



This Situation Report is jointly issued by PNG National Department of Health (NDOH) and World Health Organization (WHO) once weekly. This Report is not comprehensive and covers information received as of reporting date.

## Situation Summary and Highlights

- As of 11<sup>th</sup> July 2021 (12:00 pm), there were a total of 17,367 COVID-19 cases including 179 COVID-19 deaths reported in Papua New Guinea (PNG). From the period of 5<sup>th</sup> July - 11<sup>th</sup> July, there were 85 newly reported cases. Four deaths were reported this week from Hela and Autonomous Region of Bougainville.
- As of 9<sup>th</sup> July 2021, a total of 63,155 people has been vaccinated in PNG. This includes 7,996 health workers and 44,514 essential workers and 10,645 people over the ages of 18 including those with comorbidities.

## Pillar Updates & Priorities

### Surveillance:

- As of 11<sup>th</sup> July, 96% of the total 17 367 cases have recovered while 179 cases are active. Cumulative deaths remain at 179 with a case fatality rate of 1%.
- Go.Data rollout training for Central Province ended with an on-site practicum conducted in Bereina station. This makes it the second province to have Go.Data installed for COVID-19 Surveillance data entry at provincial levels after the NCD.

### Laboratory:

- End user agreement between the GoPNG and Minderoo (Air Lab) has yet to be signed which is awaiting MOU clearance. This will then pave way for the commissioning of the air lab and its full operations.
- The training for the biomedical engineers has been completed, whilst the testing training for laboratory scientist is expected to be completed at the end of this week, after an issue of Microsoft software expiration was sorted.
- The distribution plan for all testing commodities (UTMs, Cartridges, Ag RDT) has been finalized and with the logistics team for distribution to all 22 provinces. At the national level, there are sufficient testing commodities for additional distribution.
- Positive samples are being shipped to Doherty Institute (Melbourne) regularly for the whole genomic sequencing.

**Table 1. Newly reported COVID-19 cases in PNG<sup>1</sup>**

	New Cases (05 July to 11 July 2021)	Cumulative Total
AROB	1	436
Central	0	271
East New Britain	6	1195
East Sepik	2	254
Eastern Highlands	5	752
Enga	2	286
Gulf	0	131
Hela	18	185
Jiwaka	2	159
Madang	3	435
Manus	5	490
Milne Bay	0	238
Morobe	7	1205
National Capital District	22	5205
New Ireland	0	546
Northern (Oro)	0	196
Simbu	6	253
Southern Highlands	0	214
West New Britain	1	1025
West Sepik	1	452
Western	0	2393
Western Highlands	4	1046
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>17367</b>

<sup>1</sup> As of 12/07/2021, 12:00 pm, PNG time

**Table 2. COVID-19 GLOBAL AND REGIONAL UPDATE<sup>2</sup>**

	Confirmed Cases	Deaths
Global	187 086 096	4 042 921
Western Pacific	3 824 942	58 118

<sup>2</sup> WHO COVID-19 Dashboard as of 13/07/2021, 22:45 CEST

- ❑ Regular testing using geneXpert and antigen RDT in the provinces are ongoing. The major challenge is that the provinces are not reported daily or weekly.
- ❑ ANGAU PCR lab has tested 64 samples so far whilst NONGA PCR lab has yet to be set up. It is expected that the training will take place at the end of July 2021.

#### **COVID-19 Hotline:**

- ❑ Since the start of pandemic until 11<sup>th</sup> July, the hotline had received a total of 262,965 calls. Of these, 6,269 (2.4%) were health-related calls. A total of 2610 calls to date have been referred to Rapid Response Team/PHAs.
- ❑ For the reporting period of 5<sup>th</sup> July – 11<sup>th</sup> July, the COVID-19 National Hotline received 2638 calls. Of these, 33 (about 1.25%) were health-related calls. 25 of these were referred to the Rapid Response Team/PHA.
- ❑ The hotline continues receiving a number of calls from people seeking information around vaccination, type of vaccines available in country, vaccine side effects, 2<sup>nd</sup> dose follow-up and vaccination pathways for general public.

#### **Emergency Medical Teams (EMTs):**

- ❑ Currently there are no international EMTs in country and none scheduled to arrive. Team UK Med's deployment to PNG has been postponed to a later date due to stricter point of entry and quarantine measures.
- ❑ The formation of the first national EMT team, Team Sana, is progressing well with two initial teams, team Alpha and team Bravo members identified. Weekly consultations are held with an international advisory board consisting of WHO EMT consultants.

#### **Clinical Management:**

- ❑ A team consisting of National EMT and WHO's IPC focal persons visited Manus Province and provided support and advice on IPC practices, clinical pathways and the emergency and isolation units in the province.
- ❑ Ongoing efforts in NCD on drawing up referral pathways for COVID-19 cases in NCD PHA, map out gaps and to look for improvement opportunities for improvement.
- ❑ Discussions were held with the critical care team on providing support to provinces to improve critical care patient management.
- ❑ The National guidelines on swabbing of the deceased at health care facilities has been developed.

#### **Infection Prevention Control (IPC)**

- ❑ The National guidelines on swabbing of the deceased at health care facilities has been developed.
- ❑ WHO IPC team members travelled to the Manus Province to support key facilities and the COVID-19 incident management teams in the implementation of IPC guidance into practice. This was a follow up visit to support Case Management & IPC processes with a focus on scenario-based discussions and training, and was undertaken in conjunction with 2 clinicians from the National Emergency Medical Team. The team joined the PEOC Monthly and spent time discussing challenges and approaches to care with the Provincial Hospital clinical teams.
- ❑ An interactive refresher IPC session was held with a group of 22 Nurse Managers and HW's to strengthen the implementation of standard precautions into every day care. Whilst the dedicated Isolation Unit is still in progress a review of the current isolation room was

undertaken. A revised flow was proposed and shared with the relevant clinicians; this will aim to reduce transmission within the facility.

- In POM a collaborative supportive visit was undertaken with NCDPHA to Kaugere, Badili, Bomana and Morata clinics. IPC processes were reviewed with recommendations provided.

### **Risk Communication & Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions (NPIs):**

- Community engagement and social mobilisation demand creation strategy plan in development, will integrate vaccine provision to support immediate uptake and support the next phase of vaccination rollout.
- ‘Vaccine Champion’ IEC key awareness material digital package with guidance document distributed through NDoH Promotion Team.
- Provincial Advocacy Support by RCCE/NCC and EPI officers with WHO staff continues with teams completing visits to Jiwaka, Simbu, WHP, Manus and Morobe.
- Q&As on vaccine safety, efficacy and the Delta variant in development.
- Advocacy tool kit to support social mobilisation by PHA’s and partners to in development completed and distributed
- Planning for National COVID-19 Response Planning and Coordination Workshop that will bring key representatives from all 22 provinces together with the National Incident Management Team to review past, current and future plan for the country’s response ongoing.
- National Church Advocacy Strategy Plan in development with regional workshops to take place in August that supports cascading church position on vaccine to community level.
- Development of Community Engagement Tools to support PHA’s and partners in advocacy and awareness session continued.
- Mobile outdoor awareness campaign continues in NCD with Sleeves Up Vaccine Champion messaging together with Niupela Pasin on 3 PMV buses on 11 key bus routes.

### **Logistics and Supplies:**

- During the reporting week, about 0.8 ton of COVID-19 supplies including mostly PPE and Lab items were dispatched Oro, Manus, Jiwaka and Western Highlands.
- Received GeneXpert Cartridge donations from USAID (5000 tests) and UNOPS (15000 tests)
- mSupply Assessment in progress for 8 priority provinces for mSupply integration.

### **Quarantine & Point of Entry:**

- As of 11<sup>th</sup> July, there were 429 people under quarantine (PUQ) of which 32 were in home quarantine, 281 in hotels, 80 in company sites and 32 in apartments.  
There are no reported COVID-19 cases of international travellers in quarantine during this reporting period.

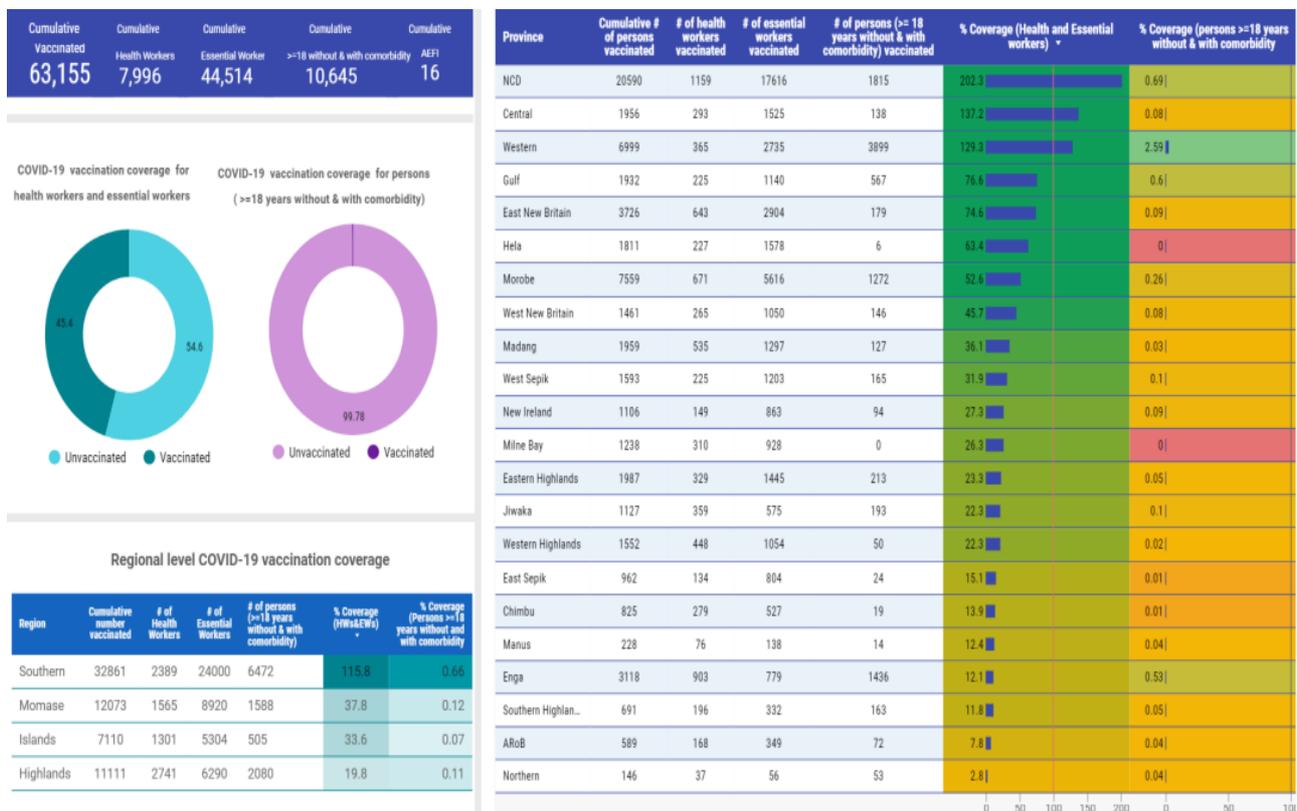
**Table 3. Persons Screened by Point of Entry**

Total Number of Travelers Screened before SOE (until 22 March 2020)	29,387	
Total Number of Travelers Screened during SOE (23 March – 16 June 2020)	3,788	
Total Number of Travelers Screened after SOE (17 June 2020 – 10 July 2021)	Air	23,407
	Sea	671
	Land	6

## National Vaccine Rollout

- ❑ A total of 152 vaccination sites have started vaccinations, out of 172 sites planned to provide COVID-19 vaccinations nationwide.
- ❑ As of 9<sup>th</sup> July 2021, a total of 63,155 people has been vaccinated in PNG. This includes 7,996 health workers and 44,514 essential workers and 10,645 people over the ages of 18 including those with comorbidities.
- ❑ 45% vaccination coverage of health care workers and other essential workers across the country.

Figure 1. Cumulative number of persons vaccinated by region and province (11<sup>th</sup> July, 2021)



## National and Provincial Public Health Response

- ❑ The Pandemic Response Coordination Group and the Health Operations Team continue to meet regularly at the National Control Centre.
- ❑ Full details of all measures can be found at [www.covid19.info.gov.pg](http://www.covid19.info.gov.pg)

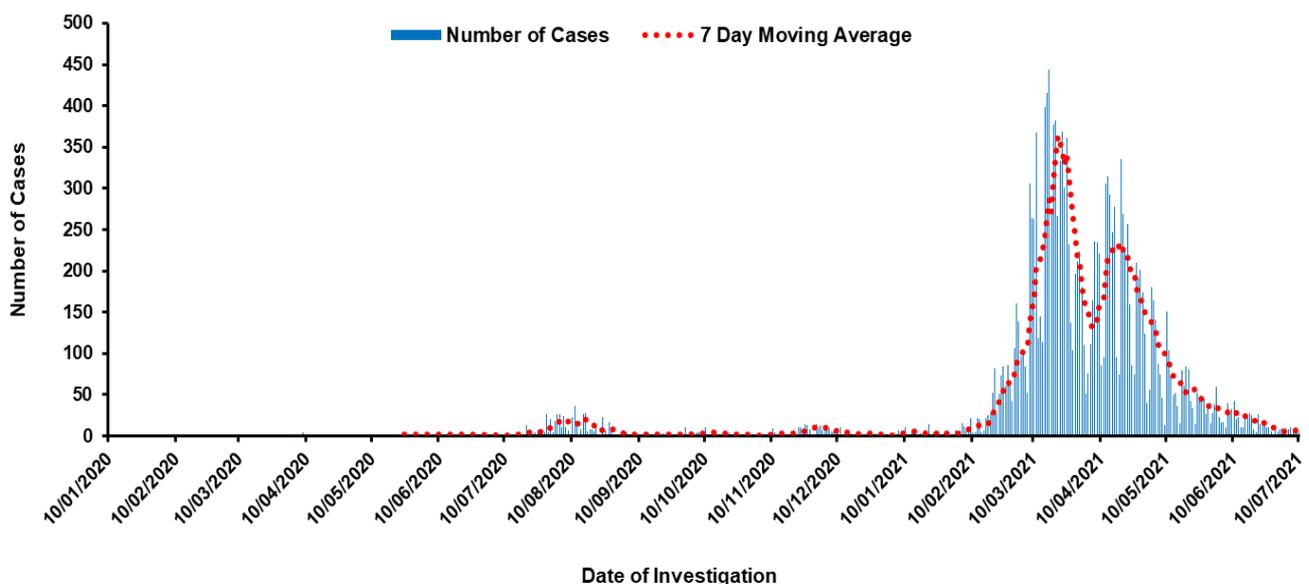
## Transmission Assessment

Currently COVID-19 cases are being reported from across PNG, with cases reported from 15 out of 22 provinces in the previous seven days. Northern (Oro), Milne Bay, Central, Gulf, SHP, New Ireland and Western provinces did not report any cases on the past seven days. The epidemic curve, although showing a marked decline in the trend, should be interpreted with caution as it may not be reflective of true positivity. The current weekly test positivity remained at 13%. However, this measure is highly reliant on receiving testing data from all facilities across PNG, particularly with regards to negative test results. Despite this, the relatively high positivity rate in the context of overall low testing is suggestive of ongoing community transmission in most provinces. Challenges around obtaining swabbing, testing and reporting data are still observed and strategies are currently being explored to improve and strengthen current response. While there continue to be low rates of testing and limited contact tracing, it is believed that community transmission of COVID-19 is occurring in much of PNG. With a low level of confidence based on the available data, National Capital District (NCD), Morobe and East New Britain appear to be in Stage 3, widespread community transmission. In addition, AROB, East Sepik, Enga, Hela, Manus, New Ireland, Northern, Western Highlands, West New Britain, and Western appear to have localised community transmission (stage 2).

More information on the WHO Western Pacific Regional Office COVID-19 transmission stages can be found here: [bit.ly/WPRODashboard](https://bit.ly/WPRODashboard)

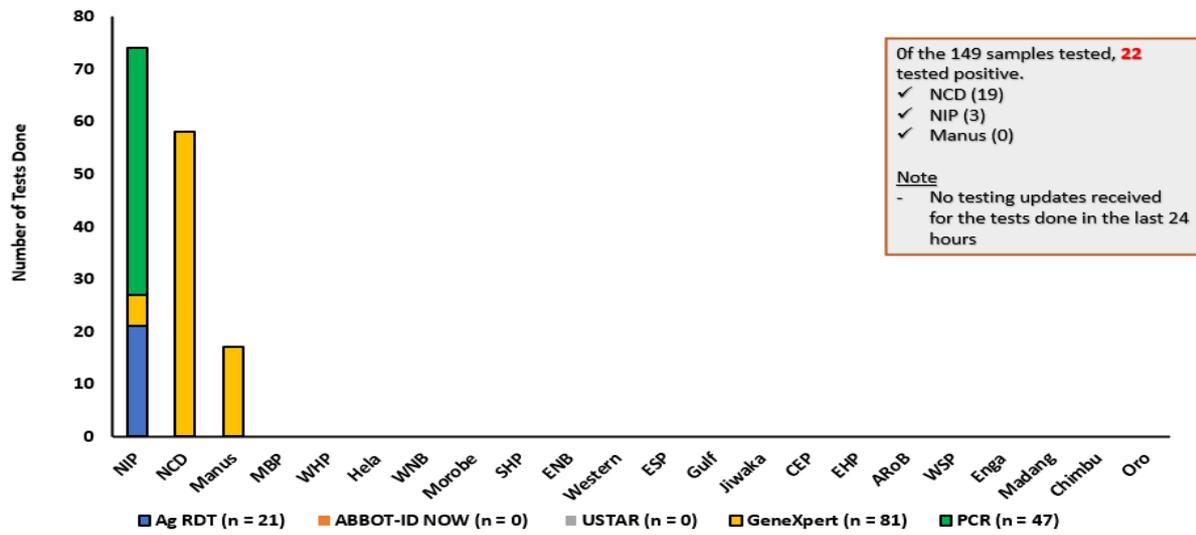
## Epidemiology

**Figure 3. Epidemiological curve of COVID-19 cases in Papua New Guinea, 15<sup>th</sup> March 2020 to 11<sup>th</sup> July 2021**



Please note: The true extent of the decreasing trend must be interpreted with caution as there are delays in receiving and reporting results from provinces.

**Figure 4: Tests done by provinces using different testing platforms in the last 7 days (28<sup>th</sup> June to 11<sup>th</sup> July)**



## ANNEX A – Photos

Photo 1: IPC team visited Morata urban clinic



Photo 3: An interactive IPC session in Manus Province



Photo 3: GoData Rollout training at Bereina, Central Province

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