

More than 130 Covid-19 cases on one of first cruise ships to return to New Zealand

9:41 pm on 25 October 2022

(RNZ, 2022q)
[26 Oct 2022]



The cruise ship 'Ovation of the Seas' (file photo) Photo: Ingo Wagner / DPA / AFP

More than 130 passengers and crew on the first cruise ship to arrive in the country in two years have tested positive for Covid-19 (<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/477311/covid-19-cases-on-one-of-first-cruise-ships-to-return-to-new-zealand>).

Positive cases aboard the *Ovation of the Seas* cruise liner were confirmed earlier today. The ship carries almost 5000 passengers and 1300 crew.

Ovation of the Seas sailed in to Napier from Tahiti, it arrived in Wellington on Tuesday morning and from there will go to Picton, then Sydney.

Te Whatu Ora have confirmed this evening there are currently 129 passengers and two crew members reported as current Covid cases aboard the ship as of early this afternoon.

Medical Officer of Health Dr Jill McKenzie said there were only three new cases reported over the past 24 hours.

In a statement earlier, National Public Health Service medical officer of health in Hawke's Bay Bridget Wilson said authorities had been told about the Covid-19 cases and were confident requirements were being followed.

Royal Caribbean operates the ship and in a statement, said positive cases had to isolate in their cabin for five days and if they still had symptoms, on days six and seven.

All guests aged 12 and over cruising to New Zealand had to be fully vaccinated against Covid-19 and return a negative Covid-19 test result before sailing.

Covid-19 Response Minister Ayesha Verrall said even though there was a risk of community transmission from cruise ships, she believed the balance was right.

There was always a risk of Covid entering the country via either cruise ships or air travel when the country's borders were open, she said.

But a highly vaccinated population meant open borders did not pose the even higher risk that it did previously, she said.