



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 7 November, PNG has officially reported a cumulative total of 31,894 confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 413 COVID-19 deaths.
- In the last seven days, a total of 2,123 newly diagnosed COVID cases were reported including 43 known deaths.
- Among all reported cases this week, about **70%** of them were reported to have tested in the last 14 days; suggesting active (ongoing) community transmission in the reporting provinces.
- Sufficient stock of all lab commodities in all provinces after mass distribution of lab commodities.
- High demand for oxygen in health facilities.
- Health authorities called on everyone to adhere to the non-pharmaceutical measures to help prevent further spread of the virus as oxygen demands in the country is expected to further increase if the number of COVID-19 cases continue to rise rapidly.
- Police and Defence Force personnel in Hela conducted “Niupela Pasin” awareness.
- As of 7 November 2021, over 254,708 people have been vaccinated with at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine in PNG. Over 181,283 people are fully vaccinated. This is 9.7% of the 20% target for 2021 Phase I COVID-19 vaccinations.

Cluster Updates & Priorities

*Surveillance:

- In last seven days, a total of 2,123 new COVID-19 cases were reported including 43 new deaths. The cumulative number of cases is now at 31,894 with 413 known deaths.
- Among all reported cases this week, about **70%** of them were reported to have tested in the last 14 days; suggesting active (ongoing) community transmission in the reporting provinces.
- In the last seven days, a total of 2,123 newly diagnosed COVID cases were reported including 43 known deaths.
- 21% of the deaths had occurred in the last 7 days, 56% occurred in the last 8-14 days and 23% occurred more than two weeks ago; suggesting delayed reporting from provinces.

Delta Cases

- In the last 7 days, 22 cases of delta (plus 77 unreported cases from the previous week) were entered into the database, bringing the cumulative delta cases up to 298 cases.
- 100% of all the cases reported in the last 7 days were from more than a month ago.

Table 1. Reported COVID-19 cases in PNG¹
(1 – 7 Nov 2021)

Province	New Cases	Deaths	Cumulative Delta Variant	Cumulative Total
AROB	26		1	511
Central	96		5	675
ENB	153	3	1	1707
ES	111	1		602
EH	189	10	7	1981
Enga	6		3	1008
Gulf	95			287
Hela	30		18	479
Jiwaka	25	2		392
Madang	170	4	5	1177
Manus	19	1	1	566
Milne Bay	207		3	968
Morobe	99		75	2437
NCD	387		132	8593
NI	3	1		605
Northern	0			198
Simbu	235			808
SH	86	3	30	809
WNB	0		4	1141
WS	12		59	753
Western	4		9	3592
WH	127	18	2	2605
TOTAL	2080	43	355	31894

¹ As of 7/11/2021, 12:00 pm, PNG time

Table 2. COVID-19 GLOBAL AND REGIONAL UPDATE^{2b}

	Confirmed Cases	Deaths
Global	250 715 502	5 062 106
Western Pacific	9 652 427	133 103

² WHO COVID-19 Dashboard as of 11/11/2021, 22:45 CEST

- Of those detected as delta variant infections five have reportedly passed away 80% (4/5) of these reported deaths were reported to have had underlying comorbidities.
- NCD, Western, WHP and Western provinces accounted for the highest number of cases among other provinces. AROB, ESP, GULF, JIWAKA, ORO, SHP & WNB provinces have not reported any delta case as yet.
- Almost 98% of the reported cases have recovered.
- The average monthly test positivity has increased (by to 7% from 5% from the last surge), with over 50% test positivity in the month of October. With overall low testing rates and delayed reporting of testing by private facilities and PHAs including non-reporting of RDTs by most or all facilities, this should be interpreted with caution.

* Cases are only reported upon receipt of CIFs and death certificates hence the figures reported may not be reflective on the current situation in the provinces.

Laboratory:

- There is sufficient stock of all lab commodities at both national and provincial storehouses after mass distribution of lab commodities.
- 157 sequenced results were returned back to CPHL for verification and results emailed to provinces concerned.
- Minderoo Lab was visited by the Prime Minister this week however lab operation is pending commissioning that needs to be completed by parties concerned.
- A testing strategy has been put in place now that requires all patients, guardians and staff entering hospitals to be swabbed and tested.

Clinical Management and Infection Prevention Control:

- The consumption of medical oxygen in hospitals around the country has risen following the increase of COVID-19 cases in the country, especially in the high-risk provinces including the National Capital District.
- Clinical team has advised health facilities to be proactive in assessing their oxygen capacity and request for resupply before their buffer supply is depleted so that oxygen supply levels does not breach critical level and put lives in danger. Recently, more than 400 oxygen concentrators have been distributed throughout the country, about 18 per province on average which has been supplying oxygen to the mild and moderate cases as well.
- Plans to build Pressure Swing Absorption Oxygen Plants in Port Moresby, Kokopo, Lae and Mt Hagen to ease the demand for oxygen in the regions are being implemented with completion of the one in Port Moresby.
- Assisted logistics team in pushing donated drugs, equipment and consumables into the provinces supported by AUSMAT. Oxygen delivery equipment and accessories, other medical equipment, PPEs and consumables including drugs were sorted/ distributed equally for delivery to all PHAs and Faith Based Health Facilities throughout the country. Heads of different faith-based organizations were consulted to ensure fair distribution.

Risk Communication and Community Engagement:

- Increasing perceived risk to drive demand over last weeks increased cases/surge and corresponding deaths have linked to increase in vaccination demand.
- Initiated planning on 40 days until Christmas Vaccination campaign through community awareness, church advocacy and Private Sector Mobile Vaccine Units (MVUs).
- Social Listening and Response: Continued to track comments on institution/organization social media pages, feedback from community engagement, media monitoring and 'Dark social' monitoring of key groups. Compiling insights and responding through social media wraps on a fortnightly basis. A wide range of partners, private sectors and influential individuals that share same messages are leverage through the same network to increase the traction of correct information and content.

- Phase 2 Roll out of HCWs training - Six border provinces completed (Tranche 1) and Regional Health promotions Training for NGI and Southern regions completed.
- Other advocacies this week in NCD were conducted on vaccine awareness and information at Waigani police station to police personals and inmates, IPI officers at Murray Barracks and retail staff at Water Front at Konedobu.

Niupela Pasin:

- This week Niupla Pasin team printed and formulated Niupla Pasin IEC materials, advocated to Waigani Police Station, Foodworld Waterfront and IPI Murray Barracks in collaboration with NCC Risk Communications team.
- Bethel Christian Center, Waigani Christian Center and a wedding event Standard Operating Procedures submitted for a wedding and funeral service were assessed and approved.
- 33 Events/Gatherings Summary requests were received, 29 were granted approvals while 4 events were deferred.
- Continued provincial communication and support on implementation of Niupla Pasin in provinces. Provincial Health authorities has called on everyone to adhere to non-pharmaceutical measures to help prevent further spread of the virus as oxygen demand in the country is expected to further increase if the number of COVID-19 cases continue to rise rapidly.
- The non-pharmaceutical measures include avoiding crowds, physical distancing by 1.5 to 2 metres, wearing of masks in public places such as markets and shops, following hygiene measures such as washing of hands with soap often or using sanitizers, and coughing into bent elbows rather than into the hands.

Logistics and Supplies:

- Continued distribution of PPEs and Lab supplies to provinces/facilities/organizations.
- Continued receipt of outstanding donations from World Vision (Global Fund) at the Napa Napa AES Warehouse.
- AUSMAT continues to actively support NCC by distributing surge kits to additional priority provinces (AROB, ENB, WNB, NIP & MBP). The surge kits consist of PPEs, medicines and biomedical consumables.
- Training commenced on 1 November for the oxygen plant at POMGEN.

Quarantine & Points of Entry:

- As of 7 November, there were 39 people under quarantine (PUQ) of whom 3 were in home quarantine, 33 in quarantine hotels and 3 in company sites.
- There was one reported COVID-19 case from incoming international travellers during the reporting period from Singapore. Investigation and contact tracing are being carried out and this traveller is in isolation for 14 days.

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 November 2021)	Air	31,585
	Sea	1,309
	Land	6

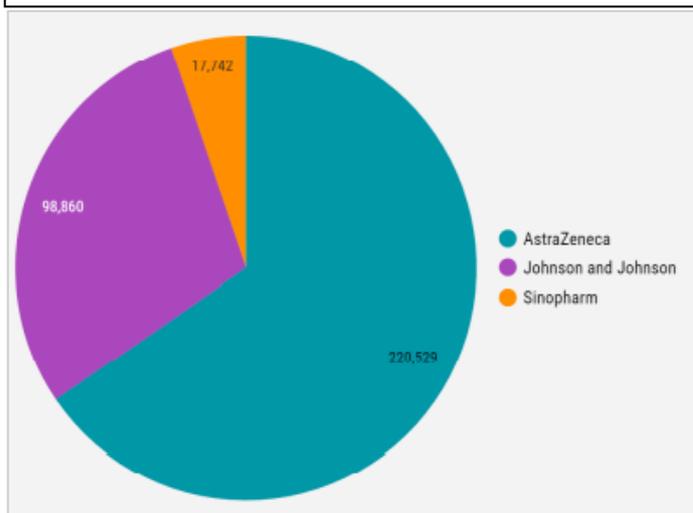
National Vaccination Rollout

- Eligibility for vaccination is open to all adults of 18 years of age and older. However, we continue to emphasize the importance of vaccination for all persons 45 years and older and all adults with comorbidities. Efforts continue for the vaccination of healthcare workers and other essential workers.
- The priority continues to be advocacy at province and district levels to create higher demand for COVID-19 vaccination.

Table 4: PNG COVID-19 Vaccination cumulative number of persons vaccinated as of 7 November 2021

Category	At least one dose received	Fully vaccinated
Health Worker	13860	8070
45 years and above	82589	62347
Persons with comorbidity	6148	4192
Cumulative	254708	181283

Figure 1: PNG COVID-19 Vaccination cumulative number and coverage of persons vaccinated as of 7 November 2021



National and Provincial Health Update

- The Pandemic Response Coordination Group and the Health Operations Team continued to meet regularly at the National Control Centre.
- Police and the PNG Defence Force personnel in Hela are conducting awareness to ensure the general public adhere to the “Niupela Pasin” protocols to contain the spread of COVID-19 cases.
- The consumption of medical oxygen in hospitals around the country has risen since the rise of COVID-19 cases in the country, especially in the high-risk provinces including the National Capital District.
- Health authorities are now calling on everyone to adhere to the non-pharmaceutical measures to help prevent further spread of the virus as oxygen demand in the country is expected to further increase if the number of COVID-19 cases continue to rise rapidly.
- The non-pharmaceutical measures include avoiding crowded places, physical distancing by 1.5 to 2 meters, wearing of masks in public places such as markets and shops, following hygiene measures such as washing of hands with soap often or using alcohol-based hand sanitizers, and coughing into bent elbows.
- With the high demand for oxygen in health facilities, the Deputy Controller for the National Pandemic Response Dr Daoni Esorom has cautioned that if we get surges in all the provinces, we will put a lot of strain on the already high demand for oxygen.
- Full details of all containment measures can be found at www.covid19.info.gov.pg

Partner Coordination Activities

- Business 4 Health (B4H) promoted G4S pop up vaccination clinic via B4H Facebook page, uploaded SITREP onto B4H website updates and conducted face to face small business/ worksite COVID IEC sessions.
- Child Fund supported in renovating laboratory space for establishing Gene Expert testing in Kwikila Interim Hospital as COVID-19 testing started at the hospital for the first time. Child Fund has supported in training 30 Community Health Volunteers and 30 Health Care workers on COVID 19 disease, Niupla Pasin and vaccination (rollout and hesitancy). Capacity building training teams ensured that demand was generated in all training sessions and tried to ensure vaccines were available. Continued logistics support for surveillance team to conduct contact tracing in communities of index cases. Provided support in kind to the Bereina HC and Bereina Laboratory to continue testing, care and management to patients and also conducted routine immunization for children in the Hiri west under Porebada Catchment whilst integrating COVID 19 awareness and promoting vaccination to generate demand.
- A partner mapping tool is being created by WHO and UNOCHA and will be trialled before rolling out to all clusters. This tool is to provide decision makers with up-to-date information regarding partner capacity across the country.
- The Health Cluster meeting continued to meet regularly every second week via zoom.
- Partners are also advised that there will be a shared drive created for direct updates for health cluster members to update each week. This will be shared post the Health Cluster meetings each fortnight.
- The next Health Cluster meeting will be held on the 23rd of November. Please email osheaj@who.int if you or your organisation wishes to join the cluster meetings and present activities. These meetings are strategic and are used to align all partner activities.
- Currently, NCDPHA, WNBPHA and WPHA have expressed interest or are holding weekly partner coordination meetings via zoom. If PHA's wish to engage in similar meetings, please contact osheaj@who.int who can assist in facilitating this.

Transmission Assessment

While the epidemic curve shows a slow declining trend after reaching its highest peak around the 1st and 2nd week of October, 2021, this trend must be interpreted with caution due to delays with reporting and overall low testing rates observed throughout the nation.

Nonetheless, more than 64% of the provinces (14/22), appear to show declining trend in the number of cases diagnosed in week 43 compared to week 42.

In order to allow for delayed reporting and a current data entry backlog, we have conducted the transmission assessment based on cases diagnosed in week 43 (25th – 31st October, 2021).

MOMASE REGION

- East Sepik, West Sepik and Morobe have shown a decline in case numbers between weeks 41, 42 and 43. Morobe and Madang are still considered to be in stage 3 (widespread) community transmission and East and West Sepik in stage 2 (localised spread).

NEW GUINEA REGION

- All provinces appear to show an increasing trend except New Ireland and West New Britain province although for both there is a suspected reporting issue; there are unofficial reports of increasing cases and strain in New Ireland on the health care system.

HIGHLANDS REGION

- EHP, WHP, Chimbu, Enga and Hela provinces show declining trends in the number of cases per week over several weeks after a notable surge in the preceding weeks, while the trend in cases for SHP, and Jiwaka provinces have been steady over several weeks to 31st October.
- EHP, WHP and Hela appear to be in wide spread (stage 3) community transmission and are still considered high risk in view of delayed reporting and unknown testing rates while Chimbu and Enga provinces are now considered to be in stage 2 transmission.

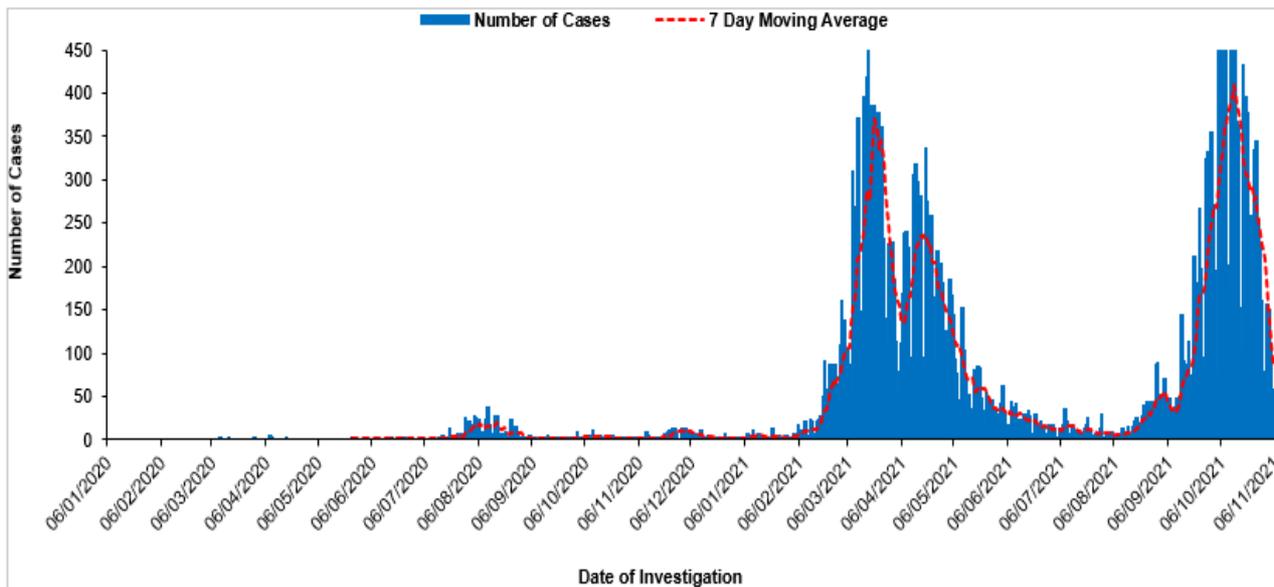
SOUTHERN REGION

- Western province, a once high-risk province, in stage 3 community transmission with surges in delta cases, shows a significant reduction in the trend of cases over the four weeks to 31st October. WP accounted for 1% of cases reported in the last 14 days and is considered to be in stage 2 community transmission.
- Milne Bay province, on the other hand, a once low risk province, appears to be in stage 3 community transmission now. It is now showing a decrease in the number of cases. This must be interpreted with caution due to delayed reporting and low testing rates observed in the province.
- NCD is showing a reduction in the number of cases diagnosed in week 43 (483) compared to week 42 (621) and in the context of increased testing but it may be too early to be interpreted and is still considered to be in stage 3 (wide spread) community transmission.
- Central province has seen a 50% increase in number of cases diagnosed in the week 42 compared to week 41 but appears to show a decreasing trend in week 43 and given its proximity to NCD among other risk factors, it remains in stage 3 transmission.
- Gulf province was not reporting until in the last few weeks. It is still considered to be in stage 2 transmission trends in influenza-like-illness.
- Northern (Oro) province is considered high risk and in stage 3 transmission given unofficial reports of increased cases and deaths (no formal reports have been received for 6 months, until 14 days ago, when only 1 case was reported).

Additional information about transmission classification can be found on the WHO Western Pacific Regional Office (WPRO) COVID-19 transmission stage dashboard at bit.ly/WPRODashboard

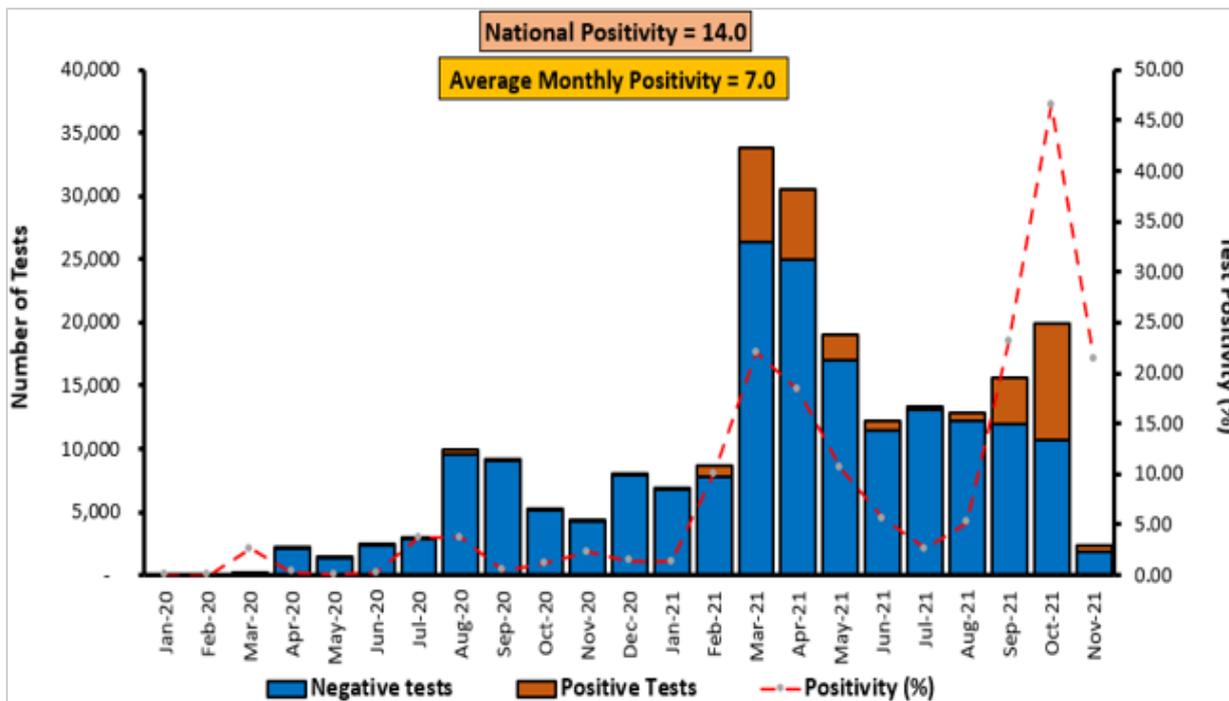
Epidemiology

Figure 2. Epidemiological curve of total COVID-19 cases in Papua New Guinea as of 7 November 2021



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

Figure 3: Positivity and testing trend from 22 Jan 2020 - 7 November 2021



ANNEX – Photos

Photo 1: NCC Clinical and Logistics clusters in collaboration with AUSMAT and WHO team working on PPEs for surge provinces at Napa Napa AES warehouse in Central Province.



Photo 2: RCCE cluster lead Dr Kaima conducting COVID-19 vaccine advocacy with the Police personals, the inmates and support staff at Waigani Police Station in NCD.



Photo 3: Frontline East New Britain PHA provincial & district health teams conducting vaccine advocacy in Gunanur CLP company in Kokopo district.



Photo 4: Frontline East New Britain PHA provincial & district health teams conducting vaccine advocacy at Kaulung No2 in Gazelle district.

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