(MOH, 2021o)
[23 Feb 2021]

5 border cases and 1 new community case

Media release

23 February 2021

This morning we were notified of a new positive case in the community. This case is a student at Papatoetoe High School.

The student has not been at school. They are a casual plus contact of the initial case at the High School and had been advised to self-isolate and get tested.

Papatoetoe High was closed last week (15–19 February). Today we asked the school to reclose until further notice as a precaution and asked every student and staff member to be retested. We would like to thank the school and the wider community for their ongoing cooperation. Testing has been set up at the school from this afternoon.

Anyone from the wider school community who needs to be tested today should do so at one of the community testing centres rather than at the school.

Public health staff are interviewing the student and their family and locations of interest which are identified will be made public.

This student lives in a household bubble of six, with a sibling who also attends Papatoetoe High but has also not been at school. Other family members have been tested.

Auckland February cases contact tracing update

Contact tracing has identified a total of 126 close contacts associated with the positive cases which have previously been reported. Of the remainder, 123 of the close contacts have returned a negative test result. We are awaiting test results for two people – both of whom are from the medical clinic and relate to Case C, which is considered a low risk exposure event.

Outstanding results from casual plus contacts at the school are being actively followed up. Anyone who returned to school this week needed to have returned a negative test.

Source investigation

All scenarios for possible infection sources of the Auckland February cases continue to be thoroughly investigated. The Auckland Airport precinct where Case B works remains the most likely source of the outbreak, but further testing has not identified any potential transmission routes.

The Four Points by Sheraton managed isolation facility in Auckland continues to be investigated. This is where there is a possible genomic similarity between a previous positive case (now recovered) and the current community cases – though we note it is not a direct match.

There were 265 returnees at the facility in late December. Thirty-six of these are based overseas. At this stage just 7 out of 229 based in New Zealand have not yet been contactable. We will continue to follow up with these people.

It is important to note that health officials consider this an unlikely source of the infection at this stage but are pursuing it as part of actively chasing down every line of enquiry.

New border case details

There are five new cases of COVID-19 in managed isolation.

Arrival date	From	Via	Positive test day/reason	Managed isolation/quarantine location
18 February	Germany	Qatar	Day 3 / routine	Auckland
21 February	India	United Arab Emirates	Day 0 / routine	Auckland

Arrival date	From	Via	Positive test day/reason	Managed isolation/quarantine location
21 February	Pakistan	United Arab Emirates	Day 0 / routine	Auckland
21 February	Egypt	United Arab Emirates	Day 1 / routine	Auckland
22 February	USA		Day 0 / routine	Auckland

No previously reported cases have recovered. The total number of active cases in New Zealand is 60. Our total number of confirmed cases is 2,007.

The total number of tests processed by laboratories to date is 1,666,446.

On Monday, 4,123 tests were processed. The seven-day rolling average up to yesterday is 10,096 tests processed.

Historical cases

Since January 1, there have now been 33 historical cases, out of a total of 190 cases.

NZ COVID Tracer

It remains critical to keep track of where you've been and the COVID Tracer app is an easy way to do this. Please continue to scan QR codes wherever you go and turn on Bluetooth tracing in the app dashboard if you haven't already done so.

NZ COVID Tracer now has 2,674,755 registered users, an increase of more than 110,000 users in the last fortnight.

Poster scans have reached 192,387,972 and users have created 7,740,622 manual diary entries. Scans in the last 24 hours 1,370,265.

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