined for 7 days and be subject to a RAT on day 6 of the quarantine period; and
- (d) Travellers from Australia, New Zealand, Fiji or New Caledonia may be quarantined at a hotel or at a community isolation & quarantine facility if they cannot afford a hotel; and
- (e) Travellers referred to under paragraph (c) must be quarantined at a hotel; and
- (f) If a traveller tests positive after a RAT either at day 3 or day 6 of the quarantine period, the traveller must be in isolation for 7 days from the date of developing symptoms or the date of the test (if no symptoms are developed).

(1B) A person travelling domestically into or out of Tanna or Erromango either by sea or by air must comply with the approved Travel Health Guidelines and the approved Standard Operating Procedures for Sea Ports and Civil Aviation.

- (2) The Health Emergency Advisory Committee may approve an inbound travelling after it has considered a traveller's reason for inbound travelling.

### **3AA. Prohibitions**

(1A) The following prohibitions apply in Tanna and Erromango:

- (a) All workplaces (other than work places providing essential services) are closed and must require any employee to attend the workplace; and
- (b) All church gatherings are prohibited; and
- (c) All social events and public gatherings are prohibited.

(2) Despite paragraph (1A)(a) and subject to subclause (3), all businesses and companies, that are not listed or approved as Essential Services may operate during normal business hours but not during curfew hours.

(3) A business or a company referred to in subclause (2), must submit to the Health Emergency Advisory Committee, a Standard Operating Procedure for its business or company and may only commence operation upon approval of the Standard Operating Procedure by the Committee.

### **3AB Curfew**

(1) A curfew is applied in Vanua Lava, Gaua, Pentecost, Tanna and Erromango from 6pm to 6am from the date on which this Order is made and ceases to have effect at 6am on Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> of May 2022.

(2) The curfew does not apply to:

- (a) Persons requiring emergency health services or persons assisting them to get emergency health services; and
- (b) Essential services as defined under this Order and as approved by the Minister; and
- (c) Persons engaged in activities under national clusters that are being activated by the National Disaster Management Office.

### **3AC Conditions relating to schools, employers, church gatherings, social events and public gatherings in Vanua Lava, Gaua and Pentecost**

- (1) All schools must:
  - (a) Ensure that their Standard Operating Procedures are in compliance with the Ministry of Health requirements; and
  - (b) Ensure physical distancing of students in the classrooms; and
  - (c) Ensure students and teachers and staff of the school including persons entering the school premises, wear a mask at all times; and
  - (d) Provide hand washing stations or provide hand sanitizers for all staff and students including persons entering the school premises.
- (2) All employers must:
  - (a) Ensure that their Standard Operating Procedures are in compliance with the Ministry of Health requirements; and
  - (b) Ensure physical distancing of its staff at the work premises; and
  - (c) Ensure that its staff including persons entering the work premises, wear a mask at all times; and
  - (d) Provide hand washing stations or provide hand sanitizers for all its staff including persons entering the work premises.
- (3) All church gatherings, social events and public gatherings, must ensure physical distancing, mask wearing and hand washing or use of the hand sanitizers by people gathering at these places.

### **3AD Conditions relating to markets and schools in Tanna and Erromango**

- (1) All schools must:
  - (a) Ensure that their Standard Operating Procedures are in compliance with the Ministry of Health requirements; and
  - (b) Ensure physical distancing of students in the classrooms; and
  - (c) Ensure students and teachers and staff of the school including persons entering the school premises, wear a mask at all times; and
  - (d) Provide hand washing stations or provide hand sanitizers for all staff and students including persons entering the school premises.
- (2) All markets must ensure physical distancing, mask wearing and hand washing or use of hand sanitizers by people entering or gathering at a market.

### **3AE Stay at home order for Tanna and Erromango**

A person is required to stay at home unless the person is leaving the home to access an essential service.

## **4. Commencement**

This Declaration of Public Health Emergency commences on 1 February 2022.