



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 08th August 2021 (12:00 pm), a cumulative total of 17,806 COVID-19 cases including 192 COVID-19 deaths were reported in Papua New Guinea (PNG).
- ❑ From the period of 02nd August – 08th August, there were 31 new COVID-19 cases and no deaths reported.
- ❑ On 4th August, eight additional COVID-19 positive infections have been identified as being the highly infectious Delta strain with a total of 8 confirmed cases. One person was from Papua New Guinea while the remaining seven were imported cases from other countries.
- ❑ The first local Delta variant case was reported from Madang province.
- ❑ Over 91,600 people has received at least one dose of vaccine and 54.8% vaccination coverage of health care workers and other essential workers across the country as of 5th August.
- ❑ Over 21,000 people received their 2nd dose of the COVID-19 AstraZeneca Vaccine and over 380 people were administered first and second doses of Sinopharm vaccine.
- ❑ Papua New Guinea received 302,400 doses of Johnson & Johnson vaccine on 6th August from US Government through COVAX facility.

Table 1. Newly reported COVID-19 cases in PNG¹

	New Cases (02 August to 08 August 2021)	Cumulative Total
AROB	1	445
Central	1	276
East New Britain	0	1213
East Sepik	0	257
Eastern Highlands	0	753
Enga	1	293
Gulf	0	133
Hela	1	188
Jiwaka	0	163
Madang	4	498
Manus	0	516
Milne Bay	0	239
Morobe	7	1286
National Capital District	11	5277
New Ireland	0	583
Northern (Oro)	0	196
Simbu	0	270
Southern Highlands	1	217
West New Britain	0	1025
West Sepik	3	509
Western	0	2393
Western Highlands	1	1076
TOTAL	31	17806

¹ As of 09/08/2021, 12:00 pm, PNG time

Pillar Updates & Priorities

Surveillance:

- ❑ As of 08th August, a total of 31 newly confirmed cases and 0 COVID-19 deaths reported while the cumulative cases are 17,806 and 192 deaths with case fatality rate of 1%.
- ❑ There are 136 active cases and 17,478 recovered cases.
- ❑ Of the 31 infections reported this week, about 65% of them were detected this week, 29% were from 8 days to 2 weeks ago and about 6% were from over 2 weeks to more than a month ago.

Table 2. COVID-19 GLOBAL AND REGIONAL UPDATE²

	Confirmed Cases	Deaths
Global	202 926 168	4 298 298
Western Pacific	4 879 276	69 465

² WHO COVID-19 Dashboard as of 09/08/2021, 22:45 CEST

- ❑ Eight additional COVID-19 positive infections in the country have been identified as being the highly infectious Delta strain of which one person is from Papua New Guinea and the remaining seven are imported cases from other countries.
- ❑ This week on 4th August, NCC was notified of the results of samples sent for Whole Genome Sequencing and announced the first local delta case reported from Madang and was tested more than 30 days ago. The case was isolated for 14 days and discharged.
- ❑ 3 contacts of the delta variant cases in NCD and Madang have been traced accordingly.
- ❑ An additional 20 COVID-19 cases have contact tracing done in Simbu and Western Highlands.

Laboratory:

- ❑ All lab and testing commodities should be distributed by the end of the week to all the provinces. Getting provinces to submit lab requisition when they have reached their buffer level is still a challenge despite coaching and mentoring. There are sufficient commodities in stock at national level.
- ❑ In light of the delta variant, provinces have been urgently requested to send all positive samples that meet the Whole Genome Sequencing criteria to be sequenced.

COVID-19 Hotline:

- ❑ As of 8th August, hotline has received a cumulative total of 272,986 calls. Of these, 6,418 (2.4%) were health-related calls. A total of 2703 calls to date have been referred to Rapid Response Team/PHAs.
- ❑ For the reporting period of 02nd August – 08th August, the COVID-19 National Hotline received 2369 calls. Of these, 36 (about 1.52%) were health-related calls. 19 of these were referred to the Rapid Response Team/PHA.

Emergency Medical Team (EMT):

- ❑ Team SANA has progressed on finalising the Technical Working Group for PNG EMT Steering Committee.
- ❑ Materials are being developed to streamline EMT capacity building exercises in provinces.
- ❑ Remote planning was supported by WHO PNG and international EMT partners.
- ❑ Team SANA is preparing for deployment to Madang Province in light of the recent Delta Variant case in the province supported by WHO.



Clinical Management & Infection Prevention Control (IPC):

- ❑ Both teams focused on preparing materials for the National level CEO/Incident Managers conference next week. The joint NDOH teams conducted a risk assessment on IPC at the conference venue in preparation for the meeting with support from WHO.
- ❑ A total of 90 participants were trained in 5 Workshops including a ToT during the 5th National Ventilator Workshop was held this week. 13 PHAs were covered with 18 Instructors trained. The training was supported by FHI360.
- ❑ A national IPC strategy is being developed in cooperation with the NDOH and the regional office to capitalise on the endorsement of the national IPC policy. This policy will be launched in September 2021.

Risk Communication & Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions (NPIs):

- ❑ Joint NDOH and WHO RCCE teams are supporting the development of communications, community engagement and advocacy plan for Phase II of the vaccine roll out. Messaging and materials are being developed to mitigate the risk of increased hesitancy caused by the availability of different vaccines. Renewed efforts will be made to engage health workers, church leaders, community leaders, faith-based health facilities, nursing councils and CSOs in the vaccine roll out campaign in Phase II.

Niupela Pasin:

- ❑ Niupela Pasin team continued to carry out assessments on event requests of more than 50 people, 8 assessments were conducted in NCD, 1 in Enga and 1 in Morobe. 13 approvals were given to several events in NCD and across the country with strict observations of Niupela Pasin including mandatory mask wearing, temperature checks, hand sanitizing, etc. The process involves a pre-event assessment with considerations to observing Niupela Pasin.

Logistics and Supplies:

- ❑ Supplied 2 tonnes of COVID-19 supplies mostly PPEs and lab consumables to 5 consignees namely Morobe, NCD (PMGH), WNB, Hela and WHP.
- ❑ Prepared lab items orders for Hela, Madang, Milne Bay, AROB, NIP, SHP, ESP, Western & Central pending dispatch.
- ❑ A distribution plan has been developed for N95 masks and gowns procured by UNOPS. UNOPs to support distribution to the provinces.
- ❑ Received Global Fund donation of disinfectants and hand sanitizers through its principal recipient World Vision PNG.
- ❑ mSupply assessment has been completed for 8 priority provinces, NCD, Western Province (Kiunga & Daru), WHP, WSP, ENB & WNB) for mSupply integration.

Quarantine & Point of Entry:

- ❑ As of 7th August, there were 369 people under quarantine (PUQ) of which 44 were in home quarantine, 223 in hotels, 66 in company sites and 30 in organizational apartments.
- ❑ There was no reported COVID-19 case of international travellers during the reporting period.

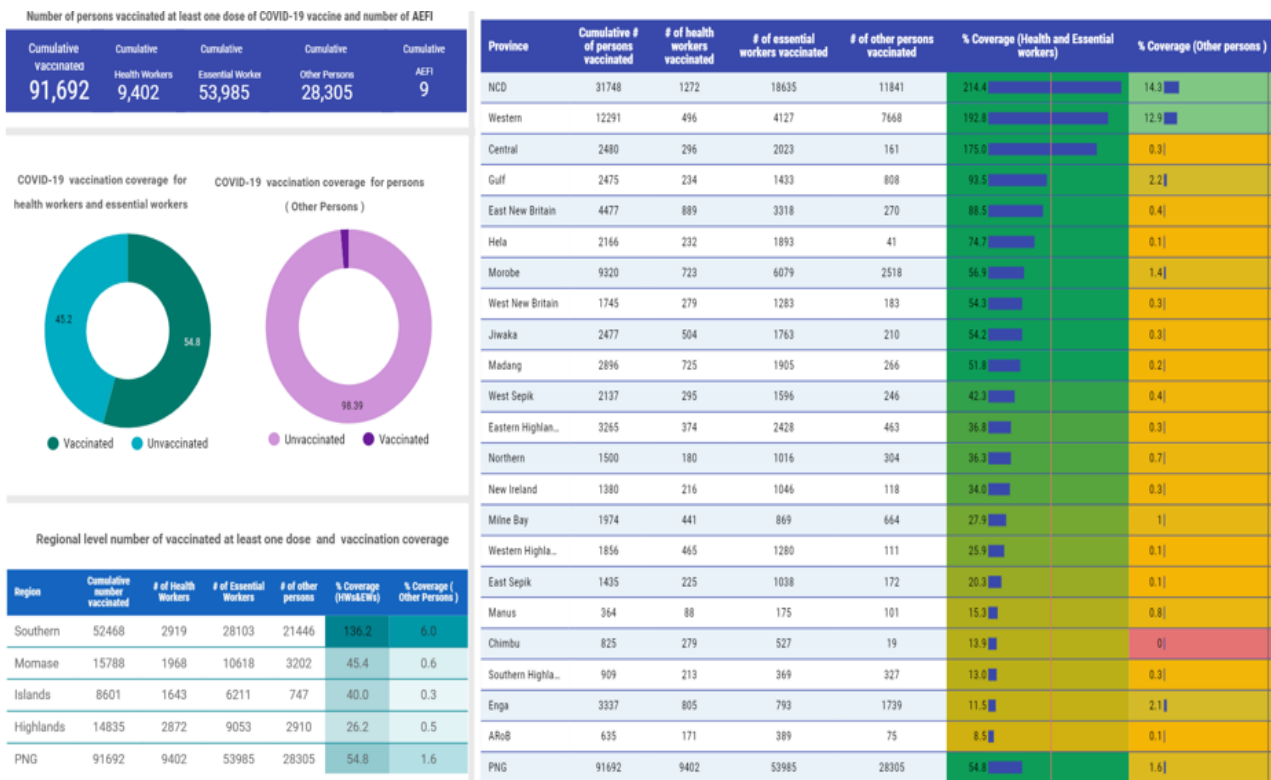
Table 3. Persons Screened by Point of Entry

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 – 7 August 2021)	Air	24,905
	Sea	693
	Land	6

National Vaccination Rollout

- ❑ As of 5th August 2021, over 91,692 people has been vaccinated at least for one dose in PNG. This includes 9,402 health workers and 53,985 essential workers and 28,305 people over the ages of 18 including those with comorbidities.
- ❑ Over 54.8% vaccination coverage of health care workers and other essential workers across the country.
- ❑ More than 21,000 people are fully vaccinated having received their 2nd dose of COVID-19 vaccine.
- ❑ There are 165 sites offering vaccination across PNG.
- ❑ Over 380 first and second doses of Sinopharm vaccine was administered.
- ❑ 302,400 doses of Johnson & Johnson vaccine arrived in PNG from US Government through COVAX facility.

Figure 1. Cumulative number of persons vaccinated by region and province (5th August, 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.
- ❑ Police Commissioner and Controller of the PNG COVID-19 National Pandemic Response David Manning made the announcement of the new detections after the first Delta positive case three weeks ago. When releasing the information, the Controller

highlighted the risk of the onset of a potential third wave of COVID-19 infections, and called on people to adhere to COVID-safe measures and to get vaccinated.

- ❑ PNG has done well under the International Health Regulations by detecting the COVID-19 delta variant cases, managing them and discharging them when they were cleared medically from isolation and rendering them non-infectious.
- ❑ Full details of all measures can be found at www.covid19.info.gov.pg

Transmission Assessment

Currently COVID-19 cases are being reported from across PNG, with cases reported from 10 out of 22 provinces in the previous seven days. Chimbu, EHP, ENB, ESP, Gulf, Jiwaka, Manus, Milne Bay, New Ireland, Oro, Western and WNB provinces did not report any cases in the past seven days.

In the past seven days, the first local delta variant was reported from Madang province from a health care worker. While the case was reported to have been diagnosed more than 30 days ago and has fully recovered (asymptomatic and re-tested negative), given that there have been reports of active transmission among clusters with poor contact tracing and high vaccine hesitancy rate, widespread transmission of delta variant in the province is highly likely.

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 around 2%. However, in the context of delayed, inconsistent or under reporting, overall low testing and limited contact tracing, positivity as well as the observed declining trend must be interpreted with caution.

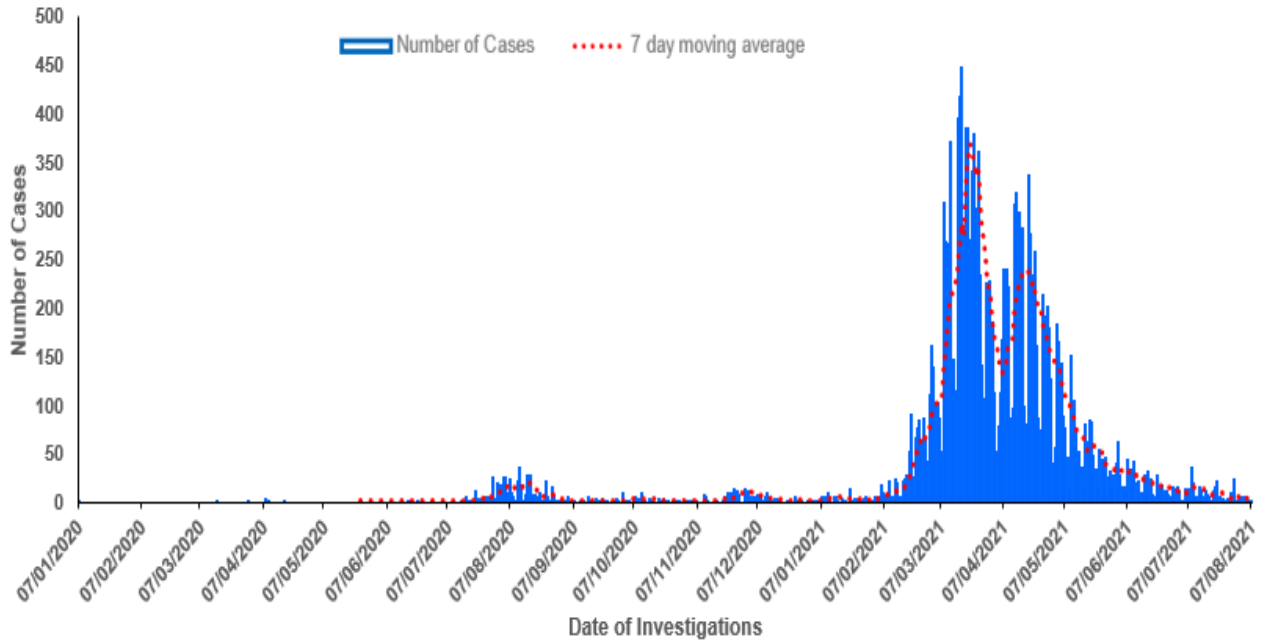
While there continues to be low rates of testing and limited contact tracing, it is believed that community transmission of COVID-19 is occurring in much of PNG. With low level of confidence based on the available data, Morobe and Madang provinces appear to be in stage 3 widespread community transmission 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 testing.

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

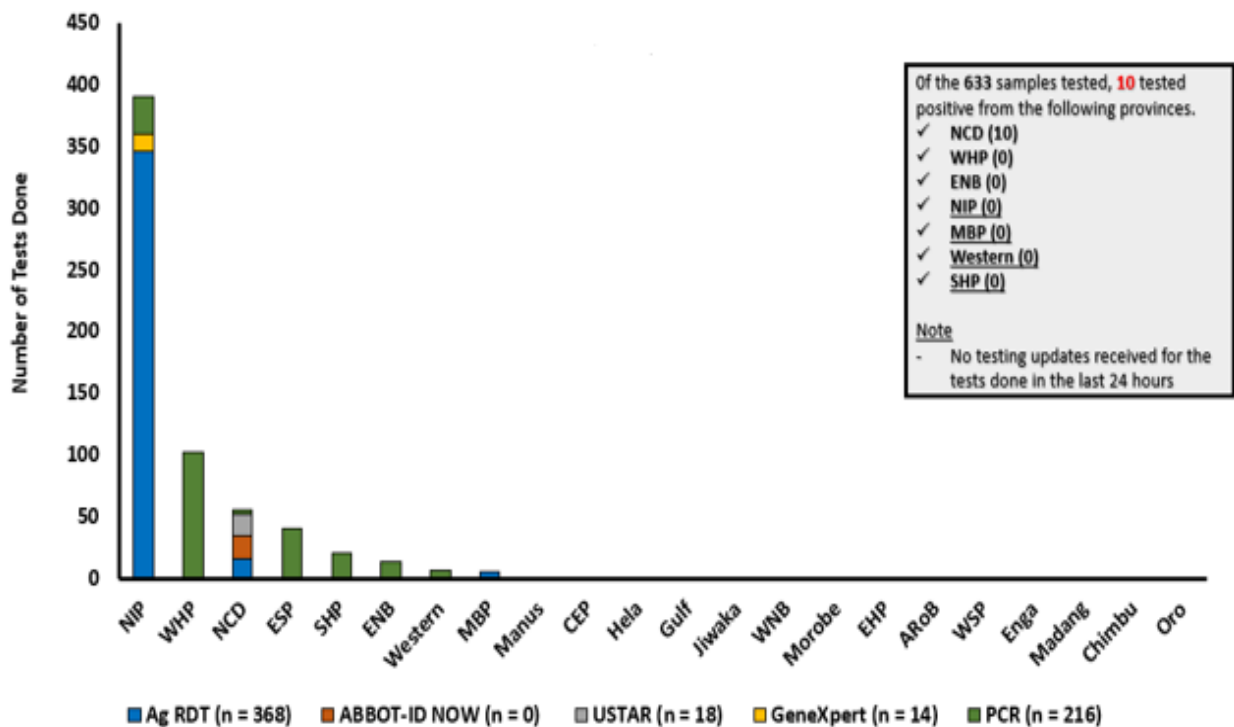
Epidemiology

Figure 2. Epidemiological curve of COVID-19 cases in Papua New Guinea, 15th March 2020 to 8th August 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 3: Tests done in the last 7 days, 26th July to 1st August 2021 (n=645)



ANNEX A – Photos

Photo 1: 302,400 doses of Johnson & Johnson vaccine arrived in PNG from US Government through COVAX facility.



Photo 2: Social mobilisers from NCD Provincial Health Authority pictured conducting awareness on COVID-19 vaccine in communities in Moresby South.



Photo 3: Global Fund donation of disinfectants and hand sanitizers at Murray Barrack Warehouse, NCD

For more information about this Situation Report, please contact:

Dr Daoni Esorom
Deputy Pandemic Controller
National Department of Health
Email: daoniesorom@gmail.com
Mobile: +675-7231 3983

Ms Apa Parunga
Information & Planning Pillar Lead
National Control Centre / WHO
Email: parungaa@who.int
parungaa@gmail.com