



# (Frame, 2022)

NEW ZEALAND (/NEWS/NATIONAL) / COVID-19 (/NEWS/COVID-19)

## Protesters, vehicles occupy Parliament grounds for hours

11:29 pm on 8 February 2022



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 subject=Protesters,%20vehicles%20occupy%20Parliament%20grounds%20for%20hours)

The usually busy roads around Parliament looked more like a campground as dozens of vans and motorhomes blocked the thoroughfare for most of today.



A truck from the convoy nears Wellington. Photo: RNZ / Samuel Rillstone

Around 1000 protesters set up in Parliament's grounds (<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/461072/anti-vaccine-mandate-protest-convoy-arrives-at-parliament>) to protest the government's Covid-19 restrictions, stating that measures taken, and the vaccine mandate infringe their freedoms.

While hundreds of vehicles travelled to the capital, around 100 blocked roads and footpaths, and parked in front of the Wellington Cenotaph.

The convoy has travelled the length of the country since Sunday, starting both in Cape Reinga and in Bluff.

By Tuesday night the large crowd had mostly left but a few hundred people remained and dozens of tents were still up on Parliament's grounds, despite being against its rules.

Police said Molesworth Street through to Lambton Quay was still not accessible to traffic and motorists by the evening, and asked people to avoid the area tonight and tomorrow morning.

Protesters had been honking horns and yelling through most of the evening.

Police said they would continue to monitor the activity.

The group has drawn inspiration from a large protest in the Canadian capital, Ottawa.

There, a state of emergency was declared (<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/world/461022/ottawa-mayor-declares-state-of-emergency-to-deal-with-trucking-blockade>) after a week of protests where trucks and tents have blocked roads over Covid-19 border restrictions.

Back here, there were minor disruptions along State Highway 1 as the convoy drew into the city this morning.

But one one commuter got a fright.



Ben, who didn't want to use his last name, was driving north past the convoy group when his window shattered.

"A cricket ball-sized rock got thrown into my car window. I thought it was like a bullet at one stage because it was just so instant, the shattering."

Ben said he pulled over and called the police who told him they would look at camera footage to see if they could identify where the rock came from.

As the convoy made its way to the capital, Wellington's CBD soon became drowned out by an orchestra of horns.

Around 100 vehicles blocked Molesworth Street, parts of Bunny Street and Lambton Quay for several hours.



Photo: Wellington City Council

The protesters created a detour for traffic stuck inside the convoy along Molesworth Street.

At its peak, just before midday, traffic was disrupted along Whitmore, Bowen, and Bunny streets, as well as Lambton Quay and Waterloo Quay.

Wellington Free Ambulance warned it could experience delays if callouts were near the blocked roads.

Metlink was also forced to close its Molesworth Street bus stop and divert its services.

The crowds were largely peaceful today, with people setting up with camp chairs and handing out food and drink.

There was, however, barely a mask in site.

After a few hours, the speakers began addressing the crowd.

"When we hear that '90 percent of the country is all for this agenda, and it's only a handful of disobedient anti-vaxxers that are against it'...well, I tell you what I've seen throughout the nation - that looks like a whole lot more than 10 percent," one speaker said.

The crowd and their cars remained in place for much of the afternoon.

Despite being parked illegally across the roads and pedestrian areas, no infringement notices were issued and no parking wardens were on site.

Wellington City Council said it "didn't want to put staff in harm's way".

Police said that "while there has been some disruption to traffic, there have been no significant incidents and subsequently no arrests".