

## CORONAVIRUS

## As it happened: Latest on Parliament protest, COVID-19 community outbreak - Wednesday, March 2

UPDATED 02/03/2022 William Hewett Rachel Sadler



Watch: A wrap of Parliament protest activity on Wednesday. Credits: Newshub.

Police are clashing with protesters in Wellington as officials attempt to "restore access" to Parliament grounds.

Officers arrested 65 people on Wednesday for a range of offences including wilful trespass, obstruction, wilful damage and assaulting police. Three officers were injured during the scuffle.

Up to 50 vehicles have been towed and approximately another 30 left the scene.

Police said some protesters had weapons including fire extinguishers, a cord set up as a tripwire, paint-filled projectiles, homemade plywood shields and pitchforks.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Health has announced a record 22,152 new COVID infections and 405 people hospitalised with the disease on Wednesday.

### What you need to know:

- There were 22,152 new COVID-19 infections recorded on Wednesday.
- Location of Wednesday's new community cases: Northland (382), Auckland (13,231), Waikato (2,139), Bay of Plenty (1,270), Lakes (415), Hawke's Bay (273), MidCentral (367), Whanganui (56), Taranaki (261), Tairāwhiti (137), Wairarapa (91), Capital and Coast (1,115), Hutt Valley (473), Nelson Marlborough (272), Canterbury (1,033), South Canterbury (36), Southern (578), West Coast (15); Unknown (8).
- COVID cases in hospital on Wednesday: total number 405: Northland: 5; North Shore: 56; Middlemore: 142; Auckland: 108; Waikato: 37; BOP: 12; Rotorua: 5; Tairāwhiti: 3; Hawke's Bay: 1; Taranaki: 4; MidCentral: 2; Hutt Valley: 2; Capital and Coast: 11; Nelson Marlborough: 6; Canterbury: 10; Southern: 1.
- The Government on Monday agreed to lift all self-isolation requirements for vaccinated travellers entering New Zealand from 11:59pm on Wednesday.
- New Zealand is in Omicron phase 3 where only positive cases and household contacts are considered close contacts.
- Anti-mandate protests outside Parliament have entered day 23.
- There are "at least" 17 confirmed positive COVID-19 cases among the Wellington protesters but there are "undoubtedly more" infections than that, Director-General of Health Ashley Bloomfield says.
- Police have conducted a "major operation" on Wednesday with the intent to reclaim public roads and restore order. It has seen 36 people arrested, three officers injured, 15 vehicles have been towed.
- Some protesters have been in possession of various weapons, including fire extinguishers, a cord set up as a tripwire, paint-filled projectiles, homemade plywood shields and pitchforks, police say.

### Related News



The extremism visible at Parliament protest has been growing for years - is enough being done?



Hotels planning full room refits as MIQ comes to an end

These live updates have finished.

9:45pm - Protesters from Wellington are reportedly heading to Christchurch to join with the Cranmer Square anti-mandate demonstration now they've been evicted from Parliament grounds, [Stuff says](#).

Cranmer Square protest spokesperson Ashleigh Thian told the outlet that people from across the country are on their way there, including some from the capital.

"I think we are going to be bigger than Wellington now," she says.

(Hewett &amp; Sadler, 2022)



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9:40pm - There have been multiple fires lit, the sound of explosions and violent clashes between police and protesters in the grounds of Parliament this afternoon.

Clouds of black smoke were seen rising above Parliament's lawn and some protesters feared that tents that had been set on fire could cause gas bottles to explode.

[Here's a photo wrap of today's events.](#)



**Anti-mandate protest in photos: Fires, explosions and violence on grounds of Parliament**

Clouds of black smoke were seen rising above Parliament's lawn as police and protesters clashed this afternoon.

-- Newshub / 2 Mar

9:20pm - There are a couple of police dogs down near the police officers.

Police are lined across the street near Parliament.

9:05pm - A [Givealittle](#) has been set up to fix Parliament's playground.

At the time of published, the page has raised \$3310 - but the amount raised is steadily climbing.

8:40pm - Hospitals are feeling the strain as COVID-19 soars, with another record 22,152 cases on Wednesday.

Nearly a third of children presenting to Starship Hospital are COVID-positive.

Thirty children a day are being brought in with COVID symptoms, but most don't need emergency care, and it's putting pressure on services.

"Less than 10 percent of children presenting with COVID are being admitted," says paediatric emergency medicine specialist Mike Shepherd.

He's reassuring parents who are worried.

"COVID-19 in most children is a mild illness and can be managed by their whanau with some of those simple measures like keeping fluids up and keeping an eye on them," says Dr Shepherd.

[Read and watch the full story from Newshub's health correspondent Lucy Warhurst here.](#)



**Starship Hospital struggles with a third of children brought for medical care COVID-positive**

Other Auckland hospitals are having challenging staffing problems, as the amount of COVID cases in hospital expected to triple in the coming weeks.

-- Newshub / 2 Mar

8:25pm - Police are now moving in on heavy machinery bringing in more concrete bollards.

There appears to be two forklifts in the area.

8:20pm - A Wellingtonian has organised "[The Big Clean-up](#)" of Parliament.

"This is not a counter-protest, but it is a show of strength. Our strength doesn't come from force, or from parked cars. It comes from our commitment to each other. That's what makes us strong as a community, and that's the strength we've got to show," says organiser Keith Ng.

"The logistics is very up-in-the-air at the moment. The loose plan is to have a clean-up crew do the hard yards in the morning, and then to have a much wider participation for the ceremonial part of the restoration.

"There's discussion between mana whenua and Parliament at the moment and we're waiting for that to finish so we can follow their lead.

"The practical part will be important, but I can't stress how important the symbolic cleansing will be too. This protest has felt really toxic, because it's been an action to intimidate, to take over, and to divide. We really need some way to make ourselves whole again."

Keith Ng  
@keith\_ng · Follow

Let's turn our frustrations about the protest into something constructive: Sign-up here to be part of the clean-up and restoration of Parliament Grounds.

bigcleanup.org.nz  
The Big Clean-Up

12:20 PM · Mar 2, 2022

[Read the full conversation on Twitter](#)

870

Reply

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8:10pm - Dozens of police carrying riot shields are currently making their way up Bowen St.

A forklift also just went past them in the opposite direction.

7:50pm - Protesters say police are firing sponge bullets at them.



Photo credit: Supplied

7:30pm - Despite the violence, many Wellingtonians will be celebrating getting their streets back after the 23-day occupation.

While police and protesters clashed, many in the capital breathed a cautious sigh of relief.

there have been numerous reports of violence and abuse towards residents like Peter Tweddle.

Tweddle says he was harassed and accused of being an undercover police officer by protesters.

"[They] accused me of being a police officer. They didn't like that I was wearing a mask, didn't like that I was wearing an earpiece for my music."

He said he was happy to finally see police taking charge on Wednesday.

"They've clearly overstayed their welcome."

[Read and watch the full story from Newshub's Imogen Wells here.](#)







Wellingtonians celebrate as police push protesters back in violent day at Parliament

While police and protesters clashed, many locals breathed a cautious sigh of relief.

→ Newshub / 2 Mar

**7:10pm** - Chair of the National Māori Authority Matthew Tukaki, who is also the person behind the #endtheprotest campaign, has thanked Police for taking charge at Parliament today and begin the process of closing the protest down.

Tukaki says the behaviour of a large group of the protesters was "nothing more than feral" and they had no interest in talking, negotiating, or anything else.

Tukaki also said that while there have been people down at the protest wanting to pursue kaupapa, that was all drowned out by those seeking mob rule and mob violence.

"The move by Police is not yet at an end but just witnessing the violence, the destruction of things such as the children's playground, burning tents, projectiles thrown at Police, the use of things such as fire extinguishers and gas bottles along with skyrockets is and remains a disgrace," Tukaki says.

"I ask all New Zealanders to save the very images and videos that the protestors have been using to livestream their antics and when the time is right they should be identified and held to account.

Tukaki says Wellingtonians have suffered abuse, financial pressure on their small businesses, and disruption to work or school while the protest was going on.

"[It was] all because these phantom few didn't like the fact that A: a majority Government was elected that they just didn't like, B: they wanted us to all believe that their conspiracy theories meant we were all wrong when it came to the pandemic, and C: that they had some god-given right to hold us all to ransom," Tukaki says.

"And even sadder than that was a very small number of Māori who decided to throw tikanga out the window and essentially invade marae and Māori infrastructure."

Tukaki says he thanks everyone from emergency services who've helped during the protest, Māori whanau from Ngati Toa, Te Atiawa and Taranaki Whanau, as well as the citizens of Wellington.

"We are finally getting our home back. We are finally getting our capital back."

**6:50pm** - Here's the latest update from police:

As the pre-planned operation in Wellington continues this evening, Police are tonight urging people to stay away from the central business district near the Railway Station, the Victoria University Pipitea campus, and northern end of Lambton Quay.

**6:45pm** - Metlink says that on the advice of police, it has closed Wellington railway station and suspended all rail services to ensure the health, safety, and wellbeing of passengers as the protest action around Parliament continues to escalate.

"We will be assessing the situation throughout the night and making a decision, with the advice of the police, on when services can safely resume," Metlink says.

"We thank all our passengers for their patience and understanding. These are exceptional times and we wish everyone to stay safe at this time."

**6:40pm** - National MP Nicola Willis says it's been a "horrific" day for Parliament, Wellington, and New Zealand.

"I'm mostly sad but also filled with gratitude for the police officers who have faced-down today's violence & destruction with patience, strength and courage," she tweeted.

"May we be forever grateful for their service."

Nicola Willis

@NicolaWillisMP · Follow

A horrific day for Parliament, Wellington and our country.

I'm mostly sad but also filled with gratitude for the police officers who have faced-down today's violence & destruction with patience, strength and courage.

May we be forever grateful for their service.

6:32 PM · Mar 2, 2022

438   Reply   Copy link

Read 198 replies

**6:35pm** - A glass door entrance at Victoria University's Pipitea campus has been smashed.

Mona Krewel

@MonaKrewel · Follow

Vic's Pipitea campus after 3 weeks of anti-mandate protests and the clash between the protesters and the police today

6:32 PM · Mar 2, 2022

60   Reply   Copy link

Read 6 replies



6:30pm - Some police officers are now carrying guns with rubber bullets.



Photo credit: Newshub.

6:20pm - There is - quite literally - a dumpster fire by Victoria University.

Photos posted to Twitter show dozens of people nearby, with thick smoke pouring into the air.

Andy McKay

@KorimakoEcology · [Follow](#)

A literal dumpster fire by Vic Uni

6:11 PM · Mar 2, 2022

Read the full conversation on Twitter

140

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6:05pm - Here's the latest update from police:

- Police have now cleared Molesworth Street of all protester vehicles that had previously been blocking the street.
- There have been 65 arrests today for a range of offences including trespass, wilful damage, and possession of restricted weapons.
- Up to 50 vehicles have been towed and approximately another 30 departed.
- Three Police staff are being treated in hospital for non-life-threatening injuries.
- Police continue to encourage people to leave the area.
- Members of the public are also urged to avoid the Parliament precinct area.

New Zealand Police

@nzpolice · [Follow](#)

Police have now cleared Molesworth Street of all protester vehicles that had previously been blocking the street.

There have been 65 arrests today for a range of offences including trespass, wilful damage, and possession of restricted weapons.

6:06 PM · Mar 2, 2022

Read the full conversation on Twitter

1.4K

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6pm - It's time for Newshub Live at 6pm for the latest on the COVID-19 outbreak and protest.

[Watch online here](#) or tune in on Three.

5:48pm - Ardern's press conference has finished.

5:47pm - Ardern says for the most part, police have been attended to on site if they've been injured.

5:46pm - Ardern says she's aware of people "living in the margins" and "this is what they're currently subscribing to", as in COVID-19 conspiracy theories.

"It is not" a reflection of NZ, she adds.

5:44pm - Ardern says she has been left "deeply sad" from what she's witnessed from protesters.

Asked if she had a message for the remaining protesters, she said: "My hope is they put down their weapons long enough for police to arrest them."

5:43pm - Did you expect it to get this bad? Ardern says she would not expect a tactical decision briefing from police.

When she has been briefed it's been about an indication of the scale of an operation and when it might begin and end. She was informed about the bollard operation last week and the operation today.

5:42pm - Has Government done enough to thwart misinformation? Ardern says every country is facing the same issue and it's accompanied by a growth in distrust in traditional media and the Government.

It's "a complex issue", she says, and "it's something we all need to address".

5:40pm - Around 270 protesters were causing the violence on Parliament's front lawn, Ardern says.

It is a small group of people committed to destruction, but "not a large group".

Ardern says the growth in disinformation will be looked into, but it won't be used as an excuse for the protest.

She adds that "there has been foreign influence in what we have seen", with disinformation sourced from overseas.

5:39pm - On the presence of children, Ardern says it has "hampered the efforts of police".

She also says "I don't have words for it" when asked about protesters using children as human shields.

On the radical element of the protest, Ardern says there is "nothing to suggest our security settings as a country need to change".

5:38pm - On cobble stones being hurled at police, Ardern says she "felt both anger at what I was seeing but resolute" in the Government's response to COVID.

She says she is "deeply grateful" to police for their response.

Ardern says it is for police to say if they used pepper spray on the protesters.

5:36pm - Asked what she thought when she saw what was happening on Parliament's lawn from protesters, Ardern says she has "words I cannot use in this environment".

5:34pm - Ardern says thousands of lives were saved by the actions of Kiwis over the last two years than what's happened on Parliament's front lawn.

Police will get the city back to the "normality" Kiwis deserve.

She adds that she was "both angry and deeply saddened" to see Parliament "desecrated in that way".

5:33pm - Ardern says it's "almost incomprehensible" that people would try and prevent the COVID response.

She says a "small portion of society have not only believed" conspiracy theories, but have "acted" on it.

Ardern says while there is a journey ahead to understand their motivations, it cannot be accepted.

"We will not be defined by this," she says.

"Our people will not be defined by a small handful of protesters."

5:31pm - Ardern has arrived.

She says police expected violence in their operation today that started at 6am.

5:25pm - We're about five minutes away from the Prime Minister's press conference.

You can watch that in the video player above. If you can't see the stream, try refreshing the page.

5:15pm - Police officers have been seen getting carried out by ambulance and police staff.

Protesters are throwing anything they can get their hands on, from metal poles and tables to concrete blocks.

Conor Whitten

@ConorWhittenTV · Follow

There are now a number of Police casualties. Protestors are throwing everything from metal poles to tables and concrete blocks.

Watch on Twitter

5:09 PM · Mar 2, 2022

6

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5:10pm - Dozens of bricks have been ripped up from the footpath.





Photo credit: Supplied

**5:05pm** - Protesters are now ripping bricks up from the footpath and throwing them at police.

One person doing this appears to be a child.



**Katie Scotcher**   
[@katiescotcher](#) · [Follow](#)

Replying to [@katiescotcher](#)

4:57 PM · Mar 2, 2022

 27

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[Read 3 replies](#)

**5:02pm** - In one livestream, protesters are throwing almost any item they can get their hands on over the fence into Parliament.

They're shouting and banging on the fence.

**4:58pm** - Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern is doing a stand up from the Beehive at 5:30pm.

You'll be able to watch that live on our website once our stream is set up, or you can follow along with updates on this page.

**4:53pm** - *Here's the latest from police:*

Fire and Emergency NZ responded to a number of small fires deliberately lit on Parliament grounds this afternoon.

These fires have been contained.

There were no reports of injury.

These actions put both protesters and emergency service staff at significant risk.

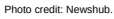
Police continue to advise members of the public to avoid the Parliament precinct.

Police also encourage anyone who wishes to leave the protest but needs assistance, to make themselves known to our staff.

**4:45pm** - With most of Parliament's lawn now cleared of protesters, the clean-up job ahead is becoming evident.

There are still protesters' signs on the ground, along with general rubbish and debris.





A screenshot of a tweet from the user @luugoesdigital. The tweet text is "Anything is a weapon" at the Wellington protest..." followed by a sad face emoji. The tweet is timestamped "4:30 PM · Mar 2, 2022". Below the text are icons for likes (8), replies, and retweets, followed by a "Copy link" button. At the bottom, there is a button that says "Read 4 replies". The tweet is displayed within a light blue border, and the background of the app is visible.

"We can only be peaceful for so long," one said.

A large, mature tree with a thick trunk and dense green foliage stands on a paved area. At the base of the tree, a fire is burning, with bright orange flames and thick white smoke rising into the air. The smoke is partially obscuring the lower branches of the tree. The background is a blurred street scene with other trees and buildings.

Photo credit: Supplied





Photo credit: Supplied

**4:24pm** - Police are continuing to move through Parliament's lawn.

In a livestream, protesters are throwing what sounds like bottles at officers

**4:18pm** - Some of the calmer protesters are in shock at what the more violent fringe have done.

"They've just started a war," one can be heard saying in a livestream. Others can be heard telling people to stop setting tents on fire.

Conor Whitten

@ConorWhittenTV · Follow

Twitter

If you thought digging trenches was doing damage, can't imagine what the bill will be for this.

Watch on Twitter

4:10 PM · Mar 2, 2022

15

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Read 5 replies

**4:16pm** - Here's the latest update from police:

Police are this afternoon removing some of the makeshift infrastructure from the protest area around Parliament.

Structures such as tents, gazebos and toilets have been removed by Police.

The removal of these items will help restore freedom of movement in the area.

**4:14pm** - More fires have broken out in tents.



Photo credit: Supplied

**4:09pm** - Police are now walking about three officers deep in a wall towards protesters.

Some protesters retaliate by throwing what looks like plastic water bottles and other items from the ground.

**4:05pm** - Here is a video of the playground slide on fire.

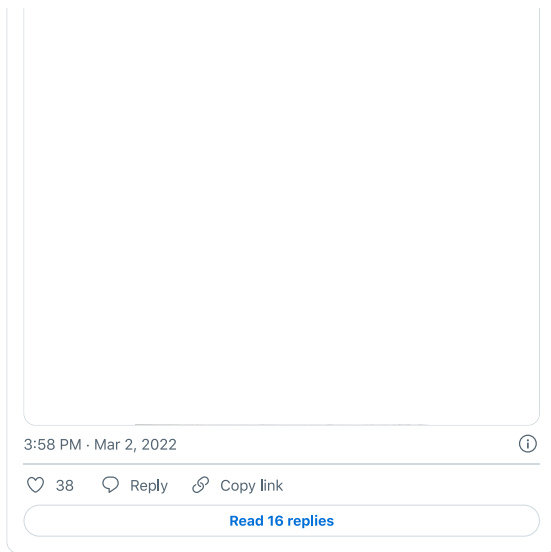
✨

@luugoesdigital · Follow

Twitter

The parliament slide is now on fire at the Wellington protest. The crowd cheers. Wtf is going on?!?!?

Watch on Twitter



**4pm** - There are still some tents on Parliament's lawn, although police are still sweeping through and removing any that remain.

**3:58pm** - The fire hoses in use on Parliament's lawn.

There are firefighters on the scene now too.

**3:52pm** - Parliament's playground is now on fire.

This is the Speaker's \$500,000 playground.

**3:51pm** - Although the fire is nearly out, thick black smoke is still pouring into the air.

**3:49pm** - The fire is out, although protesters are now throwing chairs and smashing bottles.

**3:47pm** - Two fire hoses are now being brought out to deal with the fire.

Additionally, police are now halfway down Parliament lawn.

**3:44pm** - Protesters are throwing cardboard on the fire and appear to also be pouring some kind of flammable liquid around it.

Police over the loud speaker are urging protesters to stay away from the fire and leave Parliament grounds.



Photo credit: Newshub.

**3:43pm** - Here's the latest update from police:

The next phase of the operation to restore access to the area in and around Parliament is now underway.

Police will continue to provide updates as information becomes available.

Police have now arrested 38 people since the operation began about 6am today.

Charges include trespass, obstruction, assaults Police, wilful damage, possession of a restricted weapon and refusing to provide details.

Approximately 30 vehicles, including large vehicles such as trucks and campervans, have been towed.

Police will continue to tow illegally parked vehicles.

We encourage drivers to move them voluntarily and leave the area.

**3:42pm** - A loud siren just went off.

Police attempted to put the fire out with an extinguisher but it didn't work.

**3:39pm** - Protesters are now throwing food at the police, including a carrot.

Also, a tent has been set on fire. There's thick black smoke and flames are about two metres high.







Photo credit: Newshub.

**3:36pm** - The protesters are yelling over their own loud speakers.

What they're shouting includes: "This is violent, this is out of order ... these are public grounds, we are not trespassers."

**3:34pm** - More police officers are now running in with riot shields.

It appears they are forming a thicker wall of officers against the protesters.

**3:30pm** - Police are starting to dismantle signs from the forecourt as they also tear down tents and force protesters out of the area.

"Shame on you" is being chanted in unison by protesters.

**3:27pm** - One of the occupiers has been seen pouring a two-litre bottle of milk over his face.

Elsewhere, police have now reclaimed about a third of Parliament's front lawn as a woman screams and occupiers continue to throw remnants of the occupation at officers.

They're now down to the High Court on Molesworth St.



Photo credit: Newshub.

**3:25pm** - Police have pushed down Molesworth St to Kate Sheppard apartments.

"Shame on all of you, we've been peaceful", one protester yells at a police, whose numbers on the forecourt are still growing.

It appears that police have removed many tents.





Photo credit: Newshub.

**3:20pm** - Fighting is breaking out as the police lines push onto the front lawn of Parliament.

Police are ripping tents from the ground as they go.



Photo credit: Newshub.

**3:15pm** - As the police line advances, officers behind it tear down tents and structures from the occupation.

Every officer is wearing goggles, a full face-shield, or both.

Police are continuing to talk over the loudspeaker, telling protesters to clear the area.

**3:13pm** - Occupiers are throwing cones, sticks, and wood at police as they advance.

What appears to be smoke-bomb fireworks have been thrown outside the Court of Appeal. Police are putting out their crackling embers by emptying a bottle of water.

Frazzled occupiers are also yelling "f\*\*k off" and "this is about freedom and democracy".

**3:10pm** - Police are pushing down past the Court of Appeal.

They are at least three officers deep and police in riot gear are pushing from the front.

A police officer was also seen spraying protestors who'd climbed the gate.

Officers are also pushing further down Molesworth Street as police tell the occupiers: "Molesworth Street is now closed" and "Step away from the police line".

**3pm** - Police are currently working to take down more tents.

In doing so, protesters sprayed fire extinguishers towards officers.

There is now some fighting, with police using their shields to push protesters out of the way. There is a wall of officers trying to do this.

**2:50pm** - Police say they are continuing their operation to restore access to area around Parliament grounds.

People are still advised to avoid the area in the meantime.



New Zealand Police

@nzpolice · Follow



Police are continuing their operation to restore access to area around parliament grounds.

People are advised to avoid the area.

2:45 PM · Mar 2, 2022

 848

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**2:40pm** - Capital and Coast has the highest booster vaccine rate out of all district health boards.

It has boosted 79.9 percent of those eligible. Nelson-Marlborough (76.9 percent) and Hutt Valley (76.3 percent) are in second and third for booster doses.

[Click here for a detailed breakdown of vaccine data.](#)

**2:10pm** - Some managed isolation hotels are completely refurbishing their rooms after acting as virus containment zones for the last two years.

They are replacing thousands of towels, sheets and other equipment before tourists stay in the same suites that quarantined overseas arrivals did, many of them with COVID-19.

They expect the pandemic will keep tourist numbers low but are hoping New Zealand's success at containing COVID-19 will be a drawcard.

From this weekend one of the most successful and controversial parts of New Zealand's COVID-19 response, managed isolation, is basically over.

Accor New Zealand was the biggest provider of MIQ hotels in the country with 10 facilities, including the Novotel, the Grand Mercure and the Pullman, among others.



Accor sales and marketing director iain Ganner said the business had a big job ahead of it refitting rooms ahead of the return of tourists.

"We are replacing all bedding, linen, towels, soft furnishings, just because of high use. I think it's about 3600 beds overall for us," Ganner said.

[Read the full story here.](#)



**Hotels planning full room refits as managed isolation and quarantine comes to an end**

From this weekend one of the most successful and controversial parts of NZ's pandemic response is basically over.

— Newshub / 2 Mar

**1:56pm** - Ardern has now left the podium.

**1:54pm** - Ardern says they're looking at what they could do to secure Parliament while still ensuring the public can access the site.

**1:51pm** - Ardern says the situation within the protest has given rise to health concerns for quite some time.

She adds that she has no qualms to call out what's been happening in Wellington as she calls for them to leave. She says that it tipped from a protest to an illegal occupation quite early on.

**1:47pm** - Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern is now speaking as tensions flare outside Parliament.

She begins by talking about the protesters. She says they have been given ample opportunity to leave and it is time for them to move on.

Ardern says the protest has been filled with misinformation and conspiracy theories, and she urges everyone still there to leave today.

**1:34pm** - COVID-19 Response Minister Chris Hipkins has left the podium.

**1:33pm** - Police have just provided an update on the protest outside of Parliament in Wellington.

Here is the full statement from Police Commissioner of Police Andrew Coster:

"Police are today undertaking a major operation to clear the roads and restore order to the Wellington area affected by protest activity.

The operation is the result of significant planning and the commitment of several hundred staff from around the country.

Our intent is to reclaim public roads and restore order.

This morning you will have seen we have urged protesters who have not already departed, to leave now.

Our message to those who do not wish to be caught up in our operation is, please go home.

We have staff on stand-by to assist their safe departure from the protest area.

We were clear from the start that de-escalation was the preferred option.

And during a period of engagement with protest leaders we were able to get in place tactics that de-escalated both the number of people and vehicles at the site.

However, we reached the stage where protest leaders were either unwilling, or unable, to affect meaningful change to the behaviour and the impact of the protest on Wellington.

In the last week we have a changing mix in the make-up of the crowd at the protest – in particular we became concerned that those with good intentions were outnumbered by those with a willingness to use violence to effect their means.

We have observed an escalation in concerning behaviour which has resulted in today's action.

This has never been about preventing lawful protest, but this particular protest has reached a stage where the harm being done far outweighs any legitimate protest.

By approximately midday today, we have confirmed 36 arrests, for a range of offences including wilful trespass, obstruction, wilful damage, assaults police, possession of a weapon, and refusing to provide identifying details.

We have towed 15 vehicles including a number of vans, campervans and trucks.

These have been seized and will not be returned in the immediate future.

Three of our staff have received injuries, two with abrasions and one with paint thrown in the face.

All received medical attention at the scene and are back working in operation.

We will continue to arrest and charge people where necessary and will continue seizing vehicles through the day.

However, public safety is our priority and where possible we are helping people to leave the area safely.

We have been assisted today by a number of partner agencies including Wellington City Council, Corrections, Oranga Tamariki, Fire and Emergency NZ, NZDF, and Wellington Free Ambulance.

I would like to close by extending my thanks to all the staff involved in today's operation.

This is challenging and difficult work and they have been professional and measured through out.

**1:31pm** - Hipkins said it was "human nature that people from time to time will have a bad day" when asked about the scrutiny the Ministry of Health has come under.

"Overall let the results speak for the Ministry of Health," he said, saying we should focus on how "the New Zealand response is favourable to everywhere else around the world."

Hipkins said he "has a lot of confidence" in the MoH and the work they are doing.

**1:27pm** - Hipkins is urging the anti-mandate protesters in Wellington to "go home and stay home" as they would have been exposed to COVID-19.

**1:25pm** - Hipkins said the main thing is to deal with from here is the peak that's ahead of us.

He said the peak could go one of two ways. It will either sustain a higher level for a certain amount of time, or it will have a 'steep up and then down again' peak.

"Vaccination may put us on the fast track which will see a steep drop off," he said.

**1:23pm** - Hipkins said he wants the remaining backlog of PCR tests to be cleared in the next couple of days.

He said he is aware testing capacity didn't stand up, but the "critical thing" from here is that the rollout of the RAT testing is as smooth as possible.

**1:21pm** - On hospitalisations, Hipkins said it depends on how quickly they build up. He understands these cases will put hospitals under pressure but compared it to winter where hospitals often come under pressure.

"It will be challenging over the next four to six weeks," he said.

He also extended his thanks to health workers.

**1:17pm** - Hipkins is being asked about what advice he would give to parents whose children have COVID-19.

He said to stay calm, keep the children at home and seek out testing for them.

"Younger people do tend to be much more resilient, and they tend to have milder symptoms," he said.

Hipkins said we are going to see more cases in schools and early learning centres.

**1:14pm** - Cabinet will make decisions around what MIQ will look like in the next week or two, Hipkins says.

"MIQ will likely shrink quite considerable once we see demand for MIQ drop right away.

"From this afternoon, MIQ will return to the previous self-service model."

**1:11pm** - Hipkins said they will be making changes to the regulations to school sports in the coming week or two.

He said that kids competing in a school organised activity do not need to be vaccinated.

That includes a school sports team that is competing against another school sports team.

**1:08pm** - Back to Hipkins, he is urging people, not to stockpile Rapid Antigen Test and reminded them they have an expire date.

He said if you have half a dozen tests on hand that is more than enough.

**1:06pm** - The ministry has provided an update on the booster:

It's great to see more than 60% of eligible Māori across the motu have now received a booster dose.

This milestone is an opportunity to celebrate the mahi of staff at vaccine clinics, health providers and iwi who have led the way to ensure Māori are well protected against COVID-19.

As always, there's still work to do. The Ministry of Health strongly encourages everyone who is eligible to get their booster dose, which will help protect themselves and others in the community from Omicron.

The booster dose greatly reduces the likelihood that you will become severely ill and require hospital care if you catch Omicron.

If you are 18 years or older and had your second vaccination at least three months ago, please get your booster as soon as you can. Find a centre near you by visiting [BookMyVaccine.nz](https://www.bookmyvaccine.nz) or calling the Covid Vaccination Healthline on [0800 28 29 26](tel:0800282926) for a whānau booking.

Yesterday, 18,970 booster doses were administered.

We're also continuing to remind people to self-report positive results for Rapid Antigen Tests (RATS) through My Covid Record, to help us understand the size of the outbreak. People who need help recording their result can also call [0800 222 478](tel:0800222478).

More than 80% of today's 22,152 community cases were detected by a RAT. We would like to thank the tens of thousands of people who have self-reported their result.

**1:04pm** - Here is the latest data from the Ministry of Health on the outbreak and vaccination campaign:

COVID-19 vaccine update

Vaccinations administered in New Zealand

- Vaccines administered to date: 4,020,089 first doses; 3,960,970 second doses; 33,472 third primary doses; 2,390,659 booster doses: 243,224 paediatric first doses and 3,739 paediatric second doses
- Vaccines administered yesterday: 421 first doses; 843 second doses; 105 third primary doses; 18,970 booster doses; 1,405 paediatric first doses and 237 paediatric second doses

People vaccinated (including those vaccinated overseas)\*

- All Ethnicities (percentage of eligible people aged 12+): 4,064,094 first dose (96.6%); 4,003,247 second dose (95.1%), 2,392,300 boosted (71.7% of those eligible)\*
- Māori (percentage of eligible people aged 12+): 519,456 first dose (91%); 499,081 second dose (87.4%), 204,002 boosted (60.1% of those eligible)
- Pacific Peoples (percentage of eligible people aged 12+): 280,858 first dose (98%); 274,815 second dose (95.9%), 122,711 boosted (58.6% of those eligible)
- 5 to 11-year-olds all ethnicities: 243,109 first dose (51%); 3,718 second dose (0.8%)
- 5 to 11-year-olds - Māori: 36,127 first dose (31.3%); 612 second dose (0.5%)
- 5 to 11-year-olds - Pacific Peoples: 21,473 first dose (43.5%); 484 second dose (1%)

\*Note, that the number for "people vaccinated" differs slightly from "vaccines administered" as it includes those that have been vaccinated overseas.

Vaccination rates for all DHBs (percentage of eligible people aged 12 +)\*\*

- Northland DHB: first dose (90.3%); second dose (87.8%); boosted (69.1%)
- Auckland Metro DHB: first dose (97.4%); second dose (96.1%); boosted (68.1%)
- Waikato DHB: first dose (95.3%); second dose (93.5%); boosted (66.9%)
- Bay of Plenty DHB: first dose (95.3%); second dose (93.3%); boosted (68.1%)
- Lakes DHB: first dose (93.6%); second dose (91.5%); boosted (68.6%)
- MidCentral DHB: first dose (96.8%); second dose (95.2%); boosted (73.3%)
- Tairāwhiti DHB: first dose (93.5%); second dose (90.8%); boosted (69.3%)
- Whanganui DHB: first dose (92.4%); second dose (90.5%); boosted (73.4%)
- Hawke's Bay DHB: first dose (97.2%); second dose (95.2%); boosted (71.1%)
- Taranaki DHB: first dose (94.8%); second dose (93.1%); boosted (68.2%)

- Wairarapa DHB: first dose (96.8%); second dose (95%); boosted (74.9%)
- Capital & Coast DHB: first dose (98.8%); second dose (97.9%); boosted (78.8%)
- Hutt Valley DHB: first dose (96.9%); second dose (95.7%); boosted (75.3%)
- Nelson Marlborough DHB: first dose (96.8%); second dose (95.4%); boosted (76.1%)
- West Coast DHB: first dose (93.1%); second dose (91.2%); boosted (73.4%)
- Canterbury DHB: first dose (99.8%); second dose (98.7%); boosted (73.1%)
- South Canterbury DHB: first dose (95.4%); second dose (94.2%); boosted (75%)
- Southern DHB: first dose (97.9%); second dose (96.7%); boosted (74.8%)

\*\*First and second dose percentages are for those 12+. Booster dose percentages are for 18+ who have become eligible three months after having their second dose.

## Hospitalisations

- Cases in hospital: total number 405: Northland: 5; North Shore: 56; Middlemore: 142; Auckland: 108; Waikato: 37; BOP: 12; Rotorua: 5; Tairāwhiti: 3; Hawke's Bay: 1; Taranaki: 4; MidCentral: 2; Hutt Valley: 2; Capital and Coast: 11; Nelson Marlborough: 6; Canterbury: 10; Southern: 1;
- Average age of current hospitalisations: 52
- Cases in ICU or HDU: 10
- Vaccination status of current hospitalisations (Northern Region only, excluding Emergency Departments): Unvaccinated or not eligible (42 cases / 14.7%); partially immunised <7 days from second dose or have only received one dose (7 cases / 2.4%); double vaccinated at least 7 days before being reported as a case (134 cases / 47.3%); Received booster at least 7 days before being reported as a case (55 cases / 19.4%); unknown (45 cases / 15.9%)

## Cases

- Seven day rolling average of community cases: 12,939
- Number of new community cases: 22,152
- Number of new community cases (PCR): 3,525
- Number of new community cases (RAT): 18,627
- Location of new community cases (PCR & RAT): Northland (382), Auckland (13,231), Waikato (2,139), Bay of Plenty (1,270), Lakes (415), Hawke's Bay (273), MidCentral (367), Whanganui (56), Taranaki (261), Tairāwhiti (137), Wairarapa (91), Capital and Coast (1,115), Hutt Valley (473), Nelson Marlborough (272), Canterbury (1,033), South Canterbury (36), Southern (578), West Coast (15); Unknown (8)
- Number of new cases identified at the border: 8
- Number of active community cases (total): 123,836 (cases identified in the past 21 days and not yet classified as recovered)
- Confirmed cases (total): 142,321

Please note, the Ministry of Health's daily reported cases may differ slightly from those reported at a DHB or local public health unit level. This is because of different reporting cut off times and the assignment of cases between regions, for example when a case is tested outside their usual region of residence. Total numbers will always be the formal daily case tally as reported to the WHO.

## Tests

- Number of PCR tests total (last 24 hours): 20,086
- PCR tests rolling average (last 7 days): 26,004
- Number of Rapid Antigen Tests dispatched (last 7 days): 7.7 million

**1:03pm** - COVID-19 Response Minister Chris Hipkins has announced that there are 22,152 community cases of COVID-19. There are 405 people are in hospital and 10 are in ICU.

**12:53pm** - After COVID Response Minister Chris Hipkins gives the COVID update, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern will front media at the Beehive - you can also watch that live in the video above.

**12:48pm** - COVID-19 Response Minister Chris Hipkins will reveal Wednesday's latest COVID figures at around 1pm. You'll be able to watch that live in the video above.

**12:38pm** - Here are the key things Police Commissioner Andrew Coster said:

- "We have reached the stage where protest leaders were either unable or unwilling to effect substantial change."
- "The harm being done far outweighs any legitimate protest."
- The operation has involved several hundred staff from around the country," Coster said
- "Our intent is to reclaim public roads and restore order."
- "Our message to those who do not want to be caught up in our operation is, please go home. We have staff on standby to assist with their safe departure from the protest area."
- In the last week, we've seen a changing mix in the make-up of the crowd, he says.
- "We have been concerned that those with good intentions have been outnumbered by those willing to use violence."
- "We have observed an escalation in concerning behaviour that has ultimately resulted in today's actions."
- "Nothing about this protest has been acceptable and it now needs to end."

**12:11pm** - As Police Commissioner Andrew Coster said, officers have started towing cars parked illegally around Parliament.

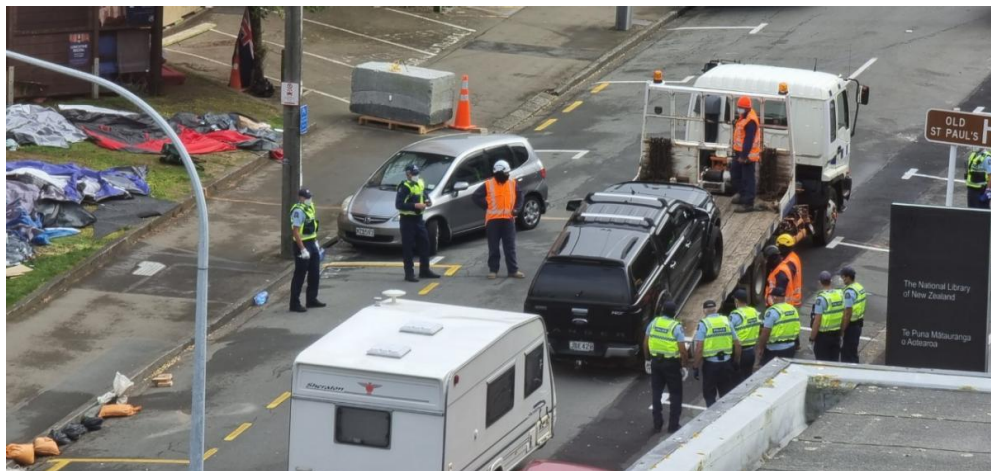






Photo credit: Newshub

**12:09pm** - One part of the police operation on Wednesday was removing items that belonged to protesters.

A trampoline, signs, chairs and tents can all be seen in a pile of rubbish.



Photo credit: Newshub

**12:06pm** - The press conference has now ended.

**12:05pm** - Coster is urging any protesters that still have cars in the area to remove them before they are towed.

**12:04pm** - Coster said that the changing environment at the protest was the reason for the change in tactics.

"In the last week we have seen a changing mix in the make up of the crowd," Coster said.

"In particular, we've become concerned that those with good intentions are now outnumbered by those with a willingness to use violence to effect their means."

**12:02pm** - The operation on Wednesday was planned over a number of days, Coster said.

He said police are learning as they go.

**12pm** - The changing mix of protesters was a key factor, Coster said.

He said that there was no interest in turning this into a fight, but the protest had tipped over a balance and needed to end.

"Nothing about this protest has been acceptable," Coster said.

**11:58am** - We think the protest has reached a stage that is no longer sustainable, Coster said.

He thinks officers have been very patient and is happy with their behaviour.

**11:57am** - The balance has tipped and now it's time for the protest to end, Coster says.

"When the job is done, we will be done."

**11:56am** - De-escalation was the preferred option," Coster said

"But we reached the stage where protest leaders were unwilling or unable to effect meaningful change."

**11:55am** - Coster said 36 people have been arrested and 15 vehicles have been towed.

Three staff have been injured, two with abrasions and one with paint thrown at them. All three are back out on front line.

**11:53am** - Police Commissioner Andrew Coster is here and is speaking.

**11:45am** - Green Party Co-Leader Marama Davidson is calling for the police to continue its de-escalation approach.

"I hope we continue to see a de-escalation approach from NZ Police. I wish to see no harm or danger come to anyone.

"Greens have long called for restorative justice approaches & away from the over-policing and discrimination that is too often applied unequally," Davidson tweeted.



**11:38am** - Police Commissioner Andrew Coster will hold a media conference to provide an update on the operation outside Parliament on Wednesday morning.

**11:26am** - The situation outside Parliament seems to have calmed considerably.

Protesters are standing calmly facing off against officers at the intersection of Hill Street and Molesworth Street, with some demonstrators having their backs turned to police.

**11:09am** - In news away from the protest, COVID-19 Response Minister Chris Hipkins said a decision to end vaccine mandates 'could be' within weeks to a couple of

months.

The Government has received advice on when COVID-19 vaccine mandates could end but it will largely depend on when New Zealand's Omicron outbreak starts to wane, Hipkins told the AM show on Wednesday.

On Friday, the High Court quashed an "unlawful" COVID vaccine mandate for police and Defence Force staff - with the judge saying it was an unjustified limit of rights.

"If you look at the court case from last week - the advice that we've had back from the police already is that, actually, the mandate has served its purpose and they don't think they're going to need another one," Hipkins said.

"Defence, on the other hand, has indicated that they do think they'll need to do something because when they deploy internationally, and particularly to the Pacific, they often require people to be vaccinated before they can be deployed so it's more complicated for them."

Read the full story [here](#).

Ryan Bridge pushes Minister Chris Hipkins for answers on lifting NZ mandates, re...



**10:55am** - Shocking footage from the standoff between police and protesters outside Parliament shows a demonstrator kicking a police officer on the ground, a cop punching a protester and demonstrators hurling bottles and spraying officers with what appears to be a fire extinguisher.

Watch the video [here](#).

**10:50am** - Police have been removing tents and structures all morning.



Photo credit: Newshub

**10:48am** - A protester on a loudspeaker says they will not leave the site until Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern talks to them and ends vaccine mandates.

**10:46am** - There is a gap forming between frontline police officers and the protesters. The protesters are holding large wooden planks while the police are in riot gear with plastic shields.





**10:42am** - Police have released a statement about the protests.  
Full statement below:

*A pre-planned operation to further restore access around the Parliamentary precinct has gained significant ground, with a number of vehicles and structures removed from the area this morning.*

*A large number of Police staff from around the country and within Wellington District have been deployed for this morning's operation, which commenced about 6am. Police were disappointed to see protesters in possession of various weapons this morning.*

*These included, but were not limited to, the use fire extinguishers as weapons, a cord set up as a trip wire, paint-filled projectiles, homemade plywood shields and pitchforks.*

*At least three Police staff have been injured.*

*A laser was also pointed at the Police helicopter, which is in Wellington to assist the operation.*

*Protesters have repeatedly been reminded that Parliament grounds are closed, and that remaining there means they are trespassing.*

*Police are pleased with the number of people and vehicles that have voluntarily left the protest area this morning, and we will continue to work with partner agencies to assist us with the safe movement of people, including helping them get their vehicles out safely if they wish to do so.*

*Police want to reiterate this is not an appropriate place for children and we are working with staff from Oranga Tamariki.*

*For operational reasons, Police will not be providing staff numbers at this stage.*

**10:38am** - Police officers appear to be removing illegally constructed buildings near the site.

**10:33am** - Footage has emerged on social media showing police beating a protester while he lays on the ground getting arrested.

**10:22am** - A police officer can be seen holding a canister as violent scenes continue to occur outside Parliament in Wellington.







Photo credit: Newshub





Photo credit: Newshub

**10:15am** - Police have confirmed around 60 people have now been arrested at Parliament and cars are being towed.

"We have commenced towing larger vehicles, including trucks, vans and campervans," police said in a statement.

"We will continue to work with partner agencies to assist us with the safe movement of people, including helping them get their vehicles out safely if they wish to do so."

 **TWITTER** NEW ZEALAND POLICE

**New Zealand Police**  @nzpolice · Mar 2, 2022 

Around 60 people have now been arrested in relation to this morning's operation at Parliament grounds.

Police continue to tow vehicles that are parked illegally. We have commenced towing larger vehicles, which includes trucks, vans and campervans.

**New Zealand Police**  @nzpolice · [Follow](#)

We will continue to work with partner agencies to assist us with the safe movement of people, including helping them get their vehicles out safely if they wish to do so.

10:13 AM · Mar 2, 2022 

 226  Reply  Copy link

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**10am** - Tensions remain high around Parliament as police begin to tow cars that are parked within the protest area.







9:59am - A social media post has shown a protester bringing a very young child down to the front line to face off against police. These images come after police said they had "concerns for their wellbeing" while adding it was "not an appropriate place for children".

Jill #AKF

@jillyrulz · [Follow](#)

Child endangerment. This man is breaking the law and using the baby as a shield.  
SHAME ON HIM!!  
[#endtheprotest](#)  
[#GoHome](#)

Georgia Forrester

9:47 AM · Mar 2, 2022

50

Reply

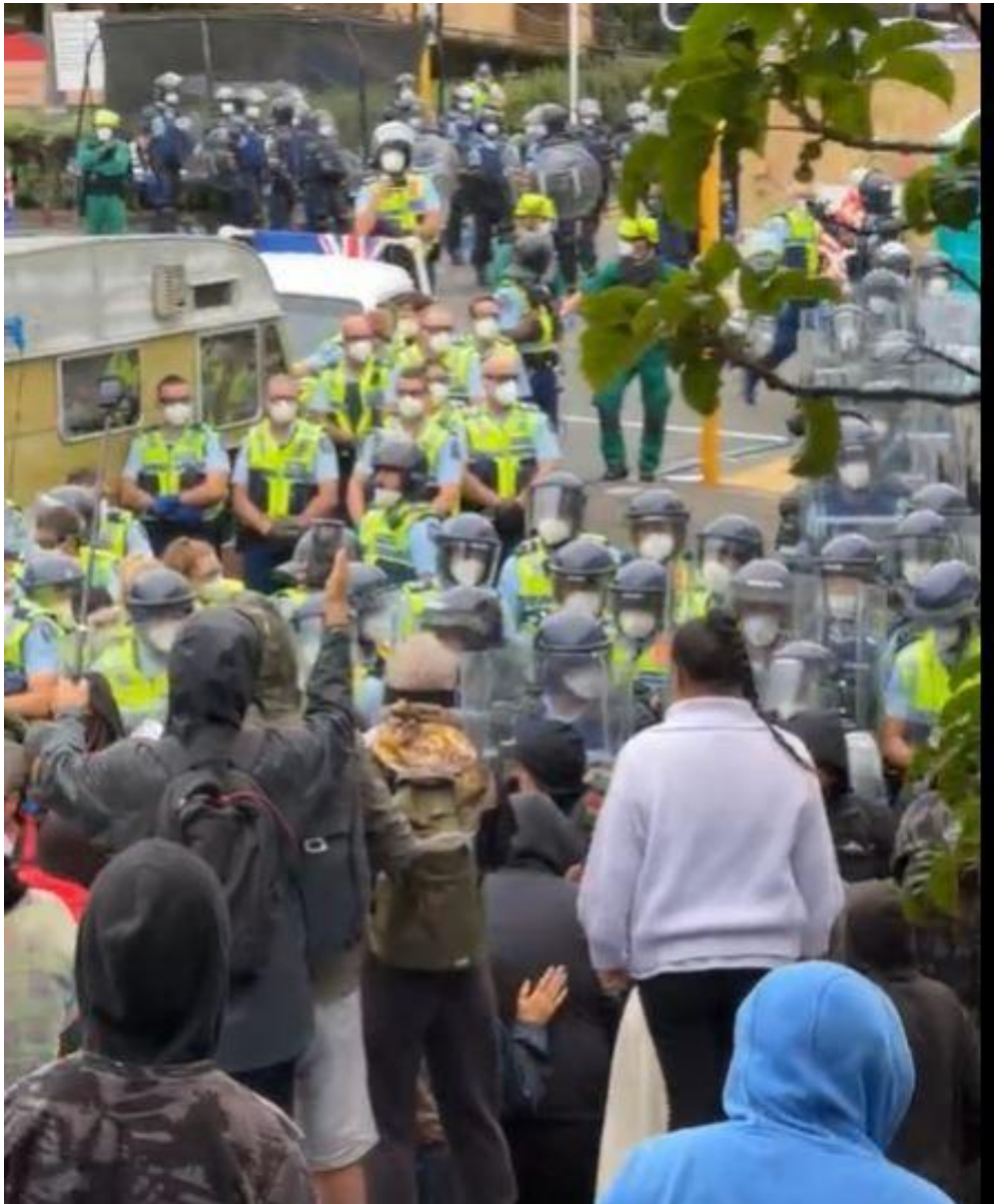
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9:54am - Tensions continue to escalate outside Parliament as police conduct a pre-planned operation on Wednesday morning. Riot police can be seen moving to the frontline to face-off against anti-mandate protesters.









9:49am - Police officers in full riot gear can be seen talking with other officers on the frontline.  
Protesters can be seen carrying large plywood planks which they are using to push back against officers.











**9:44am** - Police are concerned about the well-being of children at the protest outside Parliament.

Officers and protesters have faced off all morning in violent clashes.

"Police have seen at least 10 children within the protest area in Wellington and have concerns for their well-being," police say.

"Police want to reiterate this is not an appropriate place for children and we continue to urge those with young ones to pack up and go home.

"We are working with Oranga Tamariki staff in this morning's operation.

"Our staff are ready to assist those who wish to leave, including helping them get their vehicles out safely."

 **TWITTER** NEW ZEALAND POLICE



**New Zealand Police** 

@nzpolice · Mar 2, 2022



Police have seen at least 10 children within the protest area in Wellington and have concerns for their wellbeing.

Police want to reiterate this is not an appropriate place for children and we continue to urge those with young ones to pack up and go home.



**New Zealand Police** 

@nzpolice · [Follow](#)

We are working with Oranga Tamariki staff in this morning's operation.

Our staff are ready to assist those who wish to leave, including helping them get their vehicles out safely.

9:38 AM · Mar 2, 2022 

 222

 Reply

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**9:39am** - RNZ is reporting that the Police Special Tactics Squad has arrived in Wellington to help with the ongoing ugly and violent scenes outside Parliament on Wednesday.

**9:25am** - A protester has just thrown a punch at a police officer as the two sides clash.

Video from Parliament shows protesters kicking a police officer in the head after they fell into the crowd.

**9:21am** - A major school near Parliament will open on Wednesday despite the ongoing violent scenes between police and anti-mandate protesters.

Wellington Girls College, located on Pipitea Street, said on a Facebook post that if students can get to school then "you will be fine".

Principal Julia Davidson said she had spoken to the Ministry of Education and police and was told that schools were safe to be open.

"We know some buses will go to Queen Margaret College and students will have to walk back down Hobson St," she says.

"Today is a day where we'll do our best with whoever turns up - everyone else please go online! "This is an evolving situation, please keep an eye on the media.



**Wellington Girls' College**

about 4 months ago



Mōrena koutou

As you are no doubt aware there is a major Police operation underway at Parliament. Traffic routes are problematic - but if you can get here you will be fine.

I have spoken to the MOE this morning who have been in direct contact with Police and they believe Thorndon schools are safe to open.... [See more](#)

98 14 1

Heather  
@HilneJ · [Follow](#)

My haircut for this morning just got cancelled. The stylist is located further up Molesworth near the New World. She said she's seen a fair amount of protesters & police and several arrests and is worried stuff might get violent.

9:02 AM · Mar 2, 2022

5   Reply   Copy link

[Explore what's happening on Twitter](#)

Oliver Lewis  
@OliverLewis · [Follow](#)

Milk is running down Molesworth St!

8:31 AM · Mar 2, 2022

2   Reply   Copy link

[Read 1 reply](#)

9:10am - A TikTok has shown a police officer being sprayed directly in the face by what is believed to be a fire extinguisher by protesters.





**9:07am** - The Kiingitanga is calling for a peaceful resolution to the ongoing occupation of Parliament grounds and other whenua across the country.

Here is the full statement:

Kiingi Tuuheitia Pootatau Te Wherowhero VII has been a strong advocate of the COVID-19 response over the past two years, while acknowledging the impacts of the response on some individuals and their families.

"Kiingi Tuuheitia has always said the wellbeing of our people is paramount, which is why we have been united against the virus, just like our ancestors did in the 1918 pandemic," spokesperson Rahui Papa says.

"Our priority now is to get through Omicron and start preparing for life after COVID when we can move freely without fear of sickness."

The Kiingitanga has not given its support to any occupation and any claims to the contrary are untrue.

Kua tuu te kaupapa, Kua tae te waa kia hoki ki te kaainga kia tau ai te maungaarongo me te rangimaarie.

**9:01am** - The protest is turning ugly outside Parliament on Wednesday morning.

Protesters are shoving police and calling them scum while one can be heard yelling, "drop your shield c\*\*\*" at an officer.

**8:59am** - Police have said around 20 arrests have been made so far this morning as part of the pre-planned operation in central Wellington.

Here is the full statement:

"Police can confirm around 20 arrests have been made so far this morning as part of the pre-planned operation in central Wellington.

"Police have also begun towing vehicles. We are once again urging people inside the protest area to leave now."



**New Zealand Police** 

@nzpolice · [Follow](#)



Police can confirm around 20 arrests have been made so far this morning as part of the pre-planned operation in central Wellington.

Police have also begun towing vehicles.

We are once again urging people inside the protest area to leave now.

8:56 AM · Mar 2, 2022



 [Read the full conversation on Twitter](#)

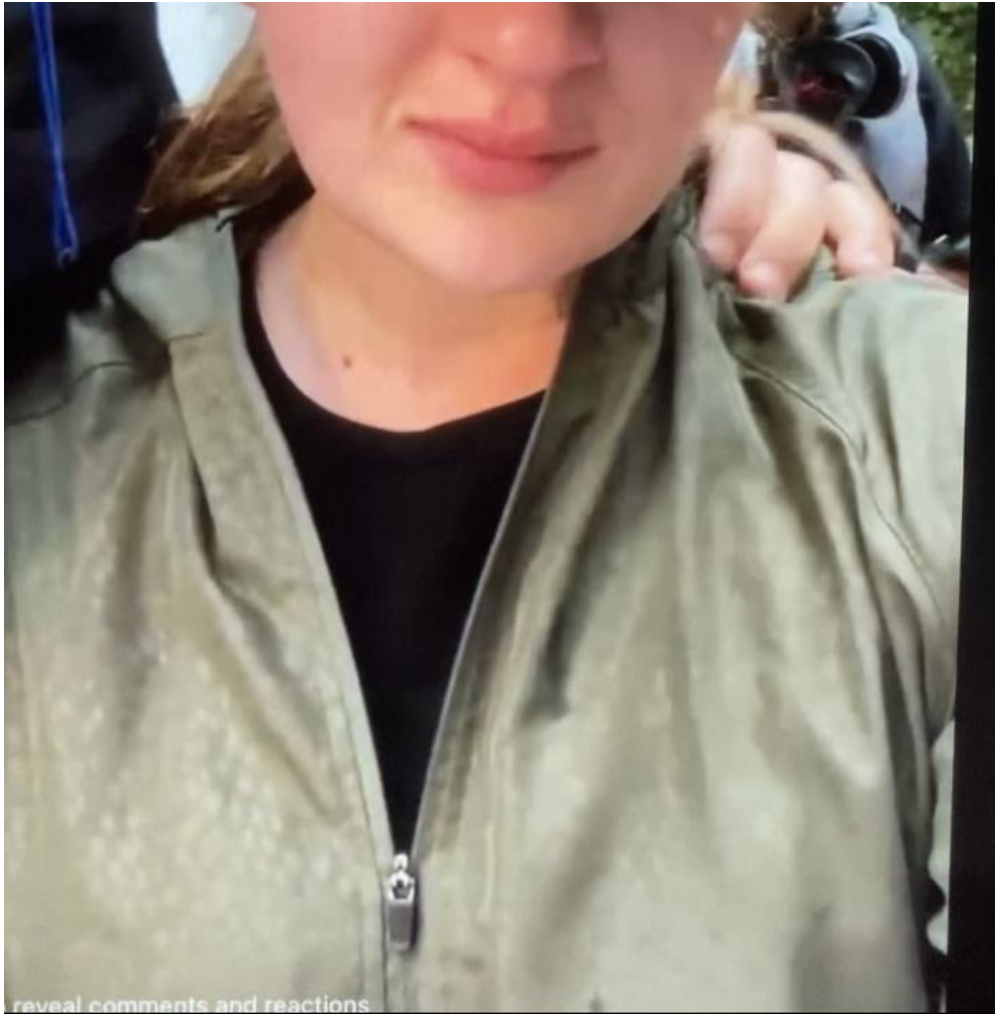
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**8:47am** - Anti-mandate protester Chantelle Baker is crying in her livestream after claiming she was pepper sprayed.







reveal comments and reactions

**8:44am** - Protesters can be heard yelling homophobic slurs at police, one saying "what are you doing you f\*\*king f\*\*\*t?" and calling him "scum".

**8:42am** - Police have provided an update on their operation outside Parliament on Wednesday morning.

"Police have gained significant ground this morning in the operation to restore lawful protest at Parliament grounds," they say.

"We continue to urge those wishing to leave to let our staff know. We will work to facilitate their safe exit from the area.

"Protesters have been reminded that Parliament grounds are closed and that they are trespassing."

New Zealand Police

@nzpolice · Follow

Police have gained significant ground this morning in the operation to restore lawful protest at Parliament grounds.

We continue to urge those wishing to leave to let our staff know. We will work to facilitate their safe exit from the area.

8:37 AM · Mar 2, 2022

Read the full conversation on Twitter

573

Reply

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**8:35am** - Tensions remain very high at Parliament as the face-off continues between protesters and police.

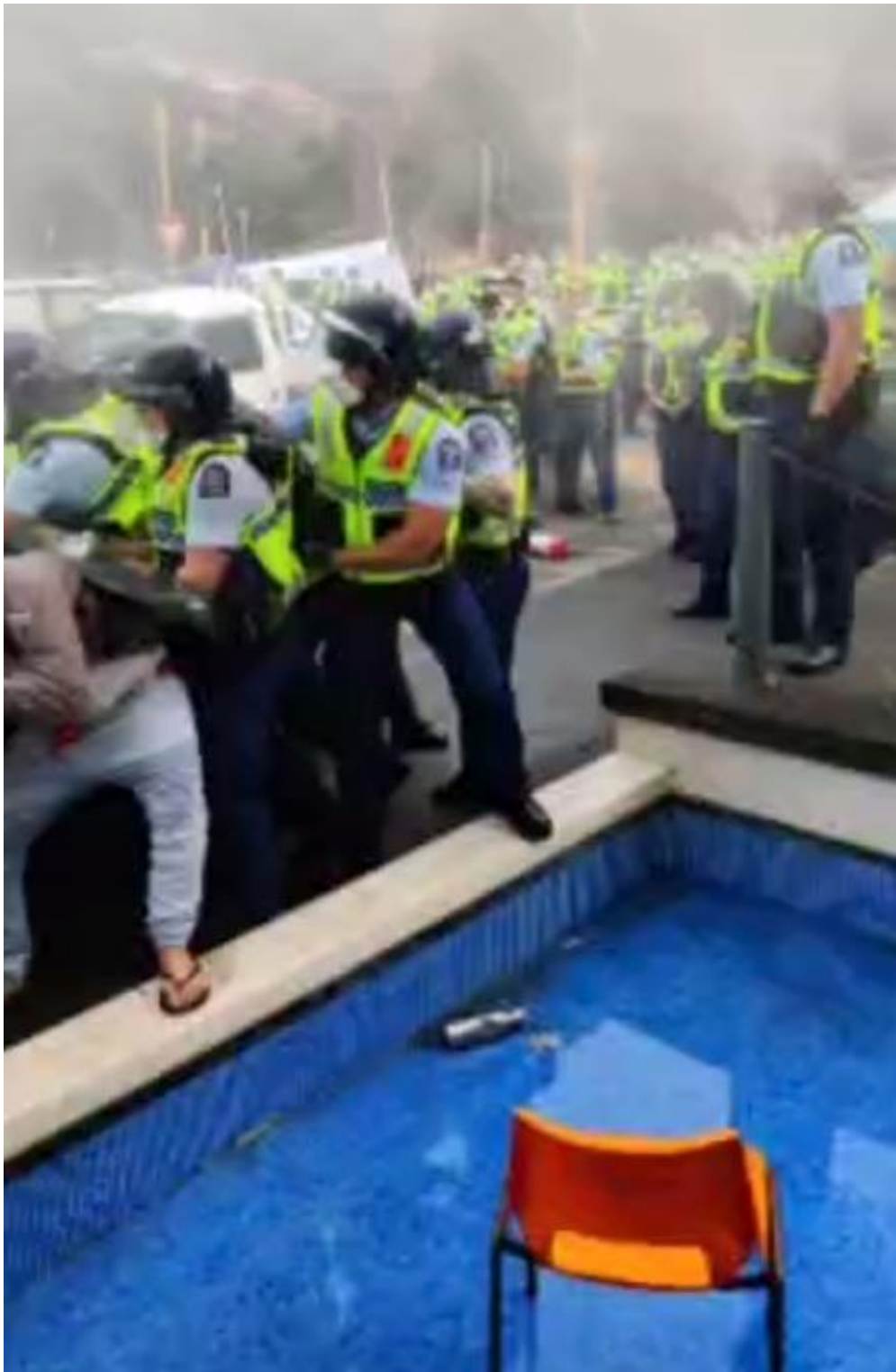
Video from Parliament shows protesters throwing a large pole and water bottles at police while other demonstrators can be seen spraying something at police officers.

**8:27am** - Pepper spray was just sprayed above the crowds as protesters push and shove against officers.

Demonstrators can be seen grabbing a police officer's arm and trying to pull him into the crowd before screaming, "you're all terrorists".

A protester has been handcuffed and taken away after a scuffle with officers.





**8:23am** - The stand-off between police and anti-mandate protesters outside Parliament appears to be intensifying.

Protesters can be seen pouring milk on each other after pepper spray was used towards them.

Protesters are standing off against officers in riot gear. They can be heard yelling at the police to "stand down".

Police and protesters are scuffling after officers tried to remove some construction board.











**8:12am** - A large gathering of protesters can be seen facing off against police with riot shields on Molesworth Street, with some yelling "hold the line".

Video from Parliament grounds shows officers in riot gear standing in large clouds of white mist while some protesters can be seen pouring milk into their eyes.

Some protesters are wearing ski goggles to cover their faces.

Officers are trying to clear large piles of rubbish that has been thrown on the ground as protesters yell at them.

**8:05am** - Newshub Political Editor Jenna Lynch said a steady stream of protesters are being taken into custody at the back of Parliament.

**7:59am** - Police have provided an update on their operation, which is currently ongoing outside Parliament.

"Police staff in and around the Wellington protest area have sighted protesters in possession of various weapons," police say.

"These include homemade plywood shields and pitchforks. Protesters have also been pointing a laser at the Police helicopter.

"No arrests have been made at this stage."

**7:57am** - Here is an update from AM about the police operation currently ongoing around Parliament in Wellington.

Hundreds of police move in on Wellington protesters in major operation | AM

**7:55am** - Newshub political editor Jenna Lynch told AM that a police helicopter has been up in the air from about 6am.

"I think they are clearing the streets primarily but this little area on Parliament grounds, they have moved as well," she said.

Lynch said that all Parliament staff have been told to work from home, which she thinks means the operation could be going on for "hours and hours".

She told AM that some officers are fully kitted out in riot gear while others are just wearing face masks.

A medical tent has also been set up for officers and there are several mobile units.

**7:49am** - A recorded message can be heard telling protesters that Parliament is closed and to leave.

Officers are standing in a line behind concrete bollards with protesters in front of them. Demonstrators are yelling out, playing music and watching.

The amount of people inside Parliament grounds seems to be significantly fewer than in previous days.

There is a heavy police presence in and around Parliament with hundreds of officers, some with riot shields and full-face masks.

7:41am - Police and protesters continue to face-off outside Parliament on Wednesday morning in a "pre-planned operation".

1News live stream has shown what looks like some white powder being sprayed at police.



Photo credit: 1News

7:36am - Newshub political editor Jenna Lynch told AM that the police operation has been "pretty successful".

"They've had a pretty successful operation by the looks of things so far," she said.

"Just here around Parliament grounds, this area has been blanketed in tents for the past few weeks...but they [police] have managed to take back an entire section of the forecourt which was taken over by the protesters."

7:33am - Police have provided an update on their operation on Wednesday morning around Parliament.

"The police operation to restore access to the area around Parliament is progressing as planned," police say.

"Police are pleased to see a number of vehicles preparing to leave the protest area."

7:28am - Newshub political editor Jenna Lynch told AM hundreds and hundreds of officers are moving protesters on at Parliament.

Lynch said police have been fairly successful so far with a large area of the grounds cleared.

She said officers can be seen shaking tents to check they're empty before ripping them out of the grounds and removing them.

Music can be heard blasting in the background and there have been some "scuffles" between officers and protesters, Lynch said.

7:24am - COVID-19 Response Minister Chris Hipkins told AM on Wednesday that Parliament is covered by police this morning.

Hipkins says he's not aware of the details of the operation.

He reiterated once the Omicron wave has passed some of the mandates could "start to change".

7:21am - Police are urging people inside the Wellington protest area to "leave now".

"Our staff are ready to assist those who wish to leave, including helping them get their vehicles out safely," police say.

7:20am - Police are banging on the windows of protesters' vehicles telling them to leave.



Photo credit: Newshub

7:17am - COVID-19 Response Minister Chris Hipkins has told AM on Wednesday, that he wishes the police all the best.

"They've got a tough day ahead."

7:14am - Police have just provided an update on their operation on Wednesday morning.

Here is the full statement:

"This morning's operation involves a significant number of police staff from around New Zealand," police said.

"We are working with partner agencies to assist us with the safe movement of people. People in Wellington are advised to please avoid the area this morning."







Photo credit: Newshub



Photo credit: Newshub

**7:11am** - Earlier on Wednesday morning, police broadcasted a message through speakers that warned protesters that they could face arrest.

"This is Police. Parliament Grounds are closed. If you do not leave, you are trespassing. Any obstruction of police staff executed in their duty may result in your arrest."

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6:36 AM · Mar 2, 2022



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**6:57am** - Protesters can be seen pushing against police with riot shields and trying to stop them from moving down Molesworth Street towards Parliament.

A protester can be heard on a megaphone saying: "Form a new line!"



Photo credit: Newshub





Photo credit: Newshub

**6:54am** - Stuff is reporting that police have used pepper spray on protesters' on Wednesday morning.  
Newshub reporters have seen police taking some of the protester's tents down around Parliament.

**6:51am** - Here are some photos from the police operation occurring around Parliament grounds on Wednesday morning.




Photo credit: Newshub




Photo credit: Newshub

**6:46am** - Protesters believe that the police operation is to raid and clear some of their encampment.  
Police have forklifts around Parliament grounds while a number of officers have been brought in from outside of Wellington.  
**6:43am** - Police officers arrived in rented vans around Parliament grounds on Wednesday morning.  
Some can be seen in riot gear but most are just wearing face masks while a police helicopter is overhead.



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The numbers outside Wellington Central Police station.



12:16 AM · Mar 2, 2022

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**6:40am** - Police released a statement earlier this morning saying this was a "pre-planned operation".

Here is the statement:

"A pre-planned operation is underway to restore access within the protest area on Parliament grounds," police said.

"Police are advising the public to avoid the area around Parliament this morning."

**6:36am** - Police are currently facing off with protesters around Parliament on Wednesday.

Police have just provided an update saying commuters in the northern part of Wellington City are advised to plan for further traffic disruption around the protest area.

Hill Street is closed and people are asked to avoid the area this morning.

**6:34am** - Kia ora, good morning, and welcome to Newshub's live coverage of the COVID-19 Omicron outbreak and the Parliament protest for Wednesday, March 2.

Newshub.

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