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NEW ZEALAND

## Covid 19 Delta outbreak: Person in 30s youngest in NZ to die from virus

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Aucklanders have been let free to travel as case numbers in the city continue a promising decline. Video / NZHerald

NZ Herald

The Ministry of Health has confirmed a person who died last week of Covid-19 was in their late 30s, making this the youngest person to die of the virus in the country.

"The patient who passed away at Auckland City Hospital last week was in their late 30s," a Ministry of Health spokesperson said.

The person died at Auckland City Hospital last week.

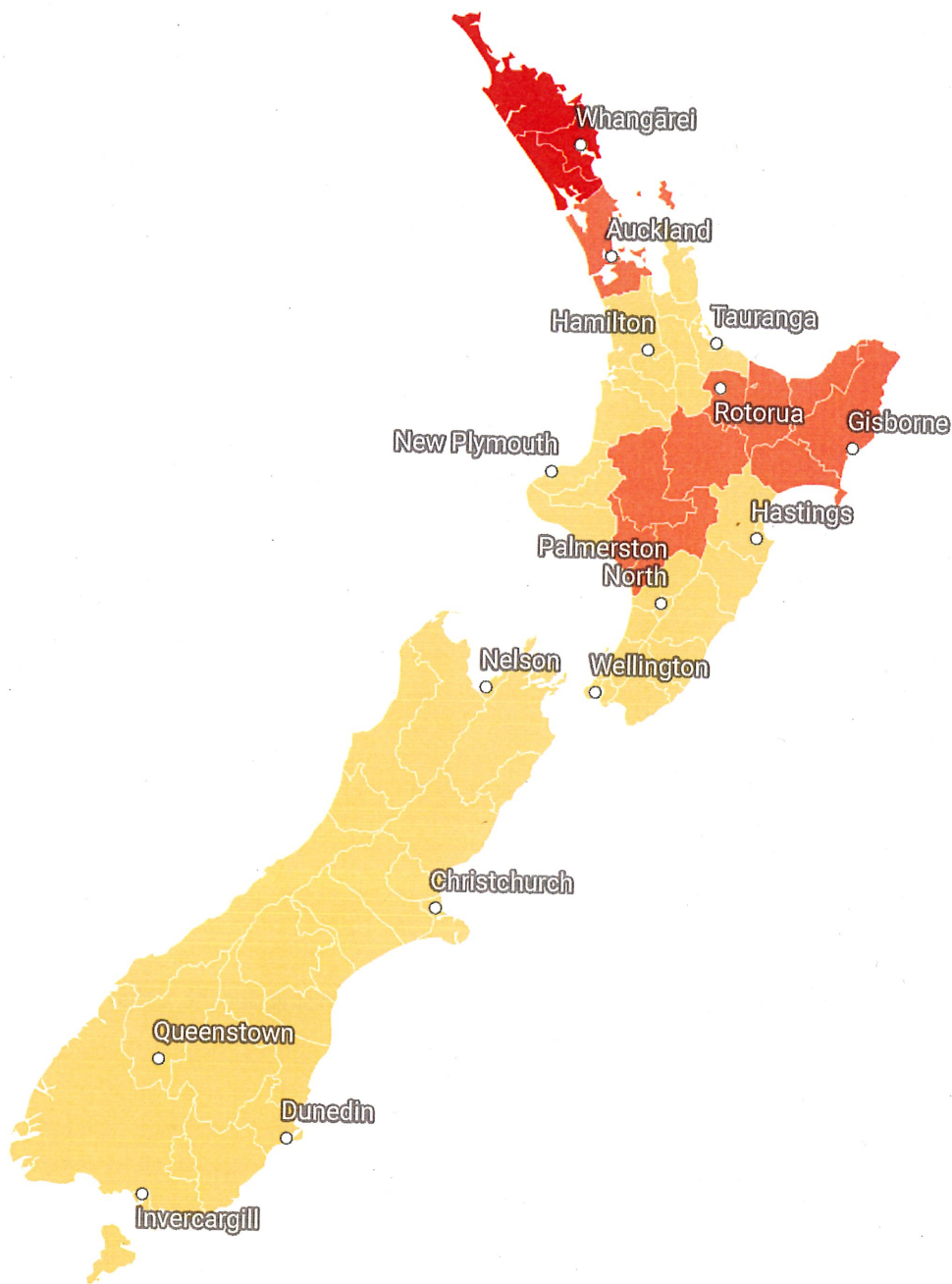
This news comes after the country recorded its 48th death since the virus first hit our shores early last year.

## Covid-19 traffic light settings

Auckland will move from red to orange at **11:59pm on December 30**. With the exception of Northland, all other areas in red also move to orange then.

Visit [Covid-19 Protection Framework](#) for more details.

Red      Red to Orange on Dec 30      Orange



Last updated December 13. Next review expected Monday, January 17

Map: Herald Network graphic • Source: [Ministry of Health](#) • Map data: [Stats NZ](#) • Created with [Datawrapper](#)

That death, announced today, was a person being cared for at Tauranga Hospital.

"The family has requested that no further details be released and, out of respect for those wishes, we will be making no further comment at this time," the Ministry of Health said in today's 1pm Covid update statement.

"Our thoughts are with the patient's whānau and friends at this deeply sad time."

Last Saturday the ministry announced two people died of the virus in hospital.

One of those deaths was a person who died in Auckland City Hospital after being admitted because of their Covid infection.



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 A Flourish data visualization

Currently, there are 61 Covid patients are in hospital, including four in ICU. Of those being treated in hospital, 11 are in North Shore, 24 in Auckland, 22 in Middlemore, two in Waikato, one in Tauranga and one in Christchurch.

The average age of current hospitalisations has gone up slightly to 50.

## 74 new Covid cases as Taranaki school cluster emerges

Today there were 74 new community Covid-19 cases, with Auckland (56), Waikato (9), Bay of Plenty (7), Lakes (1) and Canterbury (1) making up the numbers.

There are 15 new cases of Covid-19 in the Taranaki township of Eltham. The cases will be officially added to tomorrow's numbers.

The cases are self-isolating and initial interviews suggest they are all linked to the Eltham case reported on Sunday, the ministry said.

Links to four of these new cases are already confirmed and investigations are under way to identify, isolate, and test any close contacts and determine any locations of interest.

People in Taranaki are asked to monitor the ministry's [locations of interest page](#).

The majority of these new cases are in pupils who usually attend a school in Eltham, which is now closed for the summer break.

Local public health officials are working with the school on public health advice for the school community, including isolation and testing for some individuals.

It comes after two new cases were revealed in Eltham and Hāwera last night.

Earlier today, South Taranaki Mayor Phil Nixon confirmed 11 Covid cases that were linked to Eltham Primary School - all in the same class.

So far, there were no adults infected, but Nixon said he was expecting the number to rise.

"There's a big feeling of apprehension around the town at the moment. We're in orange, but people have started to social distance and take their own precautions. People are pretty worried," Nixon said.

Eltham Primary School, which has a roll of about 150 students, is now closed for the remainder of the year. Yesterday was the school's final day, with students coming together for a Christmas performance, posted to the school's social media pages.