

# Covid 19 Delta outbreak: 14 cases in community ahead of level 3 move

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(Neilson, 2021f)

There were 14 new cases of Covid-19 in the community on Tuesday, all of them in Auckland or the Upper Hauraki. Video / Dean Purcell / Jason Oxenham / Mark Mitchell



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There are 14 Covid cases in the community as Auckland prepares to shift down to alert level 3 tomorrow.

Ahead of the move, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern announced harsher fines for those who breach Covid restrictions.

## Man with Covid sneaks into hospital

A man who tested positive for Covid-19 spent half an hour in North Shore Hospital may have come into contact with up to 20 staff last Thursday, the Waitemata District Health Board said.

The man bypassed the hospital's front-of-house screening processes while staff were assisting another person and hid from security staff before running into a lift.

An email this morning to Waitemata DHB staff said that a "small number of colleagues have been temporarily stood down from work after coming into contact with a member of the public who has tested positive for Covid 19".

"These North Shore Hospital-based staff will undergo testing and will be away from work until they are cleared to return. This situation has come about after a man acted evasively to breach our strict alert level 4 hospital visitor rules on 16 September. He bypassed front-of-house screening processes while staff were assisting another person and hid from security staff before running into a lift.

"This person has acted deceptively to break the rules everyone else has followed and potentially exposed people to the virus in the process," an email to staff said.

"We are working closely with police, who are aware of this situation and we are also checking with the Ministry of Health to see if the actions taken by this individual are covered by the current legal orders in place during lockdown. We will keep you updated."

The email said the man briefly visited Ward 7 and the hospital's Assessment and Diagnostic Unit before he was confronted by security and escorted from the building.

He was on-site for just under 30 minutes in total.

The hospital learned yesterday the man tested positive for Covid-19.

## Today's new cases

All new cases are in Auckland and the Upper Hauraki, director general of health Ashley Bloomfield says.

One of today's new cases was recorded from the household where the prisoner was transported to in Whakatāwai. That means four cases from the area have now tested positive. The area is now in a mini-lockdown and Bloomfield urged community members at Whakatāwai to get tested and to also get a vaccination.

Contact tracers are interviewing students at Mangatangi School in a bid to find any unknown transmissions in the community. Two students at the school have tested positive.

Bloomfield said the Section 70 health order covering the north Waikato area near the new cases would allow some people to cross the level 4 boundaries to shop for groceries or get pet supplies.

This would allow them to travel to Pokeno to get essential supplies or further to Middlemore Hospital if they need healthcare. But only to these destinations.

## \$12,000 maximum penalty for Covid rule breaches

Ardern today outlined heavier fines for those who breach Covid-19 rules.

She said much of New Zealand's success against Covid has been the good compliance by most people.

She said a small number of people had been breaking the rules, including people who escaped from MIQ facilities.

However, once people started getting fined for doing this, it reduced the number of people who tried to break out of MIQ facilities, she said.

Current fines for Covid infringements will move from \$300 to \$4000 for individuals.

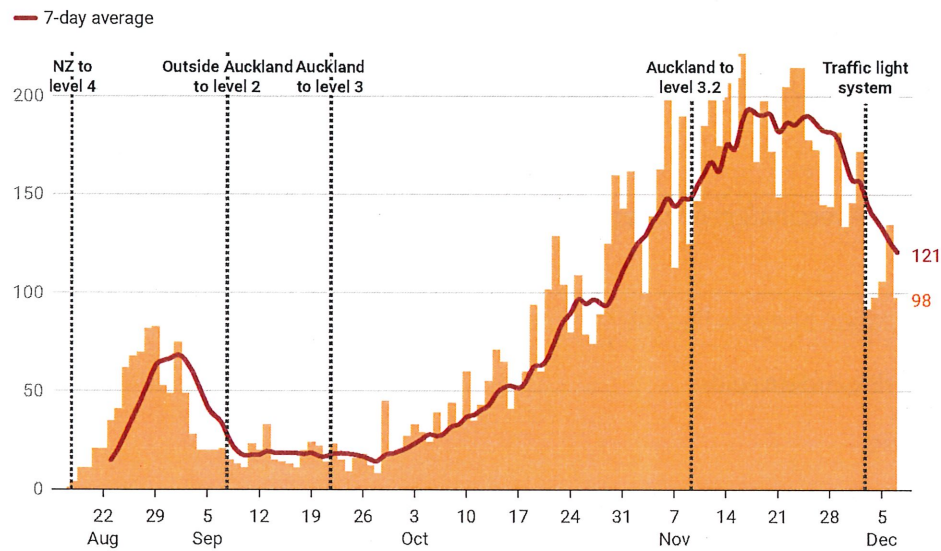
If a court imposes the fines on individuals, the fines will move from \$1000 to \$12,000.

Ardern said the sheer magnitude of what happens when someone with Covid breaks the rules meant it was important to increase the fines to reflect this.

Ardern said the public would support fines that reflected the seriousness of Covid rule breakers.

When asked about Judith Collins breaching Covid rules in an icecream shop, she said it was up to every New Zealander to accept responsibility for their own actions, especially those in public positions.

## Daily new Covid-19 community cases



## Clover Park testing plea

Ardern said there was a new testing centre at the Manukau Sports Bowl.

That took the total centres to 24 in Auckland.

She said the new testing centre was aimed at residents in Clover Park.

She asked everyone from the suburb to go and please get tested.

That was because there had been a string of cases come out of the suburb.

Out of the seven other suburbs of interest, people are also asked to come forward if they have symptoms or mild symptoms for testing.

Out of yesterday's five unlinked cases, four are located close geographically to other households where there are cases.

Bloomfield said he expected another 50-60 Covid cases from a current group of households that have cases of the virus.

There are 15 people in hospital today, four in ICU.

## Funeral rules as Auckland moves to level 3

Bloomfield said personal travel restrictions would remain very tight for Auckland residents under level 3.

There would be eased restrictions for people going to funerals, but it will require an exemption from the Ministry of Health.

These would only be offered in limited numbers and would only be given to immediate families.

## Vaccine trial for children

Bloomfield also noted very positive results from Pfizer's vaccine trials among children.

While the results were early, it was still promising news, he said.

The children were given vaccines about three weeks apart and it generated similar antibodies among them as it did among adults.

Bloomfield said medical regulators would act as fast as possible at the appropriate time to approve the vaccine for children if results remained favourable.



Bloomfield said school-aged children, even those without their parents present, can be adjudged as able to give their own consent to have a vaccine.

However, the aim will be to take a whanau approach and have parents present when giving vaccines, he said.

## Push for vaccines

Ardern called on Auckland to try to reach 90 per cent vaccination of the eligible population within two weeks, which she described as "ambitious".

Seventy nine per cent of Auckland's eligible population had now had their first dose of the vaccine.

But every person who isn't vaccinated remains a risk, Ardern said.

Getting the vaccine yourself is not enough, she said.

She urged people to also encourage others to get their vaccines.

Today NZ Post is giving its staff and their whanau and contacts to also get a vaccine at a drive-through centre at their Highbrook Centre.

Throughout the coming week there will be a series of pop up vaccine centres in various communities across Auckland aimed at getting more people vaccinated.

## Prisoner breached Covid rules

Ardern said this morning that officials had confirmed how the Auckland prisoner - a patched Black Power member - became infected after being freed on bail and immediately breaching those conditions by visiting four sites in Auckland.

"We now know how he got Covid ... when and who from," Ardern told TVNZ.

The man didn't necessarily catch Covid from the people who were driving him from prison to his bail address in Whakatīwai in north Waikato.

There has so far been about two dozen prisoners on remand taken across the Auckland level border and all had been pre-departure tested for Covid, Ardern said.

The key now was to ensure those transporting them were also Covid free, she said.

One of the options for the future was to have a person come from a level 2 area into Auckland to pick up a prisoner being remanded to an address outside Auckland.

The idea was that the person coming from level 2 is likely to be Covid free.

If that is not possible then Ardern was keen to see whether Corrections staff could instead drop prisoners to their bail addresses.

However, the infection did occur after the man left Mt Eden Prison and before he arrived at his approved level 2 bail address.

Aucklanders can finally smell the freedom in terms of takeaways and contactless shopping as the city emerges from its longest stint in level 4 tonight.

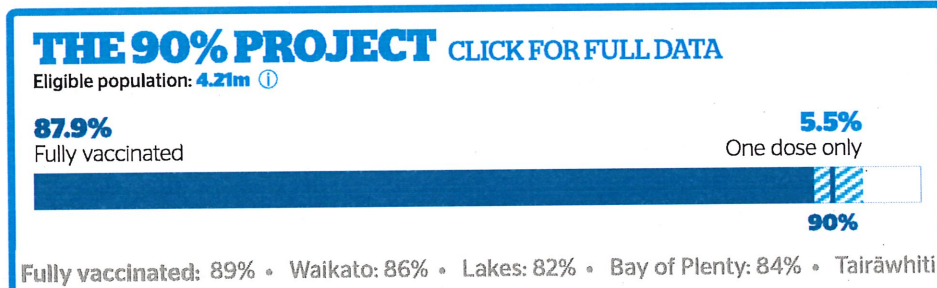
## Current Locations of Interest ☆

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The move down comes as there are still numerous cases of Covid-19 emerging in the community each day with 22 reported yesterday.

Covid modeller Professor Michael Plank told TVNZ moving to level 3 was a calculated risk by the Government and it was really important people didn't take it as a signal that the virus had passed.

Plank said it was really hard to ring-fence the virus and stop it jumping into a new household and spreading within that household. He believed the Government could still eliminate the virus providing everyone did the right thing.



Senior Māori health researcher Dr Sue Crengle said there was a risk that with moving down level the virus would get away on New Zealand and it would find itself in a similar situation as New South Wales. "They had a long tail, they had less restrictions than we have and the virus got away on them."

Director-general of health Dr Ashley Bloomfield told Newstalk ZB's Mike Hosking it would have been nice for the case numbers to be lower, but they were all connected to current cases or were in managed isolation which is why the Government was comfortable announcing the alert level change for Auckland.

Despite that, he said of the alert level change: "You lose a bit of sleep over them."

He also stood by the Government's elimination strategy and said the aim was still to get the number of cases back down to zero.

There were 22 new cases of Covid-19 reported on Monday, bringing the total number of active cases in the outbreak to 377. Sixteen people are in hospital, including four in ICU.

