



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 01st August 2021 (12:00 pm), a cumulative total of 17,775 COVID-19 cases including 192 COVID-19 deaths were reported in Papua New Guinea (PNG). From the period of 26th July – 01st August, there were 120 new COVID-19 cases and no deaths reported.
- ❑ Over 83,300 people has received at least one dose of AstraZeneca vaccine in PNG as of 1st August 2021. This includes 9,046 health workers and 52,742 essential workers and 24,515 people over the ages of 18 including those with comorbidities.
- ❑ Over 18,000 people received their 2nd dose of the COVID-19 AstraZeneca Vaccine as of 1st August 2021.
- ❑ RCCE teams from NCC and WHO continued to support the NCD PHA, MKA Health and Vision City Vaccination Clinic which has been scaled to a full 8-week Vaccine Champion event campaign.
- ❑ About 881 people has been vaccinated during these four mobile clinics as numbers are expected to increase over the remaining 7 weeks.
- ❑ The Government continues to maintain strict border control measures.

Table 1. Newly reported COVID-19 cases in PNG¹

	New Cases (26 July to 1 August 2021)	Cumulative Total
AROB	8	444
Central	0	275
East New Britain	4	1213
East Sepik	0	257
Eastern Highlands	0	753
Enga	0	292
Gulf	0	133
Hela	0	187
Jiwaka	1	163
Madang	33	494
Manus	0	516
Milne Bay	0	239
Morobe	17	1279
National Capital District	32	5266
New Ireland	3	583
Northern (Oro)	0	196
Simbu	16	270
Southern Highlands	0	216
West New Britain	0	1025
West Sepik	5	506
Western	0	2393
Western Highlands	1	1075
TOTAL	120	17775

¹ As of 02/08/2021, 12:00 pm, PNG time

Pillar Updates & Priorities

Surveillance:

- ❑ As of 01st August, a total of 120 newly confirmed cases and 0 COVID-19 deaths reported while the cumulative cases are 17,775 and 192 deaths with case fatality rate of 1%.
- ❑ There are 172 active cases and 17,411 recovered cases and a total of 17 contacts of the delta variant index case has been traced.
- ❑ Of the 120 new cases reported this week, about 33% of them were actually diagnosed this week. 18% were from 8 days to 2 weeks ago and about 49% were from over 2 weeks to more than a month ago.
- ❑ Of the cases reported this week, 79% of these cases (19) were reported from inmates of a police holding cell.

Table 2. COVID-19 GLOBAL AND REGIONAL UPDATE²

	Confirmed Cases	Deaths
Global	199 473 366	6 498
Western Pacific	4 559 435	65 406

² WHO COVID-19 Dashboard as of 03/08/2021, 22:45 CEST

Laboratory:

- Minderoo Air Laboratory has been fully completed and is ready for operation however there are delays in conducting a technical inspection and commissioning of the air lab.
- Preparations on the four regional TOT trainings on Antigen-RDT has been finalised for September and sent to WHO for funding.
- Whole Genome Sequencing of samples with CT value <30 for variants of concern is on-going. A sampling template has been developed and shared with CPHL for identification and shipment of urgent samples requiring genomic sequencing and samples coordination.
- A distribution plan for provinces on Testing Commodities has been submitted to Logistics cell to facilitate supplies.

COVID-19 Hotline:

- As of 1st August, hotline has received a cumulative total of 270,617 calls. Of these, 6,382 (2.4%) were health-related calls. A total of 2684 calls to date have been referred to Rapid Response Team/PHAs.
- For the reporting period of 26th July – 01st August, the COVID-19 National Hotline received 2697 calls. Of these, 40 (about 2.18%) were health-related calls. 25 of these were referred to the Rapid Response Team/PHA.

Emergency Medical Team (EMT):

- There are no international emergency medical teams in country. Meanwhile, the national EMT, Team Sana, has been scheduled to visit provinces to build capacities and provide mentoring in collaboration with Clinical Management and IPC teams from NCC and WHO.

Clinical Management:

- The team met and discussed with visiting clinicians from JID on certain areas of possible collaboration are the utilisation of triage tools in the Emergency Department and IPC practices. The visiting clinicians from JID are currently supporting Port Moresby General Hospital and Angau Memorial Hospital.

Infection Prevention Control (IPC)

- The IPC team presented a summary of findings from visits made to selected urban clinics at the Health Operations meeting and to the IPC focal point from NCD PHA with recommendations.
- The IPC team also met with the WHO IPC team in WPRO to work on a larger IPC strategy for the country.
- A launch of the national IPC policy which was endorsed recently is planned for September 2021.

Risk Communication & Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions (NPIs):

- RCCE team continued to support the NCC, NCD PHA, MKA Health and Vision City Vaccination Clinic which has been scaled to a full 8-week campaign.
- Promotion of the event has been scaled and included on Cinema Ads, Public Service Announcements, Radio, Press Ads, Posters, TVCs (in Vision City), SMS blasts and live radio crosses.
- 881 people has been vaccinated during these 4 mobile clinics as numbers are expected to increase over the next 7 weeks.

- ❑ Continued positive feedback received with no reported instances of negative or anti-vaccination sentiments throughout the outreach days. A short survey has been developed for capturing feedback from those vaccinated.
- ❑ The joint RCCE team this week also supported the development of a national vaccine strategy with consideration on introduction of additional vaccine brands and rollout plans for the second phase.
- ❑ FHI 360, NDOH Health Promotions and joint RCCE teams, with support from the US Embassy, have initiated discussions on developing a plan to support vaccine training and rollout within clinics to support People Living with HIV.
- ❑ Mass media for both vaccination sites and PNG Council of Churches Declaration commenced with press ads, lift outs in national newspapers as well as radio placement of the 60sec eligibility and safety ads.
- ❑ NCD PHA with supported from partners FHI360 and UNICEF commenced rollout of a social mobilisation in selected sites in NCD.
- ❑ Vaccine Advocacy Sessions continued with key sectors as more than 50 women operating Small to Medium Enterprises in NCD attended a session to this week.

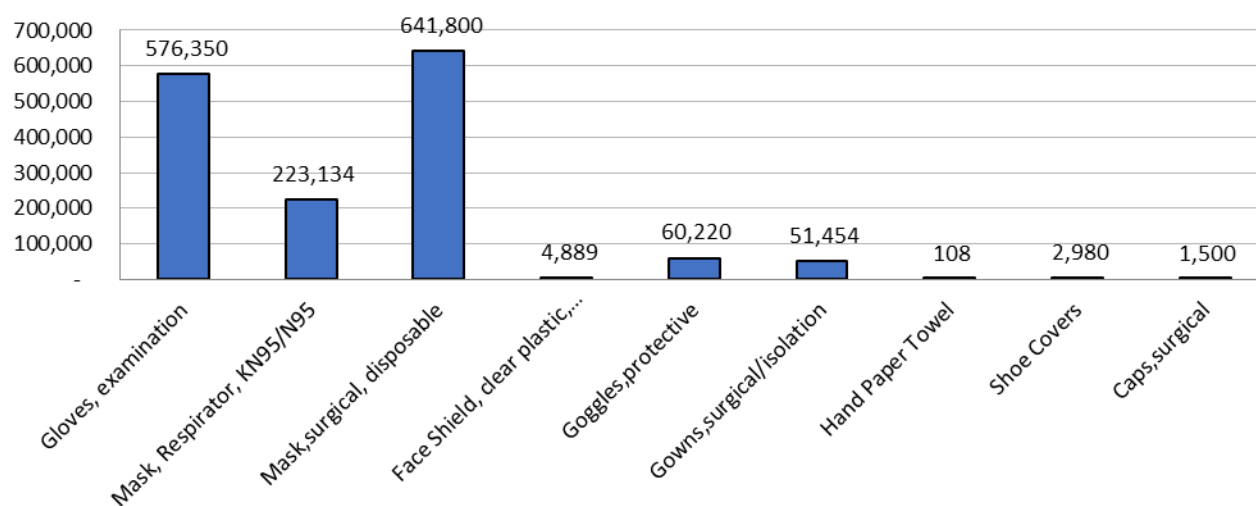
Niupela Pasin:

- ❑ Niupela Pasin team continued to carry out assessments on event requests, 2 assessments were conducted in NCD while 9 approvals were given to several events in NCD and across the country. The process involves a pre-event assessment with considerations to observing Niupela Pasin.

Logistics and Supplies:

- ❑ Supplied less than 0.5 tonnes of COVID-19 supply mostly lab consumables to NCD during this reporting week.
- ❑ Prepared PPE orders for WNB and Hela POEC and lab items for Hela, Madang, Milne Bay, AROB, NIP, SHP, ESP, Western-Daru & Central.
- ❑ End of month stock take was carried out on all critical PPEs, Laboratory tests and consumables, biomedical items, IPC and COVID-19 medicines.

Figure 1. NCC, Critical COVID-19 PPE Items as of 30th July, 2021



Quarantine & Point of Entry:

- As of 1st August, there were 160 people under quarantine (PUQ) of which 39 were in home quarantine, 154 in hotels, 48 in company sites and 30 in organizational apartments.
- There were 4 reported COVID-19 cases of international travellers during the reporting period. Investigations and contact tracing are being carried out and the individuals are in isolation. All samples sent to Australia for genome sequencing and pending results.

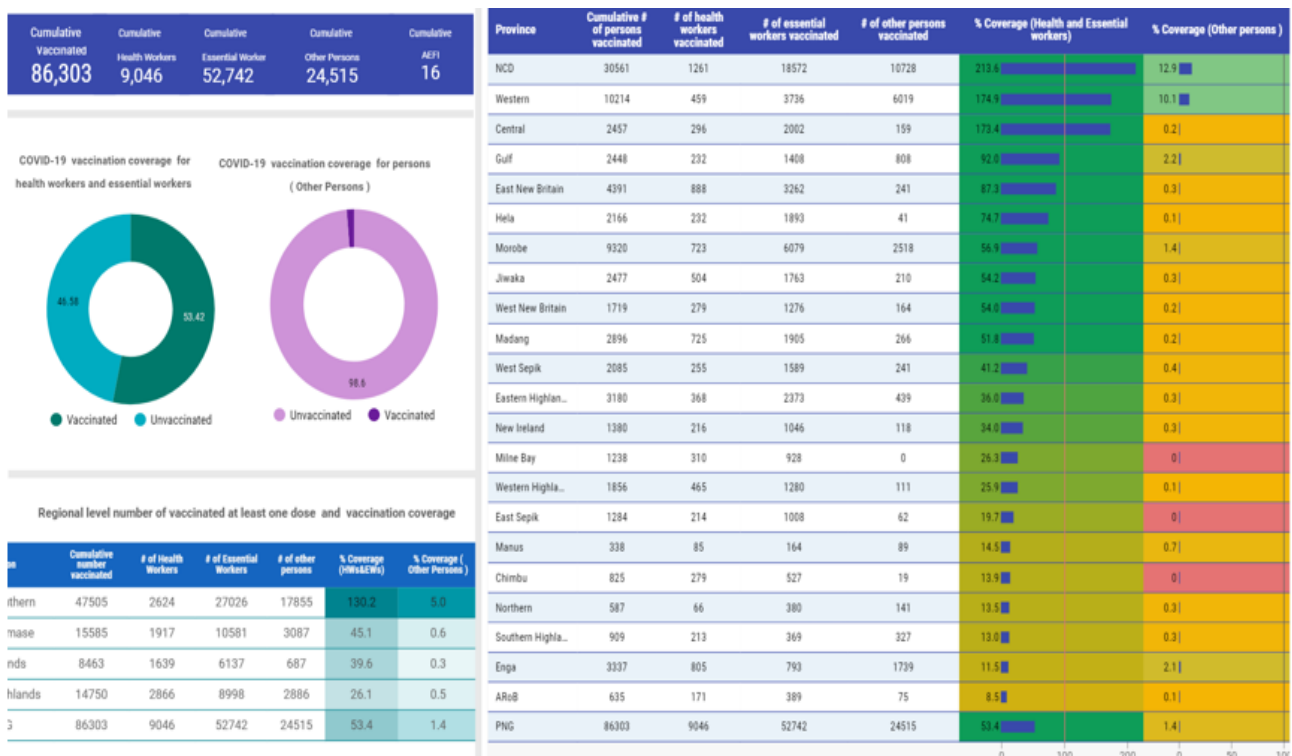
Table 3. Persons Screened by Point of Entry

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 – 31 July 2021)	Air	24,408
	Sea	671
	Land	6

National Vaccination Rollout

- As of 1st August 2021, over 86,303 people has been vaccinated at least for one dose in PNG. This includes 9,046 health workers and 52,742 essential workers and 24,515 people over the ages of 18 including those with comorbidities.
- Over 53% vaccination coverage of health care workers and other essential workers across the country.

Figure 1. Cumulative number of persons vaccinated by region and province (1st August, 2021)



- ❑ More than 18,000 people are fully vaccinated having received their 2nd dose of COVID-19 vaccine.
- ❑ There are 165 sites offering vaccination across PNG.
- ❑ Over 300,000 doses of J&J vaccine will arrive on 6th August from the support of US government through COVAX facility
- ❑ The technical team is working to complete the strategies for the second phase and provincial microplanning is being done expected to be completed by 12th 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.
- ❑ Full details of all measures can be found at www.covid19.info.gov.pg

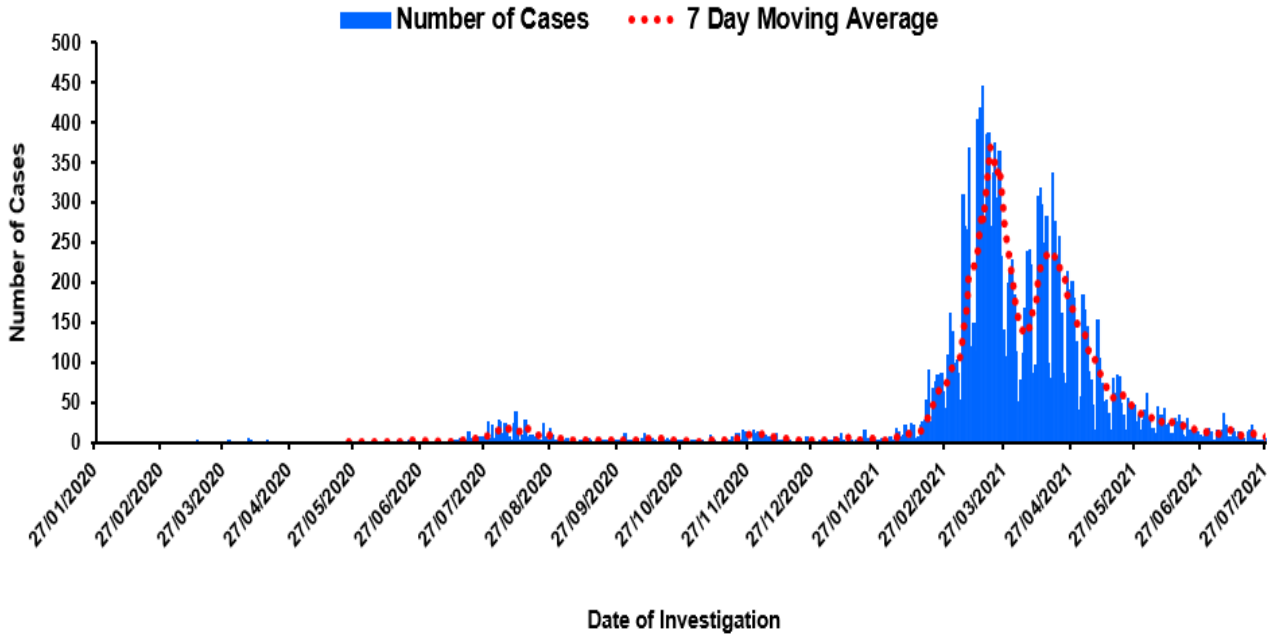
Transmission Assessment

Currently COVID-19 cases are being reported from across PNG, with cases reported from 8 out of 22 provinces in the previous seven days. Eastern Highlands, Enga, ESP, Gulf, Hela, Manus, Milne Bay, Oro, Southern Highlands and Western provinces did not report any cases in the past seven days. 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. In the past seven days, one localised outbreak was reported from the Madang province among the Jomba cell inmates. This would be the second reported cluster from the same province in the same month, after the Ramu Guard Dog Compound cluster. No new cases have been detected for the previously reported, Lae Town Cell and Ramu Guard Dog Compound cluster in the past 7 days. 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 response.

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

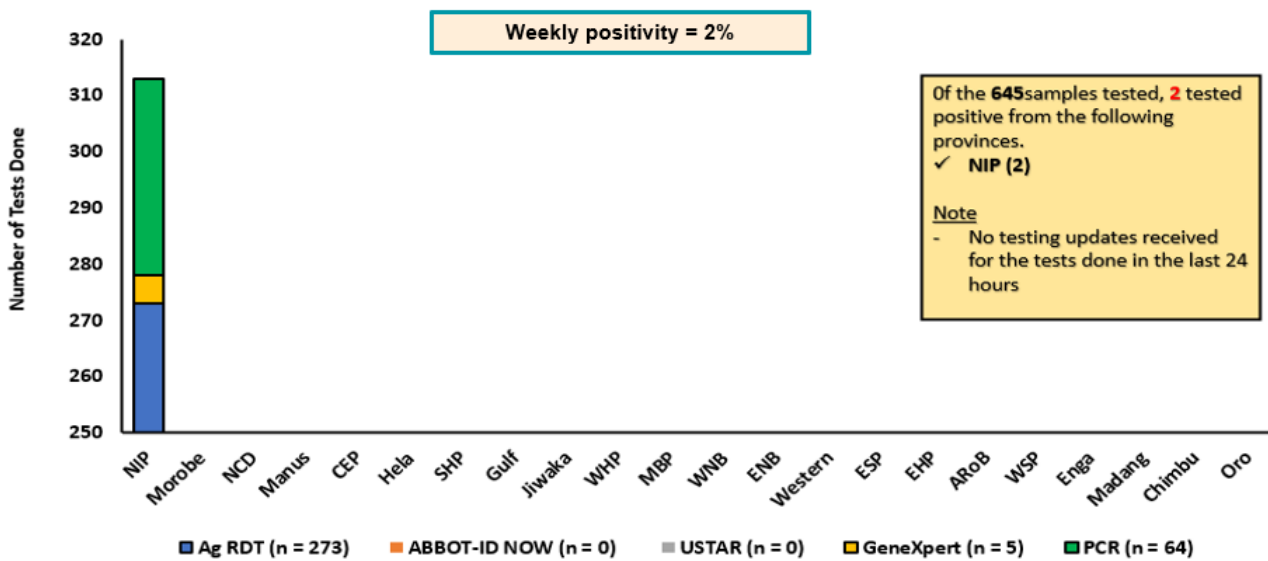
Epidemiology

Figure 3. Epidemiological curve of COVID-19 cases in Papua New Guinea, 15th March 2020 to 1st 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 4: Tests done in the last 7 days, 26th July to 1st August 2021 (n=645)



ANNEX A – Photos

Photo 1: Vaccinated clients participating in short feedback survey at Vision City, NCD.



Photo 2: Vaccine Advocacy Sessions presented to over 50 SME women in Moresby North-East.



Photo 3: Strict point of entry surveillance carried out in Manus.

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

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