



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 24 October, PNG has officially reported a cumulative total of 27,895 confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 335 COVID-19 deaths.
- In the last seven days, a total of 2,827 new cases including 29 deaths were reported.
- The Australian Medical Assistance Team (AUSMAT) arrived in country on 18 October and went to Goroka this week to assess the situation and determine the support required during the surge.
- As of 24 October 2021, over 212,000 people have been vaccinated with at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine in PNG. Over 135,000 people are fully vaccinated. This is 7.9% of the 20% phase one target population for 2021 for COVID-19 vaccinations.

Table 1. Reported COVID-19 cases in PNG¹ (18 – 24 Oct 2021)

Province	New Cases	Cumulative Delta Cases	Deaths	Cumulative Total
AROB	9			955
Central	79			582
ENB	94		2	1141
ES	57			538
EH	69	2		2361
Enga	217	56		725
Gulf	32			171
Hela	80	1		395
Jiwaka	54		6	341
Madang	161	1		600
Manus	2			467
Milne Bay	230			408
Morobe	343		1	1462
NCD	892	73	2	7672
NI	0	1		534
Northern	1			198
Simbu	114	3		521
SH	86	1		567
WNB	14	1		1659
WS	14	2		886
Western	11	31	1	3566
WH	268	19	17	2146
TOTAL	2827	191	29	27895

¹ As of 24/10/2021, 12:00 pm, PNG time

Cluster Updates & Priorities

*Surveillance:

- In last 7 days, a total of 2,827 new COVID-19 cases were reported including 29 new deaths. The cumulative number of cases is now at 27,895 with 335 deaths.
- Over 90% of the cases were reported to have been tested in the last 21 days indicative of active (ongoing) transmission in the reporting provinces.

* 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:

- Procurement delays halted the completion of new PCR laboratories in Angau, Nonga, Mt Hagen & Goroka. Laboratories in Angau, Mt Hagen and Goroka are waiting on procurement of reagents, equipment and machine parts while Nonga lab is pending completion of plumbing and electrical works for the containerised building.
- Minderoo Lab operations is awaiting the inspection report and lab commissioning before testing can start.

Clinical Management and IPC:

- The national EMT continued to support the clinical team in Goroka for the past month
- The AUSMAT team are in Goroka this week to assess the current situation and see how to best support Goroka Hospital. They have made trips to visit major COVID facilities and hospitals in Port Moresby, Mount Hagen and Lae to assess the clinical and equipment needs.

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

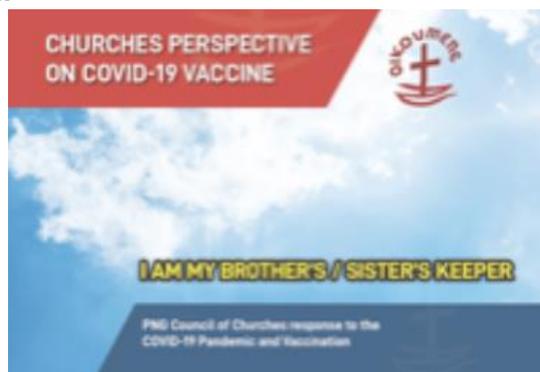
	Confirmed Cases	Deaths
Global	243 857 028	4 953 246
Western Pacific	9 339 489	127 451

² WHO COVID-19 Dashboard as of 26/10/2021, 22:45 CEST

- The Clinical Management teams from NDOH, WHO and AUSMAT have mapped biomedical equipment needs and consumables for provinces during this surge.
- The WHO Clinical Management/IPC team continued to be a part of the Correctional Services Technical Working Group and support prisons with technical advice on clinical pathways and IPC measures.
- The increased number of COVID-19 cases in pregnancy and associated mortality will be the focus in coming weeks.
- Simplified guidelines for the 'Management of the Deceased' in health facilities and communities is in progress. This will augment the guidance note on "Safe Management of the Deceased in the Context of COVID-19".

Risk Communication and Community Engagement:

- Supported by the Church Partnership Program, RCCE teams from NCC and WHO and UNICEF, a milestone in church advocacy was achieved with the launch of the PNG Council of Churches advocacy tool detailing the theological perspective on COVID-19 vaccines for use by churches to inform sermons at community level and for general congregational awareness.
- Mass media television and radio campaigns this week focussed on increasing vaccination uptake by people with co-morbidities and mitigating second dose drop out. These activities coincide with a significant increase in vaccine uptake. At the same time there is a need to combat increased misinformation and fake news on social media about vaccination being linked to the current surge and increase in COVID-19 deaths.
- In collaboration with the PNG Obstetrics and Gynaecology Council, WHO is mapping existing IEC resources and planning for new content development for pregnant and breastfeeding women, including social media cards to raise awareness of the risks from COVID-19 during pregnancy and on the safety and efficacy of COVID-19 vaccination during pregnancy.
- In response to misinformation circulated about self-administration of COVID-19 treatments, the RCCE team had developed language and social media content that:
 - Explains ivermectin is only to be used in registered clinical trials
 - Explains clinical trials
 - Encourages responsible sharing of information
- Added to the 'VAX FACTS' series is the translated 'VAX FACTS' series in Tok Pisin.



Niupela Pasin:

- The Niupela Pasin team approved 18 events promoting adherence with NPIs/public health and social measures (PHSM) this week for various activities in NCD and Central Province.
- The team also provided technical guidance on the development of Niupela Pasin Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for different events for five organisations from the public, private and faith-based sectors.
- Representatives from Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary, Correctional Institute Service, NCD PHA, Road Transport Authority, Motu Koita Assembly and the Education Department attended the third stakeholders meeting on Policing Niupela Pasin on 21 October in NCC.
- Communication with provinces continued this week on provincial establishment and rollout of Niupela Pasin next week. The team also conducted stock-take and prepared distribution plans of Niupela Pasin IEC Materials for provinces.

Logistics and Supplies:

- Approximately 2 tonnes of COVID-19 supplies, mostly PPE and laboratory items, were dispatched to the Southern Highlands, Simbu, Central, National Capital District, East New Britain, Jiwaka and

West New Britain provinces. Other facilities/organizations supplied were the NDoH-HIV Program, Port Moresby General Hospital, Health Ministry Office, Rita Flynn, St Johns, CPHL and NCC.

- Continued receipting of the outstanding donations from DFAT, Global Fund and WHO at the Napa Napa Warehouse.

Table 3: NCC COVID 19 Commodities Stock on Hand at 24 October, 2021

#	Item Category	Item Description	Unit	SOH
1	PPE	Gloves, examination	pieces	309,650
2	PPE	Mask, Respirator, KN95/N95	pieces	279,864
3	PPE	Mask, surgical, disposable	pieces	1,354,080
4	PPE	Face Shield, clear plastic, disposable	pieces	181,925
5	PPE	Goggles, protective	pieces	69,070
6	PPE	Gowns, surgical/isolation	pieces	127,201
7	PPE	Shoe Covers	Pair	73,200
8	PPE	Caps, surgical	pieces	7,500
9	IPC	Bleach	bott	7,864
10	IPC	Body Bag	pieces	1,110
11	IPC	Biohazard bags	pieces	148,225
13	IPC	Hand Sanitizer	pieces	2,812
14	Lab	GeneXpert Xpress SARS-CoV-2 cartridge (box/10 tests)	Tests	3,900
15	Lab	Rapid Test Kit, Panbio COVID 19 Ag	Tests	2,400
16	Lab	Sample Collection Kit (UTM / VTM)	Kits	580,800

Quarantine & Points of Entry:

- As of 23 October, there were 820 people under quarantine (PUQ) of whom 170 were in home quarantine, 470 in quarantine hotels, 126 in company sites and 54 in organizational apartments.
- There was one reported COVID-19 case in international travellers during the reporting period. Investigation and contact tracing are being carried out and this traveller is in isolation.

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 2020 – 16 June 2020)	3,788	
Total Number of Travelers Screened after SOE (17 June 2020 – 23 October 2021)	Air	30,366
	Sea	1,309
	Land	6

National Vaccination Rollout

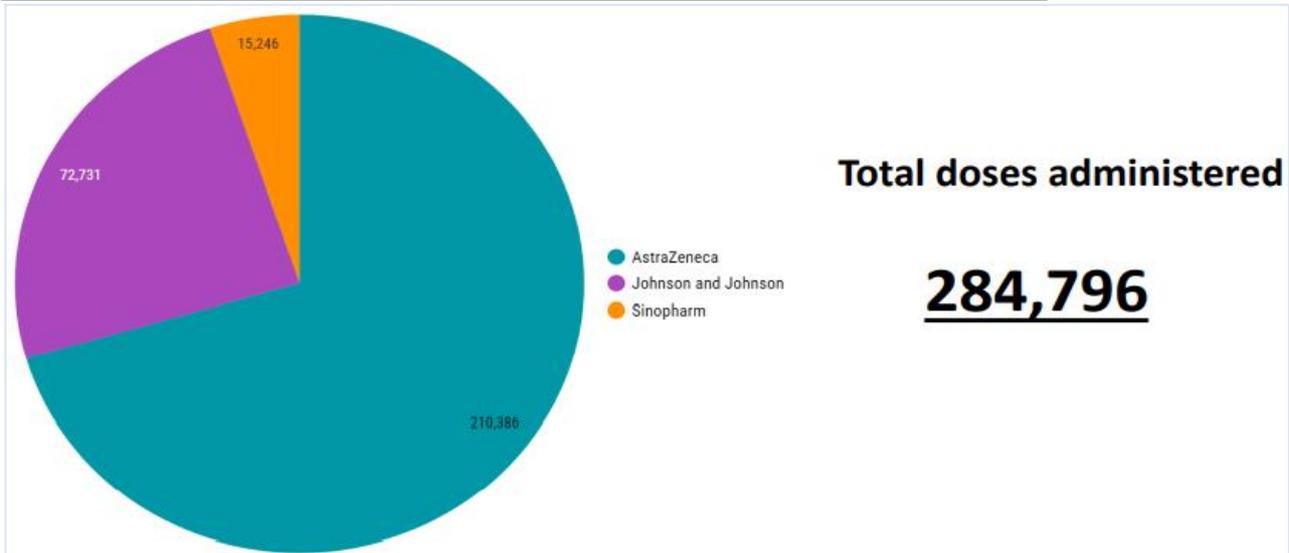
- As of 24 October 2021, 223,263 people have been vaccinated with at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. Over 147,831 people are fully vaccinated. This is 7.9% of the 20% target population for 2021 phase I target for COVID-19 vaccinations.
- The Johnson and Johnson vaccine is now available throughout PNG. Over 72,731 people have received the J & J vaccine, 15,246 people have received

Table 4. PNG COVID-19 Vaccination cumulative number and coverage of persons vaccinated by category as of 22 October 2021

Category	At least one dose received	Fully vaccinated
Health Worker	13307	7221
45 years and above	73289	52194
Persons with comorbidity	5337	3345
Cumulative	223263	147831

Sinopharm vaccine, and over 210,000 doses of AstraZeneca vaccine have been administered.

Figure 1: Total doses administered as of 24 October, 2021



National and Provincial Health Update

- The Pandemic Response Coordination Group and the Health Operations Team continue to meet regularly at the National Control Centre.
- Provinces that have received 2nd phase vaccine roll-out have continued to advocate and carry out health patrols to deliver the vaccines into rural remote areas. One good example is the Kokoda Health Centre, carrying out mobile vaccine patrols to deliver vaccination to its catchment population.
- Full details of all containment measures can be found at www.covid19.info.gov.pg

Partner Coordination Activities

- The next Health Cluster meeting will be held on the 26th of October. 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.
- 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.
- Currently, NCD, WNB and Western PHAs have expressed interest or are holding weekly partner coordination meetings via zoom. If PHAs wish to engage in similar meetings, please contact osheaj@who.int who can assist in facilitating this.
- 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 meeting on 26 October.

Transmission Assessment

In order to allow for delayed reporting and a current data entry backlog, we have conducted the transmission assessment based on cases diagnosed at in week 41 (7-17 October, 2021). The epidemic curve shows an increasing trend with a peak as high as that observed during the last surge (March/April_2021). Of the 21 provinces reporting, 13 (61%) submitted a reduced number of confirmed cases in week 41 compared to the week 40.

MOMASE REGION

- East and West Sepik remain at Stage 2 transmission. Morobe and Madang are still considered to be in stage three (widespread) community transmission with weekly case numbers for each remaining above 100 (week 41).

HIGHLANDS REGION

- All seven Highlands provinces remain in transmission stage three despite a downward trend in case numbers over several weeks (to end week 41 – 17 October) in EHP and Enga and declines between week 40 and week 41 in Hela, Jiwaka, SH and WH provinces after notable surges in the region in previous weeks. Declines in case numbers should be interpreted cautiously considering delayed reporting and unknown testing rates in the provinces.

SOUTHERN REGION

- Western province, once a high-risk province, in stage 3 community transmission with surges in delta cases, shows a reduction in the trend of cases diagnosed in the last 7-30 days. WP accounted for less than 1% of cases reported in the last 7 days and is now considered to be in stage 2 community transmission.
- Milne Bay province, on the other hand, a once low risk province is now showing an increasing trend and, appears to be now in stage 3 community transmission.
- NCD has shown a 50% increase in case numbers diagnosed in week 41 (799) compared to week 40 (526) and remains in stage 3 (wide spread) community transmission.
- Central province has a slight reduction in cases (61) in week 41 compared to the number diagnosed the week prior (71) however given its proximity to NCD among other risk factors, it is considered to remain in stage 3 transmission.
- Gulf province was not reporting until in the last few weeks. It's considered to be in stage 2 transmission. Northern Oro province is considered high risk and in Stage 3 based on unofficial reports of recent increases cases and deaths (no formal reports have been received for 6 months)

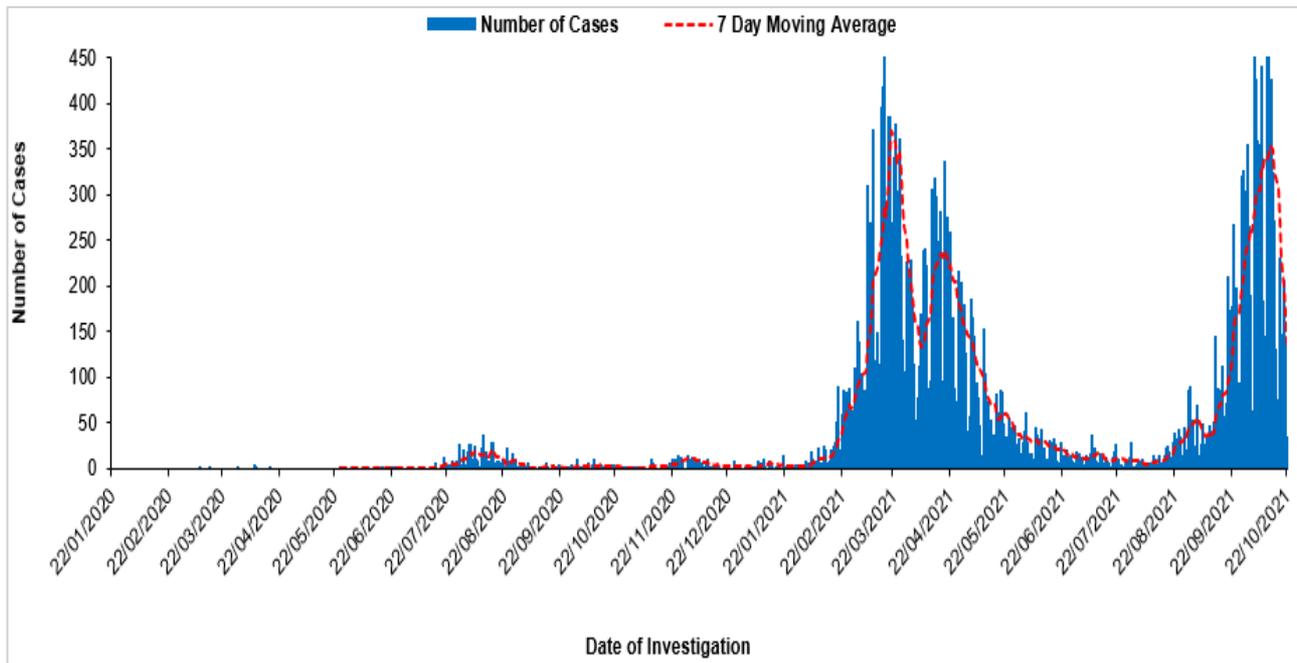
NEW GUINEA ISLANDS REGION

- WNB and ENB provinces remain at stage 2 transmission without increases in case numbers (increasing cases in ENB and they have provincial measures in place now) between week 40 and 41; New Ireland and AROB are this week considered in stage 2 transmission.
- Manus is considered to be in stage 1 transmission (sporadic cases) based on available data.

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

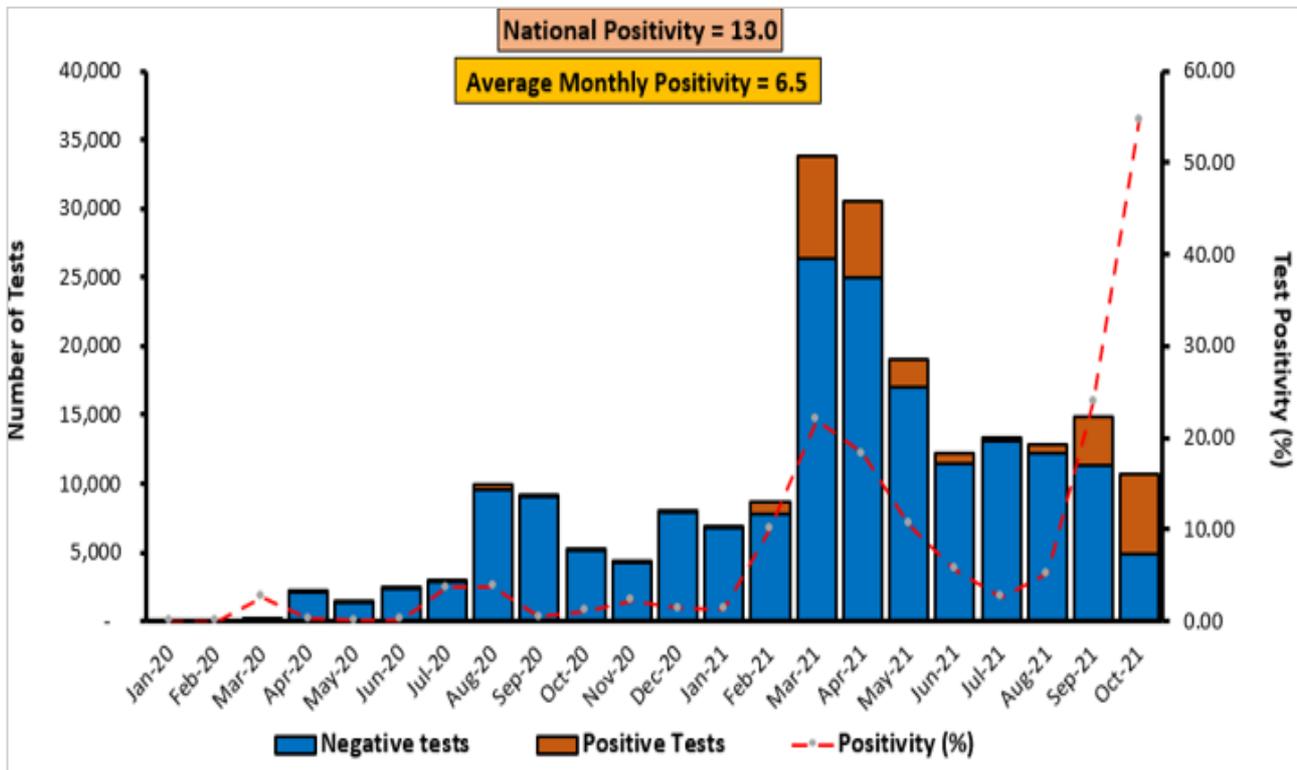
Epidemiology

Figure 2. Epidemiological curve of total COVID-19 cases in Papua New Guinea as of 17 October 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 - 24 October 2021



ANNEX – Photos

Photo 1: Dr Mike Little hearing of tragic loss and hardship from fellow Emergency Physician Dr Steven Aaron in Goroka Base Hospital



Photo 2: National Airport Corporation (NAC) takes measures to safeguard the workforce and maintain safe operations



Photo 3: Kokoda Health Centre vaccine team visiting Hamara village by foot to provide by vaccinations in Oro province.

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