



The Hon Stuart Robert MP
Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme
Minister for Government Services

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The Hon Scott Morrison MP
 Prime Minister
 Parliament House
 CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Prime Minister

I am writing to provide an update on COVIDSafe, including the outcome of my discussions with Apple and Google on their Exposure Notification Framework (ENF) and our adoption of the Herald Bluetooth Protocol to enhance the Bluetooth performance of COVIDSafe.

On 24 November 2020, I met with representatives from Apple and Google to discuss the applicability of the ENF to support our public health outcomes. I stressed the importance of maintaining our centralised, government-led approach to contact tracing that has significantly contributed to Australia's ability to successfully manage the COVID-19 pandemic. Section

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I advised Apple and Google of Australia's intention to adopt the alternative Herald Protocol (Herald), allowing Australia to maintain our centralised sovereign approach to contact tracing and to not pursue adoption of the ENF.

Following these discussions, I updated my international counterparts with whom I had discussed the applicability of the ENF. These countries included Section 33

I advised that we did not reach an agreement on the applicability of the ENF in sovereign digital tracing applications and outlined Herald as Australia's alternative way forward.

On 19 December 2020, Australia became the first country in the world to adopt Herald. This allowed us to significantly improve COVIDSafe's Bluetooth performance while at the same time supporting Australia's sovereign contact tracing model. Herald improves the way COVIDSafe uses Bluetooth to capture close contacts, especially in background mode on iOS/Apple devices. It provides more accurate and regular information on potential close contacts for our contact tracers.

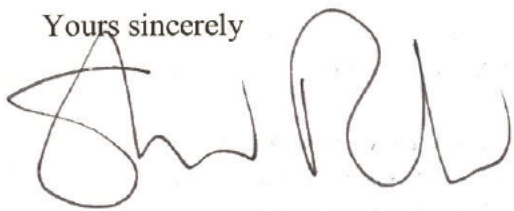
The implementation of Herald allowed us to avoid the three major issues that limit the usefulness of the ENF to contact tracers:

1. the ENF does not allow health officials to identify and manage clusters;
2. the ENF is a decentralised model that reduces the contact tracer's role and the information they receive; and
3. users can remain anonymous.

Australia is now contributing to the global development of Herald; working with its developers to provide updates on our implementation and insights into its performance. This is paving the way for other countries to implement Herald within their digital contact tracing systems. The Herald-enabled COVIDSafe application source code has been made publicly available. Section 33 are paying particularly close attention to our progress.

The Digital Transformation Agency continues to work with the Department of Health and the States and Territories to ensure COVIDSafe supports their contact tracing needs.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stuart Robert', written over a light blue grid background.

Stuart Robert

CC: The Hon Greg Hunt MP, Minister for Health

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