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CORONAVIRUS

Coronavirus: Ministry of Health confirms 51 of 55 people who left quarantine early were not tested for COVID-19

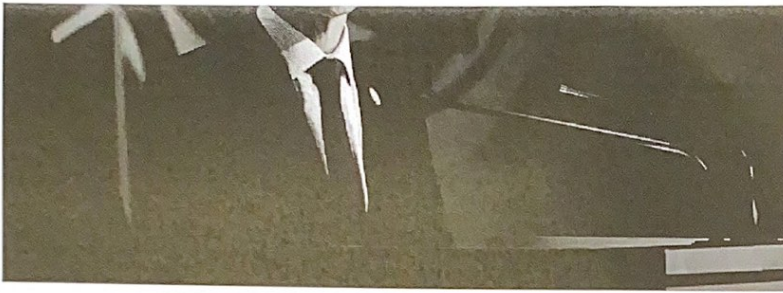
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Fifty-one of the 55 new arrivals who left quarantine early were not tested for COVID-19 before their release, the Ministry of Health has confirmed.

Of the 55 people released from mandatory isolation on compassionate grounds between June 9 and June 16, 39 have since tested negative for the virus. Seven have refused testing due to medical reasons or age, and one was wrongly counted as their exemption application withdrawn. Of the remaining eight, four are awaiting test results and four have yet to be tested, the ministry revealed in a statement Tuesday night.

The ministry also confirmed that of the four who were tested leaving managed isolation, two were tested on their days off - suggesting they were released without confirmation of a negative result.

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The data was finally released following days of uncertainty. Director-General of Health Dr Ashley Bloomfield had been unable to provide the specific figures during his media briefings, despite repeated requests for the information.

The ministry's testing inconsistencies have come under scrutiny following the confirmation of two new infections last Tuesday - sisters who had returned from the UK - marking New Zealand's first new cases in roughly three weeks. It was later revealed the women had

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