

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 25<sup>th</sup> July 2021 (12:00 pm), a cumulative total of 17,655 COVID-19 cases including 192 COVID-19 deaths reported in Papua New Guinea (PNG). From the period of 19<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> July, there were 136 new COVID-19 cases and no deaths reported.
- ❑ About 78,399 people has received at least one dose of AstraZeneca vaccine in PNG as of 25<sup>th</sup> July 2021. This includes 8,479 health workers, 49,708 essential workers and 20,212 people over the age of 18 including those with comorbidities.
- ❑ Over 10,000 people received their 2<sup>nd</sup> dose of the COVID-19 AstraZeneca Vaccine as of 25<sup>th</sup> June 2021.
- ❑ RCCE team supported NCC, NCDPHA and MKA Health to pilot an innovative demand driven approach to make vaccines available to people in everyday life settings.
- ❑ Team Sana first pilot deployment to New Ireland Province a success.

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

	New Cases (19 July to 25 July 2021)	Cumulative Total
AROB	0	436
Central	2	275
East New Britain	9	1209
East Sepik	0	257
Eastern Highlands	0	753
Enga	0	292
Gulf	0	133
Hela	0	187
Jiwaka	1	162
Madang	24	461
Manus	6	516
Milne Bay	0	239
Morobe	51	1262
National Capital District	11	5234
New Ireland	3	580
Northern (Oro)	0	196
Simbu	1	254
Southern Highlands	2	216
West New Britain	0	1025
West Sepik	4	501
Western	0	2393
Western Highlands	22	1074
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>17655</b>

<sup>1</sup> As of 25/07/2021, 12:00 pm, PNG time

## Pillar Updates & Priorities

### Surveillance:

- ❑ As of 25<sup>th</sup> July, a total of 136 newly confirmed cases and 0 COVID-19 deaths reported while the cumulative cases are 17,655 and 192 deaths with case fatality rate of 1%.
- ❑ There are 206 active cases, 17,257 recovered cases and a total of 23 contacts of the delta variant index case has been traced.
- ❑ Of the 136 infections reported this week, about 19% of them were actually diagnosed this week. 19% were from 8 days to 2 weeks ago and about 48% were from over 2 weeks to more than a month ago.

### Laboratory:

- ❑ Biomedical engineers training for Minderoo Air Lab has been completed meanwhile CPHL staff training aimed to be completed by end of this week.

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

	Confirmed Cases	Deaths
Global	194 367 010	4 200 974
Western Pacific	4 200 974	61 889

<sup>2</sup> WHO COVID-19 Dashboard as of 25/07/2021, 22:45 CEST

- The MOA between the State and Minderoo Foundation is yet to be signed before the lab is formally handed over to PNG to perform any COVID-19 testing.
- Preparations are underway for Antigen RDT Regional Training for the country. The training will be done in 4 regions.

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

- Since the start of pandemic until 25<sup>th</sup> July, the hotline had received a total of 267,920 calls. Of these, 6,342 (2.4%) were health-related calls. A total of 2660 calls to date have been referred to Rapid Response Team/PHAs.
- For the reporting period of 19<sup>th</sup> July – 25<sup>th</sup> July, the COVID-19 National Hotline received 2107 calls. Of these, 46 (about 2.18%) were health-related calls. 27 of these were referred to the Rapid Response Team/PHA.
- The hotline is receiving a new wave of curious callers seeking information regarding Delta Variant.
- The hotline continues receiving a number of calls from people seeking information relating to vaccination, quarantine and clearance certificates.

#### **Emergency Medical Team (EMT):**

- Team SANA had a pilot deployment to New Ireland Province to help build COVID Critical Care systems in the province. The team consisting of vast experienced critical and emergency care doctors, nurses and biomedical technician were integral to strengthening COVID-19 pathways and IPC practices in health facilities within the province. They worked closely with the PHA on Triage, patient flow, IPC, critical care and assisted in getting medical equipment setup and in place for a surge.
- The National EMT were also part of the clinical management training for clinicians at Kavieng and Namatanai hospitals respectively. Among the activities they carried out were rearranging patient care pathways with IPC considerations, end user training for equipment like automated external defibrillators (AED), basic life support (BLS) training, working with the clinical management (CM)/ IPC and RCCE teams on creating vaccine awareness in the two districts.

#### **Clinical Management:**

- The clinical management team visited New Ireland Province with the EMT team, Team Sana, and RCCE this week.
- This was a joint effort undertaken to strengthen COVID-19 clinical pathways, IPC practices, vaccine awareness and stimulate Niupela Pasin activities within the province. A similar approach is planned for all provincial visits.
- The team had also visited Gordens and 6 Mile clinics in NCD along with IPC counterparts to continue mapping out clinical and IPC needs at urban clinics and supported clinical management practices.

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

- IPC team continued its support visits to urban health facilities in NCD, mainly Gordens and 6 Mile clinics, and worked with clinics staff in implementing effective and appropriate IPC interventions accordingly in order to reduce transmission of COVID-19 within the clinic.
- Work was progressed on the National IPC Guidelines and launch of the IPC Policy. The IPC Guidelines are now in draft with a number of key IPC specialists around the country reviewing various components.

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

- IECs and Champions Films that are now available to the partners and those who require the information for advocacy.
- RCCE team supported NCC, NCDPHA and MKA Health to pilot an innovative demand driven approach to make vaccines available to people in everyday life settings. The model delivered all clinical quality control and SOPs with vaccination managed by the MKA Mobile Vaccination Unit within the context of a friendly and informative atmosphere.
- Focus was on accessibility, eligibility and the individual's contribution towards a safer PNG within the context of a friendly and informative environment.
- The public private partnership model amplified the resources, towards achieving a unified goal with mutually beneficial outcomes. With thanks to Vision City Management on their commitment to supporting vaccine uptake as a crucial pathway to both health and economic recovery. The event was supported by PNGAUS Partnership.
- Feedback was overwhelmingly positive with no reported instances of negative or anti-vaccination sentiments throughout the entire day.
- Development of Community Engagement Tools to support PHA's and partners in advocacy and awareness session continued.
- Development of Vaccine Site communications materials has been extended to incorporate additional tools including vaccine sites listing in the country. This will be disseminated as of next week.
- Advocacy tool kit to support social mobilisation by PHA's and partners to be completed and distributed.
- Continued planning for National COVID-19 Response Planning and Coordination Workshop for PHA CEOs and IMs which has been scheduled for next month, 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> August in Port Moresby.



### Niupela Pasin:

- Niupela Pasin team continued to make assessment on event request, 10 approvals were given to various events.
- The team visited New Ireland Province and conducted awareness on Niupela Pasin and vaccination in Kavieng and Lihir towns.

### Logistics and Supplies:

- About 0.5 tonnes of COVID-19 supplies mostly PPE and Lab items were dispatched to Port Moresby General Hospital and Tabubil Hospital Lab during this reporting week.
- This week the NCC received donations of Sample Collection Kits and surgical masks from Global Fund through its principal recipient World Vision PNG.

### Quarantine & Point of Entry:

- As of 25<sup>th</sup> July, there were 160 people under quarantine (PUQ) of which 25 were in home quarantine, 98 in hotels, 31 in company sites and 6 in organizational apartments.
- There were 6 reported COVID-19 cases of international travellers during the reporting period. Investigations and contact tracing are being carried out and the individuals are in isolation. All samples sent to Australia for genome sequencing and pending results.

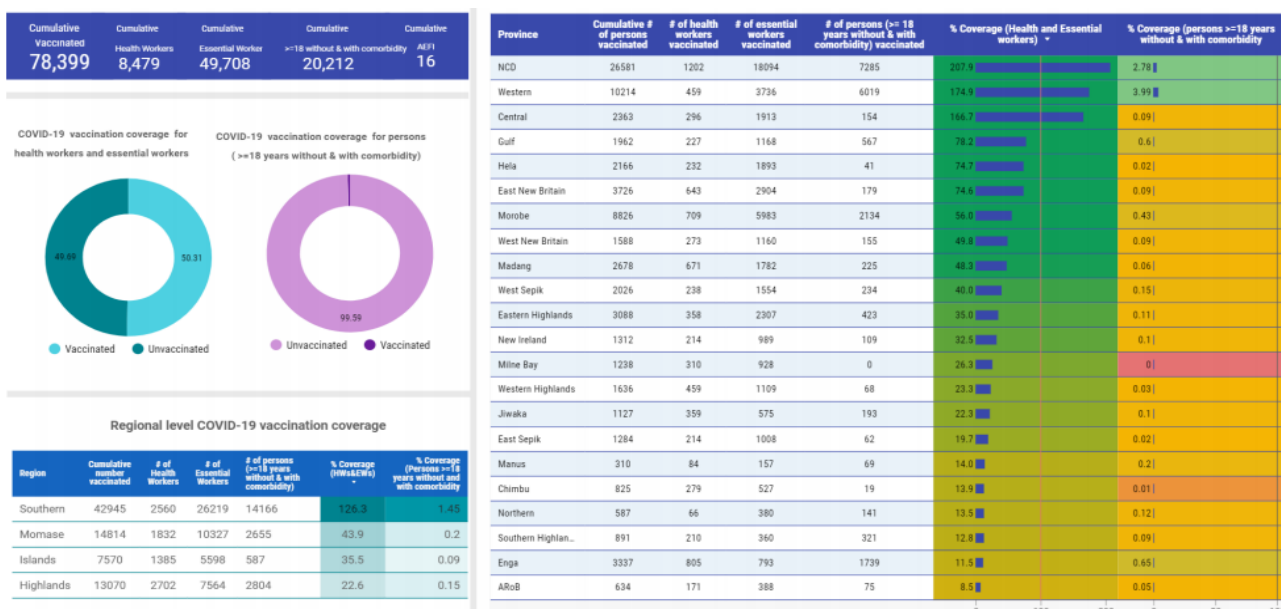
**Table 3. Persons Screened by Point of Entry**

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 (18 June 2020 – 25 July 2021)	Air	24,096
	Sea	671
	Land	6

### National Vaccination Rollout

- As of 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2021, over 78,300 people has been vaccinated at least for one dose in PNG. This includes 8,479 health workers and 49,708 essential workers and 20,212 people over the ages of 18 including those with comorbidities.
- Almost 50% vaccination coverage of health care workers and other essential workers across the country.
- More than 10000 people are fully vaccinated having received their 2nd dose of COVID-19 vaccine.
- There are 165 sites offering vaccination across PNG.

**Figure 1. Cumulative number of persons vaccinated by region and province (22<sup>nd</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 12 out of 22 provinces in the previous seven days. AROB, EHP, Enga, ESP, Gulf, Hela, Milne Bay, Northern (Oro), WNB and Western provinces did not report any cases in the past seven days.

The epidemic curve shows a marked decline in the trend and is consistent with the observed declining trend of ILI/SARI and respiratory illnesses reported through the National Department of Health's e-NHIS data base and a declining testing positivity. The current weekly test positivity is still around 2%. The total number of testing reported weekly is still higher than the reported number of weekly ILI, SARI and suspected COVID-19 reported through the ODK database. Only three (3) provinces reported testing more samples (621) this week compared to the reported number of weekly respiratory cases (509 case) from thirteen (13) provinces. Such reporting supports the declining COVID-19 trend observed in the country.

However, in view of delayed or under reporting, overall low testing and limited contact tracing activities, it is believed that community transmission of COVID-19 is still occurring in much of PNG. This week, two (2) localised outbreaks were reported from the Morobe and Madang provinces. The Morobe outbreak occurred in the Lae town cell area among inmates while the Madang outbreak occurred in the Ramu Guard Dog compound among security guards. Both outbreaks accounted for 36% of the total cases reported this week with Morobe reporting 25 cases and Madang 24 total cases. No new cases have been detected for the Morobe cluster since July 08 while for the Madang cluster, the last case was detected on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July, 2021. A possible transmission linkage between the two provinces is highly likely as the security guards reside in Morobe Province and travel to Ramu, Madang Province for work attachments.

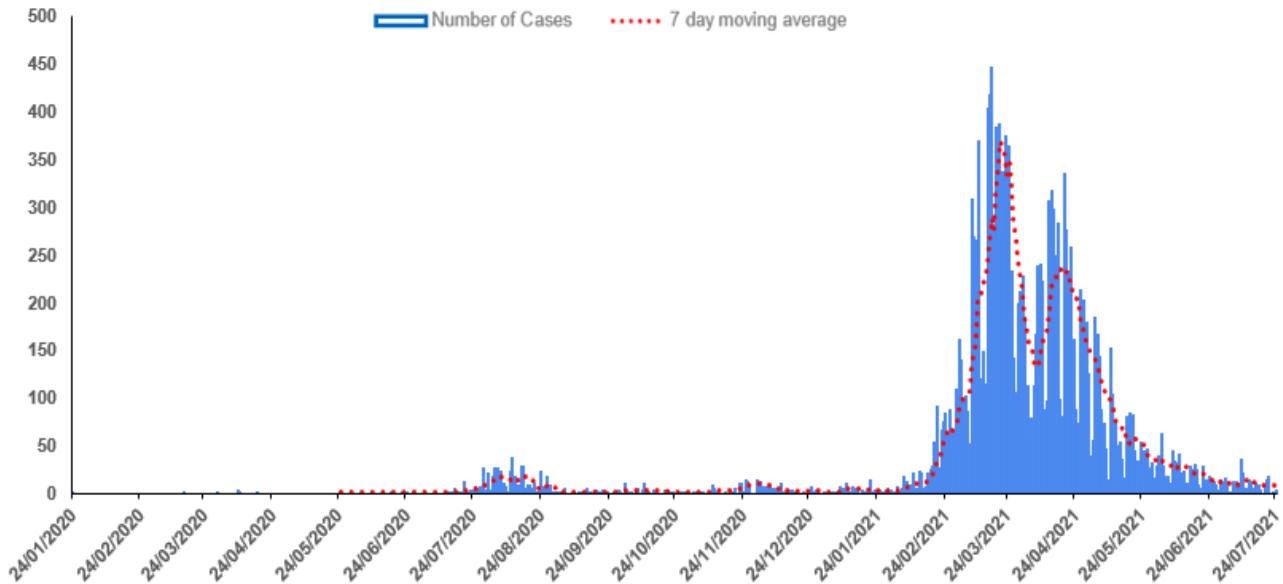
With low level of confidence based on the available data, Morobe and Madang provinces appear to be in stage 3 widespread community transmission while all other provinces in PNG would appear to have localised community transmission (stage 2). Challenges around obtaining swabbing, testing and reporting data are still observed and strategies are currently being explored to improve and strengthen current response.

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



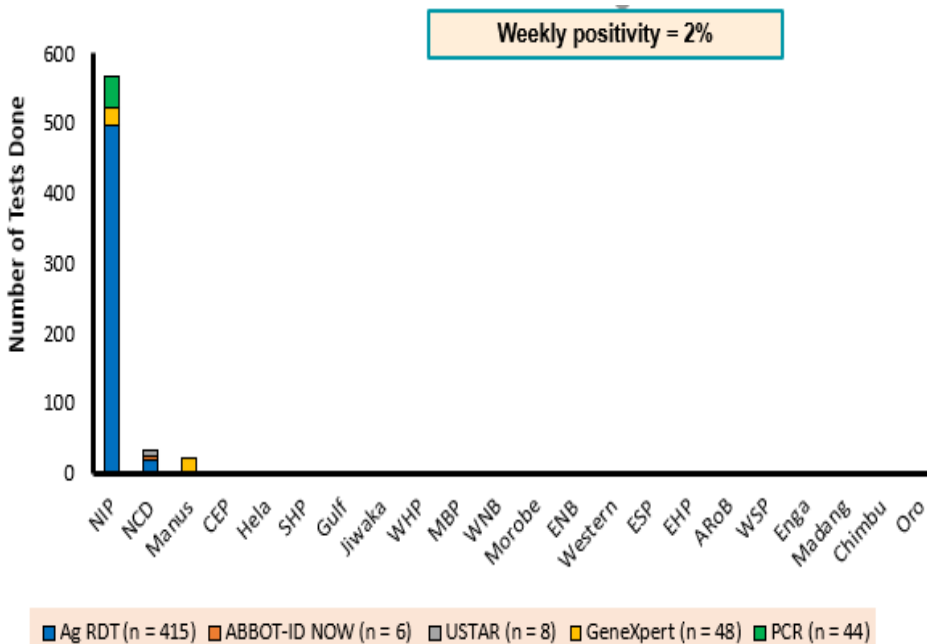
## Epidemiology

**Figure 3. Epidemiological curve of COVID-19 cases in Papua New Guinea, 15<sup>th</sup> March 2020 to 25<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 in the last 7 days, 19<sup>th</sup> July to 25<sup>th</sup> July 2021 (n=621)**



Of the 621 samples tested, 11 tested positive from the following provinces.

- ✓ NCD (9)
- ✓ NIP (2)
- ✓ Manus (0)

**Note**

- No testing updates received for the tests done in the last 24 hours

## ANNEX A – Photos

Photo 1: Multi Sectoral visit at PNG Indonesia border at Wutung, West Sepik Province



Photo 2: Team Sana pilot deployment to New Ireland Province in action in Kavieng General Hospital



Photo 3: NCDPHA, NCC and MKA mobile vaccine team at Vision City pop-up pilot



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