

[NEW ZEALAND \(/NEWS/NATIONAL\)](#) / [COVID-19 \(/NEWS/COVID-19\)](#)

## Anti-vaccine mandate protest convoy arrives at Parliament

4:18 pm on 8 February 2022

Hundreds of protesters against Covid-19 vaccine mandates who have travelled to Parliament in a vehicle convoy will not be able to stay on the grounds overnight.



A large crowd of protesters have congregated on the lawn of Parliament since this morning.

Two convoys, made up of hundreds of cars, trucks, campervans and other vehicles, had been travelling from across the country since Sunday.

RNZ understands some protesters want to remain on the grounds until tomorrow.

However, it is against Parliament's rules to have structures or protests on the grounds overnight.

p. Vehicles blocked one street next to Parliament grounds, and some parked on footpaths near Parliament. Protesters diverted some local traffic that got stuck.

Molesworth Street was completely inaccessible and traffic was heavy on the north side of Lambton Quay.

Protesters carrying flags and signs saying their rights were being breached began to gather early today, and a crowd had grown hundreds by late morning.

Music was being played on loud speakers and gazebos and water tents set up as crowds settled onto Parliament grounds.

They are demanding an end to all mandates and Covid-19 restrictions, and what they see is media censorship of their views.

Locals were advised to avoid the area.



Protesters who gathered outside Parliament were carrying flags and signs. Photo: RNZ / Angus Dreaver

Throughout the morning many more vehicles were on the highway north of Wellington, travelling to the capital.

Waikanae resident Tim Costley was travelling north of Wellington early on Tuesday said there were a "couple of thousand" vehicles from Ohau to Waiterere Beach which all but stopped south-bound traffic near Levin.

Trucks in the convoy near Parliament. Photo: Wellington City Council

"They're bumper-to-bumper the whole way through to Levin, you just can't drive south on Oxford Street, the main road, at all," Costly said.

"They've all got flags and signs - it's big."

Protesters threw a rock into the window of a passing car on Wellington's motorway this morning.

Ben was headed north when a "cricket ball sized" rock smashed through his driver side window.



Protest convoy supporters hold signs at the Newlands Road interchange near Wellington. Photo: RNZ / Samuel Rillstone

Wellington City Council said commuters should avoid the CBD if they are trying to get across town by car, in case of traffic disruption, and public transport passengers should check Metlink's website for updates.

Waka Kotahi reported no major hold ups on the main highway, but minor delays in some places.

Traffic congestion near the protest has eased, but parked cars show no signs of leaving as speeches continue.

Molesworth Street remains blocked as dozens of cars and caravans are parked across the road and footpath.

Much of the congestion blocking lanes across the waterfront quays has now dispersed.

Wellington City Council said it hadn't sent parking wardens to the area because it doesn't want to put staff in harm's way.

Wellington Free Ambulance warned earlier it might face delays because of the blocked roads.



One of a line of vehicles in the convoy heading in to Wellington mid-morning on Tuesday. Photo: RNZ / Samuel Rillstone

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern told *Morning Report* she would not be meeting protesters at Parliament.

Lockdowns meant people sacrificed some of their usual rights and abilities to keep others safe, she said.

The protest came at a time when the government was changing the way it was doing things because of the extra protection vaccines provided, she said.

Protest supporter Veronica, with her family in Wellington, said she had lost her job due to vaccine mandates which she said were discriminatory and had caused division in society. Photo: RNZ / Hamish Cardwell

