



Statement from the Privacy Foundation New Zealand

3 September 2021

### **Open Letter on Legislative Protections for Contact Tracing Records**

The Privacy Foundation New Zealand warmly welcomes the Open Letter addressed to Covid-19 Response Minister Hon Chris Hipkins, calling for legislative protections for contact tracing records. The letter published yesterday by Dr Andrew Chen and co-signed by a significant number of prominent New Zealanders, is timely given the amount of information that is now being collected both manually and digitally for Covid-19 contact tracing purposes says Foundation Chair, Gehan Gunasekara.

“The matters raised by Dr Chen are at the heart of the trust placed by members of the public in the use to which their contact tracing information is put. In fact, that trust enables effective contact tracing.

Dr Chen has highlighted the potential for this data – not only that stored on individuals’ phones from the Covid-tracer app, but also myriad paper and other records that businesses are now required to keep – to be accessed by Police and other enforcement agencies for unrelated purposes. It is important for the public to understand that promises made by the Government not to allow the data to be used for other purposes can only be credible if adopted through law.

Dr Chen’s call for New Zealand to follow overseas precedents – such as state and Federal Australian legislation which specifically prohibits use of contact tracing information for unrelated purposes – should be given heed by the Government to maximise the public’s confidence in the integrity of the contact-tracing system.”

“We therefore welcome and support the letter and urge the Government to act to further protect this public health information.”

Dr Chen’s Open Letter can be found at: <https://www.mcdp.nz/2021/09/legislative-protections-for-contact.html>

The New Zealand Privacy Foundation advocates for the protection of the privacy rights of New Zealanders by providing independent, expert and fair public comment on privacy.

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