

OFFICIAL



Australian Government
Digital Transformation Agency

Ministerial Brief
For Decision
MB21-000002

To: Minister for Government Services
Subject: Update to the Prime Minister on Apple and Google Exposure Notification Framework (ENF) discussions.

Critical Date and Reason:	N/A
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Recommendation/s for Minister Robert: That you:

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| 1. Sign the draft letter at <u>Attachment B</u> to the Prime Minister providing an update on COVIDSafe, the implementation of the Herald Protocol and your meeting with Apple and Google. | Signed / Not signed |
|---|---------------------|

Minister's Comments

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Minister's signature: Date: / / 2021

Key Points:

1. On 12 June 2020, you wrote to the Prime Minister outlining your proposed position on the adoption of the Apple/Google Exposure Notification Framework (ENF). A copy of this letter is at Attachment A.
2. You proposed Australia should not adopt the ENF unless it allowed Australia to maintain our current approach which puts Health Officials at the centre of our public health response.
3. Your Office requested a letter to be drafted to the Prime Minister to provide an update on COVIDSafe and the ENF. The draft letter is at Attachment B, and outlines the following developments:
 - a. On 13 November 2021, you sent a letter to the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of Apple and Google on behalf of Australia, Section 33 (refer to Attachment C).
 - i. The letter sought to work with Apple and Google to access the ENF Bluetooth technology in a hybrid model.
 - ii. This model would combine the best of the ENF's technology and each country's chosen contact tracing models to protect the health and privacy of their citizens.

- b. You met with Apple and Google on 24 November 2020 to discuss the applicability of the ENF in our COVID-19 response.

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- c. On 30 November 2020, you announced the Herald Protocol update to COVIDSafe which was subsequently released on 19 December 2020. The adoption of the Herald Protocol has significantly improved COVIDSafe's performance.
- d. On 10 January 2021, you signed letters to your colleagues in countries pursuing sovereign tracing applications, providing an update on your meeting with Apple and Google.
- i. This letter introduced the Herald Protocol as an alternative way to improve their contact tracing apps' performance (refer to **Attachment D**).

Sensitivities:

4. Following your announcement that COVIDSafe would incorporate the Herald Protocol rather than the ENF, a small number of people from the Australian technology community criticised the decision on social media.
5. The technology community subsequently identified several areas for improvement, some of which were incorporated into the update prior to launch. There has been very limited commentary from the technology community since this time.

Financial Impacts:

6. N/A.

Regulatory Impacts:

7. N/A.

Consultation:

8. Department of Health.

Attachments:

- Attachment A:** Letter to Prime Minister on COVIDSafe and the ENF (23 July 2020).
- Attachment B:** Draft letter to the Prime Minister to provide an update on COVIDSafe and the ENF
- Attachment C:** Letter to CEOs of Apple and Google on the Exposure Notification Framework (13 November 2020).
- Attachment D:** Letter to international counterparts on outcome of meetings with Apple and Google and the introduction of the Herald Protocol (10 January 2021).

Cleared: 04 / 02 / 2021
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