



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 21 November, PNG has officially reported a cumulative total of 34,472 confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 529 known deaths.
- In the last seven days, a total of 1,486 newly diagnosed COVID cases were reported including 93 deaths.
- As of 19 November 2021, over 266,643 people have been vaccinated with at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine in PNG. Over 194,386 people are fully vaccinated. This is 11% of the 20% target for 2021 Phase I COVID-19 vaccinations.

Cluster Updates & Priorities

*Surveillance:

- In the last 7 days, a total of 1,486 cases including 93 deaths were reported, increasing the cumulative number of COVID cases in country to 34,472 with 529 known deaths.
- 18% of the cases were tested in the last 7 days while 80% of the remaining reported cases were tested from more than a week to over a month.
- Among all deaths reported in the last 7 days, 70% had occurred more than two weeks to over a month.
- There was no new case of delta reported in the last 7 days.
- Overall, among all cases reported in the last 7 days, almost 44% of the cases and 10% of the deaths had occurred or were tested in the last 14 days suggestive of delayed reporting.

**Table 1. Reported COVID-19 cases in PNG¹
(15 – 21 Nov 2021)**

Province	New Cases	Deaths	Cumulative Delta Variant	Cumulative Total
AROB	97	5	0	698
Central	0		4	741
ENB	107	4	1	2003
ES	56			664
EH	77	15	8	2136
Enga	11	3	3	1030
Gulf	10			309
Hela	143		13	728
Jiwaka	11			406
Madang	17	5	4	1249
Manus	19	1	2	591
Milne Bay	4		0	991
Morobe	57	11	59	2483
NCD	372		112	9140
NI	116	4	1	721
Northern	164			362
Simbu	19	1	1	1000
SH	144	38		984
WNB	17		0	1180
WS	1		56	759
Western	5		32	3606
WH	39	6	2	2691
TOTAL	1486	93	298	34472

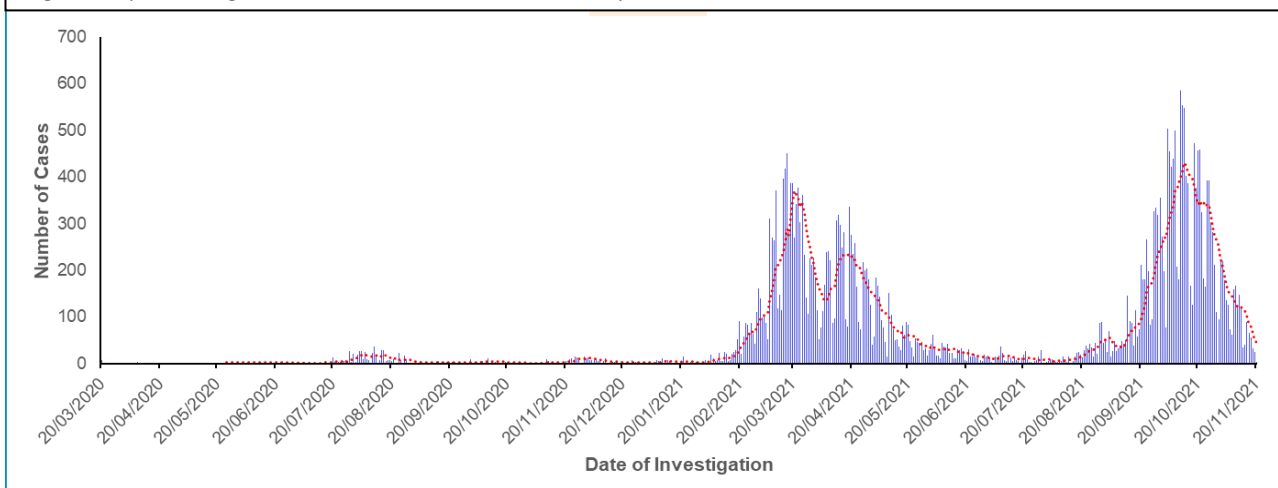
¹ As of 21/11/2021, 12:00 pm, PNG time

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

	Confirmed Cases	Deaths
Global	253 163 330	5 098 174
Western Pacific	9 794 363	135 108

² WHO COVID-19 Dashboard as of 15/11/2021, 22:45 CEST

Figure 1. Epidemiological curve of total COVID-19 cases in Papua New Guinea as of 21 November 2021

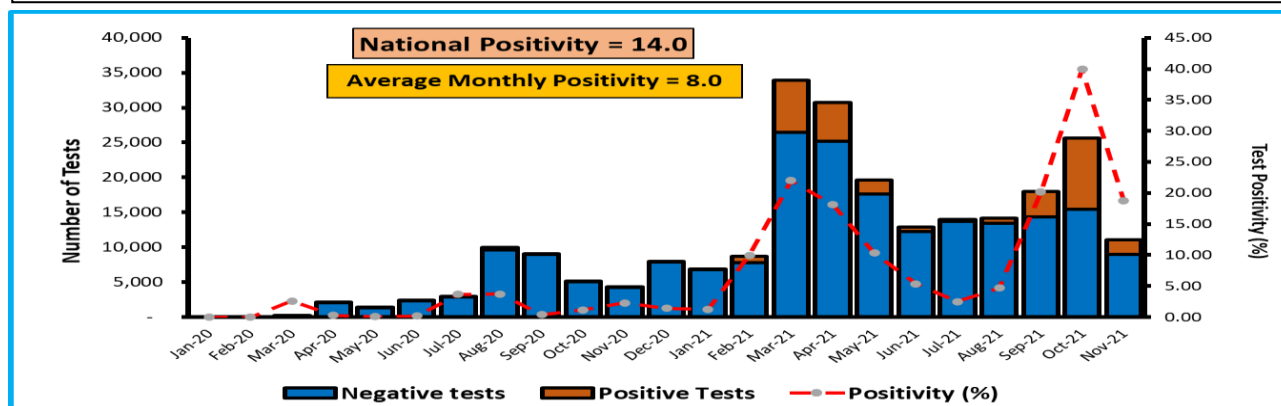


- The active cases appear to be decreasing in all provinces except Oro province as it is beginning to report cases now.
- There was no new case of delta reported in the last 7 days.
- Contact tracing training for West Sepik Province was conducted this week in Vanimo. A total of 35 participants from health facilities around West Sepik attended.



*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.

Figure 2: Positivity and testing trend from 22 Jan 2020 – 21 November 2021



Laboratory:

- A 3 week long International Air Transport Association (IATA) training on handling of Dangerous Goods and Shippers Declaration has commenced this week with the first batch of 20 participants only as Niupla Pasin is observed. Subsequent trainings for remaining two batches to follow in coming weeks. Training is supported and facilitated by WHO.
- All GeneXpert modules functionality status has been checked and mapped out for appropriate maintenance and required procurement through current manufacturer. This is to maintain uninterrupted testing for other public health program such as HIV Viral load and TB.
- Training preparation on packaging of used GeneXpert cartridges for incineration to be facilitated by WHO Medical Equipment and Waste team held next week in CPHL.

Clinical Management and Infection Prevention Control:

- UK Med is currently deployed to Mt Hagen, Team Cadus from Germany is deployed to East New Britain and Team NZ-Med/Response Global is deployed to AROB.
- Preparations on a Training of Trainer conference organised by WHO and NDOH will consist of IPC focal points from each province and other related clinicians with the aims to augment and standardise IPC knowledge and practices within the IPC community nationwide. This conference will be preceded by a two-day workshop to finalise the National IPC Guideline and training pack for all future IPC training in country.
- The IPC team visited Taurama Aquatic Centre (TAC) and met the St John's Management and the clinical staff in the isolation facility. The IPC team has offered support and efforts are underway to collaborate for the training of national IPC staff. IPC assessments have been done for Port Moresby General and Gerehu Hospitals. The findings and recommendations will be compiled and presented to NCDPHA and hospital management.

Risk Communication and Community Engagement:

- Joint NCC and WHO RCCE team provided technical support to the Ministerial COVID-19 Vaccine Taskforce to implement communications activities outlined in their 40 Day Plan and with establishment of the Communications Technical Advisory Group that will report to the Taskforce Steering Committee. Group is composed of identified sector and partner representatives.
- The team also facilitated a partner coordination of communications efforts to collectively focus on key messaging and leverage partner resources in the lead up to Christmas. Partner contributions from ExxonMobil, DFAT, ABC-ID, UNICEF, WHO, CPP and PNG Council of Churches scheduled to commence next week across media channels.
- Toksave series was launched this week. The series will run through to January 2022 and use trusted sources and voices aligned to key information needs of target audiences to address information gaps and misinformation.
- The Church Partnership Program together with the PNGCC identified 12 church leaders to be part of a dedicated theological COVID-19 vaccination communications campaign to address misinformation and vaccine hesitancy among the religion sector.
- Social Media Wrap – 4th issue preparations underway with more than 60 organisations subscribed. A call to join the social wrap distribution list was extended to the religion sector.
- Over 30 lecturers from Divine Word University and Lutheran School of Nursing, specialised in teaching Public Health, Health Extension Officers, University clinic staff and Nurse Officers attended a RCCE Training of Trainers after the first of the two trainings for final year nursing graduates was completed. Following the training completion, 27 participants decided to be vaccinated.



Logistics and Supplies:

- WHO had critical items list endorsed and sent to WPRO to check availability in Emergency Regional Stock.
- NZDF supported in dispatching and shipment of the remaining surge kits to Oro, Western, West Sepik and East Sepik provinces.
- Continue processing and dispatch of O2 consumables, concentrators and UTM's for remaining provinces, monthly orders received from provinces/facilities and Electoral Commission PPE requests for 22 provinces.
- Container collection, bleach & hand sanitizer distribution by sea freight for upper highlands (Hela, Enga & Mendi) ready to be collected at AES warehouse.
- mSupply refresher with data entry officer supported by WHO
- Continue to improve provincial supply chain flow in terms of communication from the provinces to the NCC Logistics team.

Quarantine & Points of Entry:

- As of 20 November, there were 44 people under quarantine.
- There was no reported COVID-19 case from incoming 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 – 20 November 2021)	Air	33,016
	Sea	1,364
	Land	6

National Vaccination Rollout

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

Category	At least one dose received	Fully vaccinated	Coverage(%)
Health Worker	14086	8500	
45 years and above	86670	66873	
Persons with comorbidity	6312	4366	
Cumulative	266643	194386	

Figure 3: PNG Daily reported number of COVID-19 Vaccines administered as of 18 November, 2021

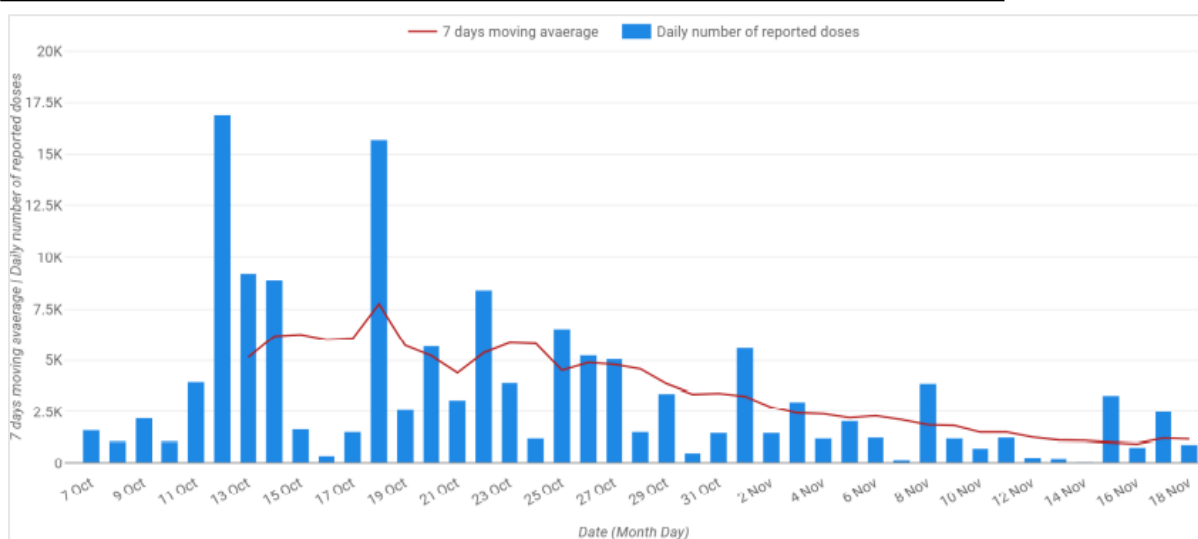
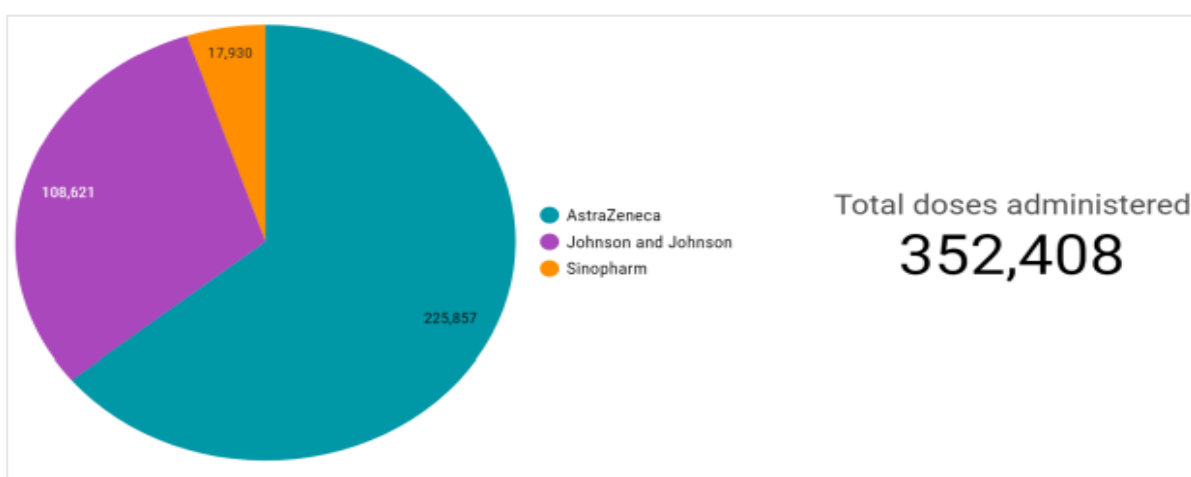


Figure 4: PNG COVID-19 Total doses administered as of 18 November, 2021



National and Provincial Health Update

- The Pandemic Response Coordination Group and the Health Operations Team continued to meet regularly at the National Control Centre.
- Full details of all containment measures can be found at www.covid19.info.gov.pg

Partner Coordination Activities

- The Health Cluster meeting was held on the 9th 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.
- 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. Thank you to all partners involved in the trial phase of this tool.
- 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.
- 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.
- Child Fund supported a four days Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) Methodology Training on 8 November in Central Province. The training was facilitated by the NDoH team Maternal Health and Health Promotion and targeted Central Province (PHA) Health promotion Officers to enhance their knowledge in learning about appropriate methods in planning for and conducting RCCE activities.
- Integrated Community Health Outreach Clinics with RCCE and COVID-19 Niupela Pasin was conducted in 5 communities in Rigo Inland in Central province while Mobile clinics also continued along the Rigo coast integrating COVID awareness and vaccination promotion. Covid 19 and Niupla pasin awareness and vaccination promotion sessions conducted through Community Health Volunteers
- Distributed 150 school hygiene packs containing soap and mask to participants in 3 primary schools as part of the opening ceremony of Hand Washing facilities constructed by Child Fund and and installation of a 9000L Rain Water catchment at Kwikila Interim Hospital as support to the Laboratory testing.
- The next health cluster meeting will be held on the 23rd of November at 1pm PNG Time.

Transmission Assessment

The epidemic curve shows a declining trend after reaching its highest peak around the 1st and 2nd week of October, 2021. It is also important to note that the trend is similar to the last surge in March/April therefore may suggest a true decline in the number of COVID-19 cases. However, this must be interpreted with caution in view of the delays in reporting and overall low testing rates.

This observation is supported by the declining weekly trend in the number of cases observed in 18/22 provinces (82%).

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 46 (8th-14th November, 2021).

MOMASE REGION

- All four provinces have shown a decline in case numbers between weeks 41 and 44. West Sepik is now considered to be in stage 1 transmission while East Sepik, Morobe and Madang are now considered to be in stage 2 community transmission (localised spread).

NEW GUINEA REGION

- All provinces appear to show an increasing trend. However, in view of delayed reporting and suspected overall low testing rates, the trends should be interpreted with caution. WNBPN has not been reporting for the last 2 weeks (weeks 45-46) while in New Ireland there are unofficial reports of increasing cases and strain in NIP on the health care system.
- ENBP continues to be in stage 3 (widespread) community transmission while WNBPN, NIP and AROB remain in stage 2 community transmission (localised spread). Manus province can now be considered to be in stage 1 transmission (sporadic cases).

HIGHLANDS REGION

- All the seven (7) highlands provinces show declining trends in the number of cases over several weeks (weeks 43 - 46) after a notable surge in the previous weeks (weeks 40-42).
- SHP and WHP continue 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 Hela, Jiwaka, EHP, Chimbu and Enga provinces are now considered to be in stage 2 transmission (localised spread).

SOUTHERN REGION

- Western province, a once high-risk province, in stage 3 community transmission with surges in delta cases, continue to show significant reduction in the trend of cases and is now considered to be in stage 1 transmission with sporadic cases.
- Milne Bay province, on the other hand, a once low risk province, continue to be in stage 3 community transmission. However, unlike in the second week of October (11th-17th October, 2021), it continues to show a decreasing trend. 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 41 to 46 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 appears to show a decreasing trend in week 43 and 46. In the context of increased testing, it is now in stage 2 transmission.
- Gulf province was not reporting until the last few weeks. It is still considered to be in stage 2 transmission.
- 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 in the last 7 days, it has been reporting cases. Oro is the only province with no report of any COVID-19 deaths.

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

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