

(MOH, 2021c)

27 Jan 2021



3 new cases of COVID-19 at the border and an update on border-related cases in Auckland

Media release

28 January 2021

Whole genome sequencing carried out overnight has confirmed the two border-related COVID-19 cases that were reported out of cycle last night are observed to be variant 20C/501Y.V2 (lineage B.1.351), first identified in South Africa.

From the information we currently have, it appears these cases have a link to the managed isolation facility at the Pullman Hotel however further investigation is currently underway to confirm how close the lineage of these cases is to the previously reported case in Northland.

The two latest cases have now been transferred to a quarantine facility in Auckland, separate from the Pullman. A third family member, who has returned negative COVID-19 tests, is currently isolating at home.

Eight locations of interest have been identified in relation to the two latest cases and are listed on our website. From information available so far, we have identified 11 close contacts - all of whom are isolating and have had their first test. Five results have come back negative, and the results of the remainder are still to come back.

Investigations will continue today into the latest two cases, including further interviews with contact tracing staff. As a result, a potential increase in the number of locations of interest, close and casual plus contacts is not unexpected.

Locations of interest

From the information we have to date, we know the risk of transmission from any particular location of interest is low.

The public health advice to businesses is that all the staff on-site at the same time as the case should get tested and self-isolate until they receive a negative test result.

Further advice on cleaning of businesses is available on the [Ministry website](#) ([/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-information-specific-audiences/covid-19-general-cleaning-and-disinfection-advice/covid-19-cleaning-businesses-and-education-centres](#)).

Testing in the community

Two new pop up testing stations have been opened north of Auckland to manage the expected demand in testing over the coming days.

The pop up testing centres are in Orewa and Albany and are in addition to the six regional community testing centres and a number of other primary care clinics offering testing.

We anticipate the potential for some delays at some of the sites, which is why extra staff from other sites south of Auckland have been transferred to the North Shore to help out, while public health staff will be walking through any queued cars, carrying out welfare checks, and ensuring people waiting are looked after.

Further details are available on the [Auckland Regional Public Health Service website](#).
(<https://www.arphs.health.nz/public-health-topics/covid-19/>)

In the first few hours, almost 600 people had been tested at the two pop-up sites.

In Northland, testing numbers have remained high but manageable. Since 24 January, a total of 3,479 tests have been carried out in Northland.

On Wednesday, a total of 8,306 tests were processed nationally.

The seven-day rolling average for testing up to yesterday is 5,176 tests processed.

Update on Northland case

As previously reported, the Northland case is now considered recovered.

More than 600 people have now been identified as casual plus contacts as a result of either using a QR code or contacting Healthline. Of that number more than 450 have returned a negative test. We are continuing to monitor the remaining people to ensure tests are taken. We are aware these numbers may continue to change daily.

Case numbers

In addition to the previously reported cases last night, there are 3 new border cases of COVID-19 - all have been transferred to a quarantine facility.

New border case details

Arrival date	From	Via	Positive test day/reason	Managed isolation/quarantine location
23 January	United Kingdom	United Arab Emirates	Day 3 / routine	Auckland
24 January	Japan	Direct flight	Day 2 / routine and contact of a case	Auckland
24 January	Japan	Direct flight	Day 2 / routine and contact of a case	Auckland

Four previously reported cases have now recovered. The total number of active cases in New Zealand is 69. Our total number of confirmed cases is 1,943.

NZ COVID Tracer

NZ COVID Tracer now has 2,514,708 registered users.

The total number of poster scans is now 162,282,854.

Users have created a total of 6,658,969 manual diary entries.

"We're currently seeing a healthy increase every day in scanning. Your efforts to scan in are helping New Zealand's response to COVID-19.

It's incredibly important that people keep a record of where they've been. It can help support contact tracers in tracing potential close and casual contacts of people who have tested positive for COVID-19.

"We recommend people continue to scan NZ COVID Tracer app. The more we all scan, the safer we'll all be. The data is stored on your phone until you choose to share it.

"The use of the app – through QR code scanning, recording manual diary entries, and Bluetooth – is just one of the tools available to support contact tracing. It's not the only one. It's important the COVID Tracer app is viewed in the wider context of New Zealand's elimination strategy," says Director-General of Health Dr Ashley Bloomfield.

Media contact

Blair Cunningham
021 195 3978