



MEDIA STATEMENT

24th September 2021

In addition to the new measures issued today, I have drafted two specific Directions in relation to how we manage High Risk Provinces domestically and High Risk Countries Internationally.

If you are fully vaccinated, and coming from a country that is not deemed to be a High Risk country, you will be able to enter Papua New Guinea without quarantine.

This is welcome news for Business.

The only requirement for International travellers will be to undergo a Covid test upon arrival. If you return a negative result you will be able to leave the airport precinct immediately. If you return a positive result however, you will need to complete 14 day isolation immediately at the travellers cost.

It is important for other countries to respect that Papua New Guinea is a sovereign nation, and is within its jurisdiction to protect its citizens.

There is a variant of concern here in Papua New Guinea. We are dealing with a strain that is different to what we saw 12 months ago, and is proving to have high transmissibility, the symptom onset is faster and it is putting a real strain on the health services around the country. Even with the limited testing we are conducting around the country as a whole, the positivity rates are alarming.

Factors I have taken into consideration to classify a province as high risk are based around Provincial Risk assessment which include and are not limited to:

- 1) Number of Tests conducted
- 2) Number of Deaths
- 3) Number of hospitalized cases
- 4) Testing of suspect cases reported

We have to accept that COVID-19 is already in every region of our country, and that it is highly likely that this includes the Delta variant.

The approach that is being taken in relation to domestic travel is designed to slow the further spread of Delta but still enable as much as is possible to enable people to travel for essential reasons.



The most significant control measures will be applied to the High Risk Provinces which are West Sepik, Eastern Highlands and Western Province.

Specific to the 3 High Risk Provinces will be a reduction of domestic passenger movements on aircraft. The only pre-approved travel will be for health workers, business travel and students.

Negative pre-flight test results will be mandatory for all passengers with tests carried out at the airport before flights depart.

For Western Province, passengers are permitted to travel on operational flights into and out of Ok Tedi so long as they are contained in a sterile bubble.

There will be zero tolerance for breaking control measures on domestic flights, and fines will be imposed on airlines and passengers who do not adhere to these safety requirements.



Mr David Manning, MBE, DPS, DPM

Controller

National Pandemic Response