

INCONSIDERATE ACTIONS TOWARDS OTHERS LEADS TO ANOTHER BREACH

19 October 2020

The husband of a couple who arrived back in Rarotonga on Friday 9th October today breached his quarantine order by handing over his phone to his daughter who then took it to Vodafone in search of a new SIM card.

Secretary of Health – Dr Aumea Herman – says, “I am incredibly thankful for the prompt actions of the diligent Vodafone staff who through their thorough questioning, and attention to detail, picked up the breach”.

24/7 monitoring has been in place at all properties where supervised quarantine is being undertaken for over two weeks. And whilst it is easy to say this latest breach should not have happened, people can be selfish and it does appear that what happened this morning was a very contrived, thought out action.

Dr Herman added, “In my briefing to the Minister of Health and members of our Community Health Advisory Committee today – they were extremely disappointed that this has happened. Every passenger is provided a print copy of the Category Quarantine Order at Auckland International Airport prior to check in, as well as an e-copy to their email. On arrival they receive a briefing form Police and Te Marae Ora regards following the rules for the supervised quarantine process. The Order is clear:

Every person in a quarantine area must:

1. Not leave the quarantine area for the duration of the quarantine, unless specifically authorised, by Te Marae Ora or Emergency Services, to do so:
2. Not interfere with the identification mechanism used to identify the quarantine area (e.g. yellow flag, police tape, barrier etc.):
3. Not to come within 2 metres of any person at the boundary of the quarantine area:
4. Not permit any items or property to leave the quarantine area:
5. Cooperate with health officials to undergo health checks:
6. Follow any further directions given by health officials.

Importantly, the public health risk for the Vodafone personnel catching COVID-19 is extremely low. The couple in supervised quarantine have tested negative twice in the past two weeks, the most recent test was on Thursday.

“I would like to credit the quick response of the two Vodafone employees, they are an asset to their managers and company and reflect the training that has taken place at Vodafone”. Both

staff returned negative COVID-19 tests this afternoon and have been cleared to return to work tomorrow.

Te Marae Ora is working closely with Crown Law and Police to review the information relating to today's breach.

“All breaches put processes in jeopardy and divert resources away from critical services. This is disheartening for our Te Marae Ora, Puna and border agency staff including Police who are working tirelessly to ensure we return our people home safely. The supervised quarantine rules are in place to protect everyone from COVID-19 and is for everyone's benefit. Selfish behaviour like this undermines the good work of many and one day will result in a COVID-19 outbreak in the Cook Islands. This behaviour needs to stop.

Members of the public should contact their local community health clinics on the free 0800 numbers if they have any questions regarding the supervised quarantine process in their area. Or call healthline on 20 066, 0800-1800, 0800-1801.

For up to date information visit www.covid19.gov.ck

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