

# (Cheng, 2021a)

## POLITICS

### Covid 19 coronavirus: Family member of MIQ worker returns 'weak positive' test result, 3 others test negative

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A relative of a Covid-infected cleaner at an MIQ facility has returned a "weak positive" test for the virus - and is being immediately retested.

Covid-19 Response Minister Chris Hipkins and director general of health Dr Ashley Bloomfield have provided the latest details about the Grand Millennium worker, who tested positive last night during routine surveillance testing.

The employee, a cleaner, and their immediate household members were isolating at their home in Auckland last night.

The cleaner visited the Mt Roskill Countdown supermarket in Stoddard Rd on Saturday. The person visited from 3pm to 3.15pm that day.

Anyone who was at the supermarket during that time is regarded as a casual contact. They are asked to monitor their health until April 3. The supermarket has closed for a deep clean "as an extra precaution" and will reopen later today, a Countdown spokesperson said. They couldn't confirm when the store would reopen but said cleaners had started working around midday and in the past deep cleans had taken a few hours.

If anyone starts to feel unwell or develop any Covid-19 symptoms they should call Healthline.

## Relative's 'weak positive' result

Hipkins said three family members have returned negative results and one adult relative had returned a weak positive result. This person was to be retested.

A change in alert levels was not on the table at this stage, Hipkins said.

The family member who tested "weak positive" was "under investigation", and a second test result was expected back later today.

The risk was low to the community, Hipkins said, and genomic sequencing results would be released when they came back.

Contact tracing so far revealed "limited" exposure, he said, and the worker remained asymptomatic.

Bloomfield said the MIQ worker wore a mask at work yesterday and they didn't work three days prior to yesterday. Two of their colleagues are now in self-isolation.

Since March 1, there have been eight cases at the Grand Millennium, all identified on day zero or day 1 of their stay. All have been genomically sequenced and could reveal who the cleaner caught Covid-19 from.

The MIQ worker received both doses of the Pfizer vaccine, the second dose being administered on March 16.

Bloomfield said the cleaner only had their second dose of the vaccine a few days before testing positive, and full protection from the vaccine usually took seven days after the second dose.

The family had not yet been vaccinated.

The MIQ worker was being tested fortnightly, but the last scheduled swab for last Thursday wasn't done and was done on Sunday instead.

Bloomfield said there was a reason for that but didn't elaborate.

Hipkins said the infection prevention protocols, including PPE use in MIQ facilities in general, were reviewed regularly. The Grand Millennium was last reviewed in January with some "mild to moderate" recommendations.

He said the Government did not have concerns around the way the Grand Millennium was operating, despite two complaints in January about security staff being in close proximity to other people.

A review into those complaints found they were "low risk" breaches and he wasn't particularly concerned about them. One involved a security contractor and the other a well-being coordinator. Masks were worn in both cases and there was no physical contact in the second case.

He said 38,808 vaccines had been administered as of midnight last night, and 4658 of those were second doses.

Hipkins said over 2200 people had completed vaccination training and there was no issue of vaccination workforce at this stage.

Asked about a traveller in MIQ who tested positive on Sunday and was told while on their daily walk, he said the case was handled appropriately.

He said the person had returned to MIQ on a bus with other MIQ travellers who had been exercising, but they had all worn masks and physically distanced on the bus.

Putting any positive case on a separate bus would be looked at once the investigation into the case was finished, he said.

Today is one year since the level 4 lockdown was announced, and asked about that moment, Bloomfield said: "I don't remember people saying 'why'. People understood why. I do recall a sense of relief. There had been a sense of anticipation that things were starting to escalate."

There are three other new cases to report today in MIQ. The rolling seven-day average of cases detected at the border is five. There are 68 active cases in New Zealand today.

There were 2754 tests processed yesterday.



# Covid-19 in NZ – March 23

## Active cases

Confirmed &amp; probable

# 68 ▲6

## 68 ▲6

Border cases

## 0

Community cases

## 0

In Hospital

## 2468 ▲5

Total cases

## 2374 ▲1

Recovered

## 26

Deaths

## NZ COVID-19 VACCINATIONS

## 200,000

Doses available

## 50,000

Eligible border workers

## 27,000

Partially vaccinated

### Total NZ Covid-19 vaccinations to date

