



(MOH, 2021i)

6 border cases and 1 linked community case already in managed isolation

Media release

22 February 2021

There are 6 new cases of COVID-19 in managed isolation, four of which are historical. There is one new community case, linked to the Auckland February cases, who is already in quarantine.

The new community case of COVID-19 is linked to the existing Auckland February cases and the individual has been in quarantine since Friday.

The latest case is a household contact of previous cases D, E, F and G.

This person (Case H) had previously been tested, returned a negative result and was isolating at home since Monday last week. The person was transferred to the Auckland quarantine facility on Friday 19 February as a precaution.

Due to the steps already taken in identifying, testing and tracing individuals linked to the February cases, as well as Case H isolating at home since Monday and then being in quarantine for the last two days, the public health risk is considered very low.

Auckland February cases contact tracing update

Due to Case H being in isolation while infectious there are no additional contacts to report.

Some casual plus contacts at the school are required to have a second PCR test – 4 teachers and 28 students where a record to the test result isn't available or a more recent test is required. Close contacts are expected return to school on Wednesday 24 February or when advised by Auckland Regional Public Health Service.

Contact tracing has identified a total of 125 close contacts associated with all cases in this cluster, aside from the positive cases which have previously been reported. Three previously reported close contacts have been ruled out on further investigation and one infant is not required to be tested. Of the remainder, 122 of the close contacts have returned a negative test result. We are awaiting test results for two people - all of whom are from the medical clinic and relate to Case C, which is considered a low risk exposure event.

As at 8.00am this morning, a total of 31 close contacts and 1,416 casual plus contacts have been identified at Papatoetoe High School. The number of casual plus contacts has increased by three following further investigation.

Of the casual plus contacts (that is other students and staff at the school), 1,402 have returned negative results, there is one positive (Case E), and 13 results are still to come.

Once again we would like to thank the teachers, staff, students and their families for testing and isolating as required to keep their community safe.

Source investigation

All scenarios for possible infection sources of the Auckland February cases continue to be thoroughly investigated. The Auckland Airport precinct where Case B works remains the most likely source of the outbreak, but further testing has not identified any potential transmission routes.

ESR has been reviewing all B.1.1.7 variants identified over the last two months to see if there is any possible link to our new case.

The Four Points by Sheraton managed isolation facility in Auckland continues to be investigated. This is where there is a possible genomic similarity between a previous positive case (now recovered) and the current community cases - though we note it is not a direct match.

There were 265 returnees at the facility in late December. Thirty six of these are based overseas. At this stage just 11 out of 229 based in New Zealand have not been contacted. We will continue to follow up with these.

It is important to note that health officials consider this an unlikely source of the infection at this stage but are pursuing it as part of actively chasing down every line of enquiry.

Border case reported yesterday

The case in managed isolation reported yesterday is now on board a commercial vessel at sea.

The mariner tested negative on day 1 in managed isolation and then tested positive on day 3. The result of this second test came in after the crew member boarded the vessel. We are now awaiting genome testing results.

The case had no contact with port workers and given that all policies and procedures were followed the risk to the community is considered very low.

Mariners are allowed to leave Managed Isolation and board vessels, before a test result is known to limit disruption to international shipping.

Health authorities remain in contact with the vessel about appropriate quarantine arrangements for all crew on board.

New border case details

Arrival date	From	Via	Positive test day/reason	Managed isolation/quarantine location
20 Feb	To be determined	Qatar	Around day 0/ routine testing	Auckland
20 Feb	Iraq	United Arab Emirates	Around day 1/ routine testing	Auckland
17 Dec**	USA		Around day 3 / routine testing	Christchurch

Arrival date	From	Via	Positive test day/reason	Managed isolation/quarantine location
17 Feb*	Morocco	France and Singapore	Around day 0 / routine testing	Christchurch
18 Feb*	USA		Around day 0 / routine testing	Christchurch
18 Feb*	Colombia	USA	Around day 0 / routine testing	Christchurch

*Four of these cases are deemed historical and not infectious.

**The delay in reporting this case was due to checking it had not been previously reported elsewhere.

Four previously reported cases have now recovered. The total number of active cases in New Zealand is 54. Our total number of confirmed cases is 2,001.

The total number of tests processed by laboratories to date is 1,662,321.

On Sunday, 3,882 tests were processed. The seven-day rolling average up to yesterday is 10,338 tests processed.

Historical cases

Since January 1, there have now been 33 historical cases, out of a total of 190 cases.

NZ COVID Tracer

NZ COVID Tracer now has 2,671,646 registered users, an increase of more than 110,000 users in the last fortnight.

Poster scans have reached 191,011,305 and users have created 7,704,970 manual diary entries. Scans in the last 24 hours 1,397,316.

It's critical to keep track of where you've been and the COVID Tracer app is an easy way to do this. Please continue to scan QR codes wherever you go and turn on Bluetooth tracing in the app dashboard if you haven't already done so.

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