



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

Situation Summary and Highlights

- ❑ As of 20 June 2021 (12:00 pm), there have been 17 038 COVID-19 cases and including COVID-19 deaths reported in Papua New Guinea. From the period of 14 June to 20 June, there were 335 new cases and no new death reported.
- ❑ As of 18 June 2021, a total of 45,194 people has been vaccinated in PNG. This includes 6,679 health workers and 34,234 essential workers and 1,075 people over the ages of 45 with those with comorbidities.
- ❑ East New Britain Province has been the most successful in reaching their health care workers having vaccinated over 64% of the health workforce.
- ❑ One international Emergency Medical Teams (EMTs) continue to provide care for COVID and non-COVID patients in Kimbe, West New Britain Province.
- ❑ Papua New Guinea received additional 146,000 doses of AstraZeneca vaccines on 15 June, donated by New Zealand government.
- ❑ PNG Council of Churches affirm support for COVID-19 vaccinations in country. They have decided to adopt the five principles of the COVID-19 vaccination.

Table 1. Newly reported COVID-19 cases in PNG¹

	New Cases (14 to 20 June 2021)	Cumulative Total
AROB	7	406
Central	2	270
Chimbu	7	236
EHP	17	727
ENB	58	1 172
Enga	7	279
ESP	21	252
Gulf	11	126
Hela	25	146
Jiwaka	1	153
Madang	4	427
Manus	40	479
Milnebay	24	218
Morobe	12	1 190
NCD	30	5 146
NIP	7	534
NOP	0	196
SHP	13	209
West New Britain	13	1 020
West Sepik	0	445
Western	4	2 391
Western Highlands	7	1 016
TOTAL	310	17 038

¹ As of 23/05/2021, 12:00 pm, PNG time

Pillar Updates & Priorities

Surveillance:

- ❑ From the period of 14 June to 20 June, there were 335 newly reported cases and no new death reported. However, the overall number of reported cases continues a downward trend.
- ❑ As of 20 June 2021 (12:00 pm), there have been 17 038 COVID-19 cases including 173 COVID-19 deaths reported in Papua New Guinea (CFR-1%). Testing remains low and real case numbers are expected to be higher than those recorded.
- ❑ Between June 28 and July 18, a nation-wide blitz testing campaign will be conducted to obtain an overview of the epidemiological situation. Main testing sites will be healthcare facilities, airports, higher education institutions and churches.

Table 2. COVID-19 GLOBAL AND REGIONAL UPDATE²

	Confirmed Cases	Deaths
Global	177 108 695	3 840 223
Western Pacific	3 348 659	51 423

² WHO COVID-19 Dashboard as of 20/06/2021, 16:45 CEST

- AgRDT training materials have been finalised together with the Laboratory Pillar with a training schedule compiled for organisations that have requested for this training after their laboratories have been certified.
- GoData training is commencing on June 21 with staff from NCD and NCC being the first to receive the training. This will serve as a pilot for the training materials and schedule which will accompany GoData rollout in the provinces.
- Training of new NCC surveillance staff is commencing on June 21 and will encompass data management and analysis, surveillance and epidemiology, and rapid response and contact tracing.

COVID-19 Hotline

- For the period of 14-20 June, the COVID-19 National Hotline received 2748 calls.
- Of these, 14 (about .51%) were health-related calls. 10 of these were referred to the Rapid Response Team/PHA.
- As of 21 June, the hotline had received a total of 253,727 calls. Of these, 6,196 (2.5%) were health-related calls. A total of 2550 calls to date have been referred to Rapid Response Team/PHAs.
- The hotline is receiving a high number of calls from people following up for certificate of release from quarantine.
- There have also been a high number of callers seeking information about identifying symptoms, preventative measures, provincial vaccination programs, vaccine awareness and travel related queries.

Laboratory:

- RT-PCR training of laboratory staff in Angau Memorial Hospital has concluded and the hospital laboratory will begin RT-PCR testing for the region at the end of June.
- A three-week studio surge planning has progressed and is expected to start immediately when the Mindero air lab set up is complete with the intent to increase the number of samples shipped to the air lab such that the laboratory is fully utilised.
- The School of Medicine and Health Sciences, in University of Papua New Guinea, finalised the proposal for a designated training laboratory for PCR testing to be conducted in the university.
- Development of AgRDT training materials has been finalised with a training schedule compiled for organisations that have requested for this training after their laboratories have been certified.

Emergency Medical Teams (EMTs)

- Heart to Heart International has completed their final deployment in country this week in West New Britain.
- A technical working group has been established to guide ongoing consultations between the national EMT team (Team SANA) and international EMT consultants to develop a Level 1 EMT in country.

Clinical Management and Infection Prevention and Control:

- The clinical management team's focus for this week has been fine-tuning the clinical management strategy and Emergency Response Plan in the COVID-19 response over the next 3 months.
- New scenario-based training modules for both NCD and provinces are being developed and should be completed by next week.

- The team are also working on joint efforts with Logistics cell to optimise the biomedical equipment and personnel support to the provinces.
- A team visited Pari urban clinic in Central Province to review existing clinical management and IPC practices and offered support.

Risk Communication & Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions (NPIs):

- Completion of 'Vaccine Champion' IEC Key awareness materials, with production and distribution scheduled for next two weeks. Mass media to support rollout of this campaign including radio focused on changes in vaccine eligibility and safety.
- Mobile outdoor awareness campaign continued in NCD with Sleeves Up Vaccine Champion messaging together with Niupela Pasin on buses on eleven key bus routes in the city.
- Mapping of IEC materials that has been developed by partners for COVID-19 response commenced and submissions are due on 21 June.
- NDoH continues phase 2 of a pilot vaccine mobilisation In-App click through campaign commenced that includes a short survey on vaccine hesitancy.
- Communications and media covered for arrival of 146,000 doses of COVAX vaccines on 15 June, donated by NZ government into PNG
- Key sector advocacy continued with the National Church Leaders Awareness meeting held in Port Moresby themed 'I am My Brother's Keeper' to define and agree on the PNG churches response to COVID-19.
- THE Papua New Guinea Council of Churches has issued a statement declaring its support for the COVID-19 vaccination, following a one-day conference in Port Moresby. Significant outcomes included signing of the PNG Council of Churches Declaration on COVID-19 outlining the council's five principles on COVID-19 vaccination. Church Leaders from each of the seven mainline churches under PNG Council of Churches recorded testimonials as part of campaign to address vaccine hesitancy and myths.
- Social listening systems have continuously identified the most discussed and shared topics and data is being fed back into message development to address public concerns and fill information gaps.
- Highlight from the Social and digital campaign last week included Health Secretary, Dr. Osborne Liko receiving his second dose and release of Dr Fiona Kupe's Vaccine Champion Quote Card.

Logistics and Supplies:

- COVID-19 supplies including PPE, IPC and laboratory supplies were dispatched to Morobe Province.
- Installation of mSupply inventory management system for COVID-19 suppliers in NCD and Central province. Next target is to rollout to the rest of the provinces.
- Donations received this week were two biomed equipment (flow splitters) from UK funding and 3 ventilators from WHO Dubai hub.
- Development of a supply chain management SOP underway.

Quarantine & Point of Entry:

- As of 20 June, there were 256 people under quarantine (PUQ) of which 51 were in home quarantine, 150 in hotels, 42 in company sites and 13 in company apartments.
- There were no reported positive COVID-19 cases in quarantine during this reporting period.

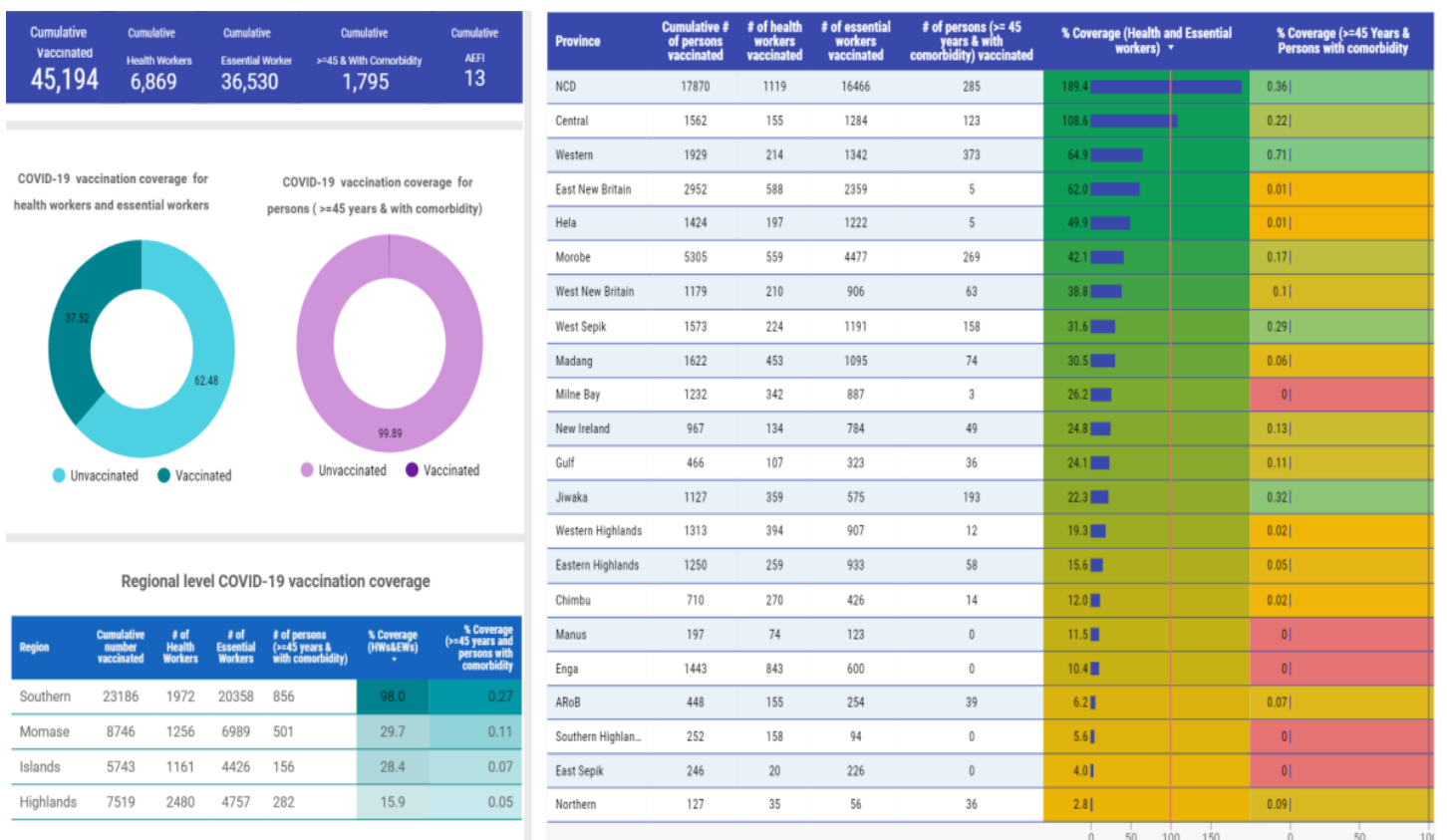
Table 3. Persons Screened by Point of Entry

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 – 19 June 2021)	Air	22,239
	Sea	671
	Land	6
	Total	23,449

National Vaccine Rollout

- ❑ A total of 128 vaccination sites have started vaccinations, out of 169 sites planned to provide COVID-19 vaccinations nationwide.
- ❑ Eligibility for vaccination is now open to all adults of 18 years of age and older. Team continues to emphasize on the importance of vaccination for all persons 45 years and older and all adults having comorbidity.
- ❑ As of 18 June 2021, a total of 45,194 people has been vaccinated in PNG. This includes 6,869 health workers and 36,530 essential workers and 1,795 people over the ages of 45 with those with comorbidities.
- ❑ Efforts continue for the vaccination of health care workers and other essential workers.
- ❑ East New Britain Province has been the most successful in reaching their health care workers having vaccinated over 64% of the health workforce.
- ❑ The Southern region has vaccinated over 98% of its targeted essential workers continue for the vaccination of health care workers and other essential workers.

Figure 1. Cumulative number of persons vaccinated by Region and Province



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.

Transmission Assessment

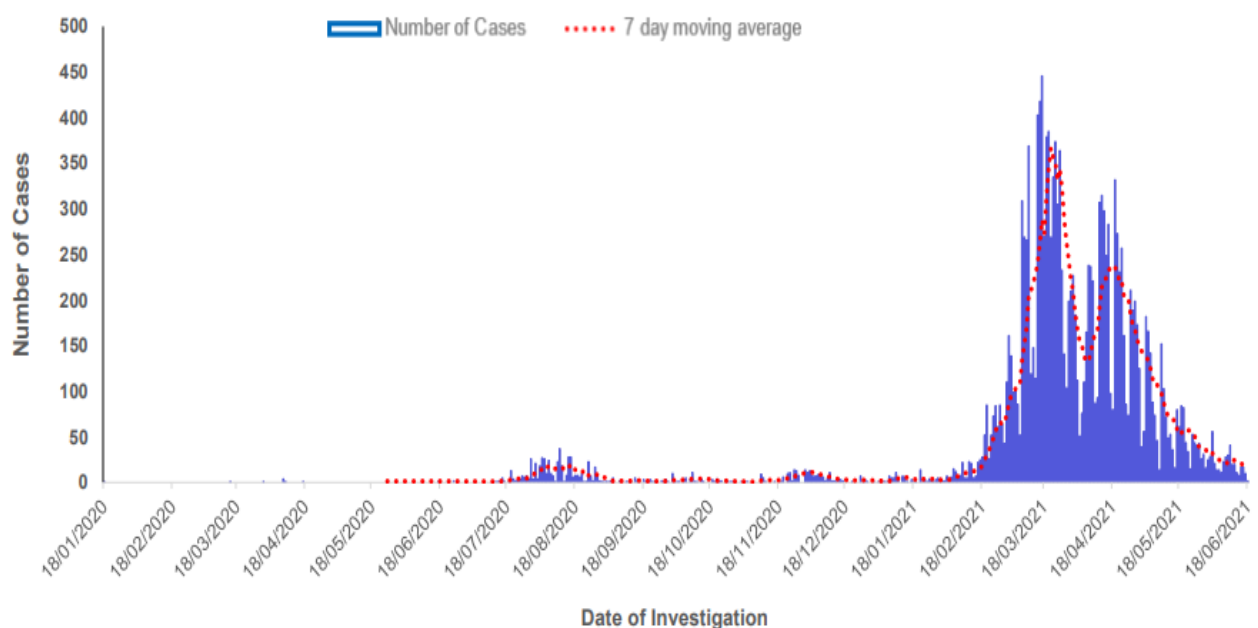
Currently COVID-19 cases are being reported from across PNG, with cases reported from 19 out of 22 provinces in the previous seven days. Northern (Oro), Western and West Sepik did not report any cases on the past seven days. The epidemic curve, although showing a marked decline in the trend, should be interpreted with caution as it may not be reflective of true positivity. The current weekly test positivity has reduced from 17% from last week to 13% this week. However, this measure is highly reliant on receiving testing data from all facilities across PNG, particularly with regards to negative test results. 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, East New Britain and Manus 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

Epidemiology

Figure 3. Epidemiological curve of COVID-19 cases in Papua New Guinea, 15 March 2020 to 20 June 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. Percentage age and sex distribution of COVID-19 cases (63% male, n=10533), 15 March 2020 to 13 June 2021

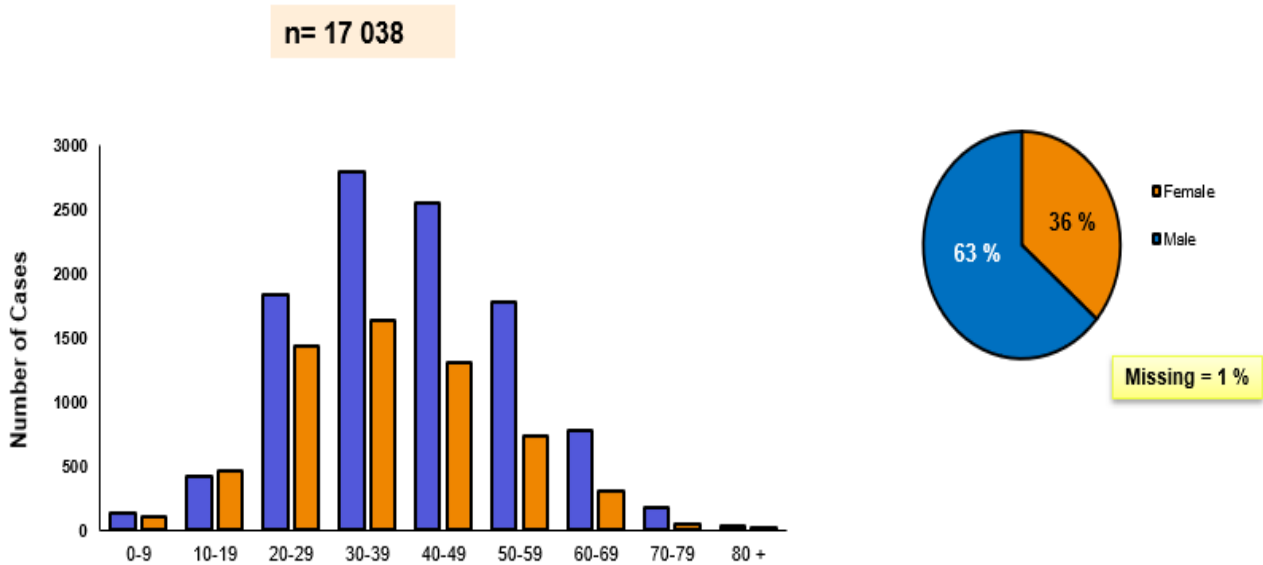
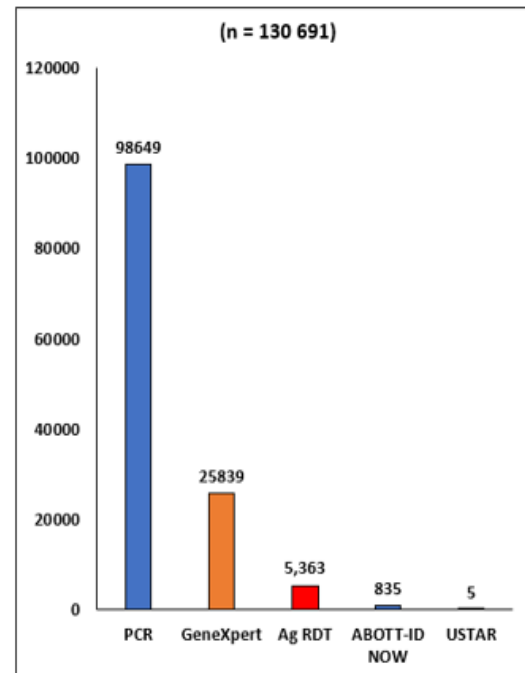


Table 4: Number of swabs taken (tests) by type of test and province from 16 Jan 2020 to 20 June 2021

Provinces	Ag RDT	ABBOT-ID NOW	USTAR	GeneXpert	PCR	Total Tests
NCD	1,147	313	5	12245	29838	43,230
Western				883	11907	12,790
WNB	476			1099	9891	11,466
Morobe	891			657	5956	7,504
WHP	804			837	5242	6,883
NIP	41			508	6195	6,744
ENB	29			1778	4794	6,601
EHP	90			969	3358	4,417
SHP		44		146	3990	4,136
ARoB	553			795	2405	3,753
Manus	513			203	2482	3,198
Hela		156		648	2050	2,698
WSP				621	1934	2,555
Enga	1			684	1650	2,335
Madang	389			1527	252	2,168
ESP	34			403	1404	1,841
CEP	8	322		28	1696	1,732
MBP	1			562	1005	1,568
Gulf	297			282	470	1,049
MISSING				0	935	935
Chimbu				596	270	866
Oro				49	724	773
Jiwaka	89			319	201	609
Grand Total	5,363	835	5	25,839	98,649	130,691



ANNEX A – Photos

Photos 1: Country team at the airport to receive the donated vaccines



Photos 2: Acting Chairman of the PNG Council of Churches Sir John Cardinal Ribat signs the declaration



Photos 3: participants of the conference, themed “Am I my brother’s keeper”

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