NEW ZEALAND

Covid-19 coronavirus: Covid transmitted via open doors at Jet Park Auckland MIQ facility

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"The biggest non-event in the history of the world" Newstalk ZB's Mike Hosking & Kate Hawkesby get the Covid jab. Video / Newstalk ZB

NZ Herald

Immediate changes have been made at Auckland's Jet Park quarantine facility after Covid was spread between returnees when room doors were opened simultaneously for seconds for food deliveries and a health check.

joint head Brigadier Rose King said three Covid-19 cases in the same bubble and room detected in the quarantine facility between July 27 and July 29 were comprehensively investigated by Auckland Regional Public Health Service - and subsequently determined to have occurred due to in-facility transmission.

The case linked to a group of five who was moved to Jet Park midway through July after one of the group tested positive on day one. A solo traveller was also moved to the facility four days later after testing positive on arrival to New Zealand and placed in rooms directly opposite each other.

Two further group members tested positive on Day 13 and another tested positive on Day 15. Genomic testing of the subsequent cases in the group linked them to the case in the room opposite – not to the original case in their bubble.

All cases had the Delta variant. The linked cases did not arrive from the same country, nor share flights and they were staying in different managed isolation facilities prior to being transferred to Jet Park.

Ministry of Health deputy director of public health Dr Harriette Carr said the investigation concluded there were no bubble breaches.

"But it found that the three cases were genomically linked to a person in the room opposite, and not to the pre-existing case within their bubble of four people.

"They found doors to rooms on opposite sides of the corridor were opened at the same time for about 3-5 seconds on four occasions between July 19 and 27, when a case in the room opposite would have been considered infectious," Carr said.

"The proximity in time and location when doors were open, and likely sharing of air that may have occurred, is considered the most likely explanation for this transmission."

After viewing security footage it found the solo traveller did not leave their room but doors on appositive sides of the corridor were opened at the same time for 3-5 seconds on four occasions between July 19 and 27 when the solo case would have been considered infectious. Three of the occasions were due to regular meal deliveries and one was a health check.

It was confirmed no other returning travellers would have been exposed and staff were wearing appropriate PPE at the time.

"We're confident there was no risk to the public as a result of this," she said.

King, said as a result of this investigation, there had been immediate changes at Jet Park.

"This is the first time we have seen something like this occur at the Jet Park quarantine facility.

"As such, we've made immediate changes to meal delivery and health check procedures to help prevent future episodes of doors opening at the same time. There are low numbers in Jet Park currently so we've also been able to separate returnees more widely throughout the facility as much as practicable," King said.

"There are elements of human behaviour here which are difficult to completely control.

The ministry's Carr said: "We're not able to control the exact timing of returnees opening their doors – but we've put measures in place to help reduce the chances as much as is practical."

Changes would extend to every managed isolation facility in the country.

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And Air New Zealand has announced it has "increased fare flexibility, so if you are booked on a domestic flight due to depart between 11:59pm tonight and up until 11.59pm on 24 August, you can change your booking with change fees and fare difference waived to travel up to and including 31 August 2021.

"If you don't know your new date of travel or you're not eligible to fly due to the alert level, you can hold your ticket in credit, valid for 12 months from date of credit issuance."

4 months ago Advice from Canterbury DHB re Alert Level 4

The Canterbury DHB has just sent the following advice:

Canterbury DHB will reinstate its no-visitor policy across all facilities from 11:59 tonight in line with the Government's Alert Level 4 lockdown announcement. There are some exceptions which are outlined below.

Unless you have been contacted by phone to advise that your planned (elective) surgery is going ahead tomorrow, please assume it has been postponed and do not turn up at hospital.

Changes to key services are as follows:

Outpatients and planned surgery

Most planned elective surgery will be postponed and rescheduled. If you haven't heard from the DHB you can safely assume your surgery or outpatient clinic has been postponed. We will only be contacting people whose urgent surgery is going ahead.

Renal patients

Renal patients need to still attend their dialysis appointments. Please turn up as you normally would to your dialysis appointment and wear a face covering or mask.

Cancer patients

"The MIQ Technical Advisory Group has considered this investigation and is working on recommendations to reduce the number of occurrences of door opening and, where possible, eliminate synchronous door opening across all 31 facilities," she said.

"While I have no reason to believe they weren't, I've also commissioned an operational assessment of the situation to determine whether the relevant Standard Operating

"Procedures and processes were followed and if any changes should be made as a result of this situation. All of this advice will be considered together and I will provide a further update on the final course of action once it is agreed."