

(Strongman, S., n.d.)

COVID-19 PANDEMIC TIMELINE

How the coronavirus started, spread and stalled life in New Zealand

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The economy is in turmoil, scared Kiwis are stockpiling and travellers are self-isolating. How did we get here? *Susan Strongman* traces Covid-19 from the first cases in China to the fall out in New Zealand.

DECEMBER 2019

It starts as early as **1 December** when, in **Wuhan City**, in the central Chinese province of Hubei, cases of pneumonia of an unknown cause surface. Near the end of the month, Li Wenliang, a Wuhan-based ophthalmologist, warns a group of fellow doctors about a possible outbreak of an illness that resembles severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS).

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Police tell him (<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/top/409004/coronavirus-chinese-media-confusion-over-doctor-s-death>) to stop “making false comments”. On 31 December, the World Health Organisation (WHO) is told about the cases.

JANUARY 2020

From 31 December 2019 through 3 January 2020, 44 patients with the mysterious illness are reported to the WHO by Chinese authorities. More than half have links to the Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market in Wuhan. On 1 January, the market is closed.



On 7 January, a new type of coronavirus is identified and isolated by Chinese authorities. Five days later, China shares the genetic sequence of the virus for countries to use in developing diagnostic kits.

Between 13 January and 20 January, cases of the virus spread through China and into Thailand, Japan and South Korea. By 23 January, the number of cases has risen to 581 - with the virus reported in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau, and the United States - and 17 people have died. Public transport in Wuhan is suspended, with closure of airports, railway stations, and highways, and people are asked not to leave the city.

On 24 January, New Zealand's Ministry of Health sets up a team to monitor the situation, but says the current risk is low. The following day, three cases of the virus are confirmed in Australia. On January 27, public health staff begin meeting flights from China to look for signs of the virus. The global number of cases rises to nearly 2800 and the death toll reaches 80.

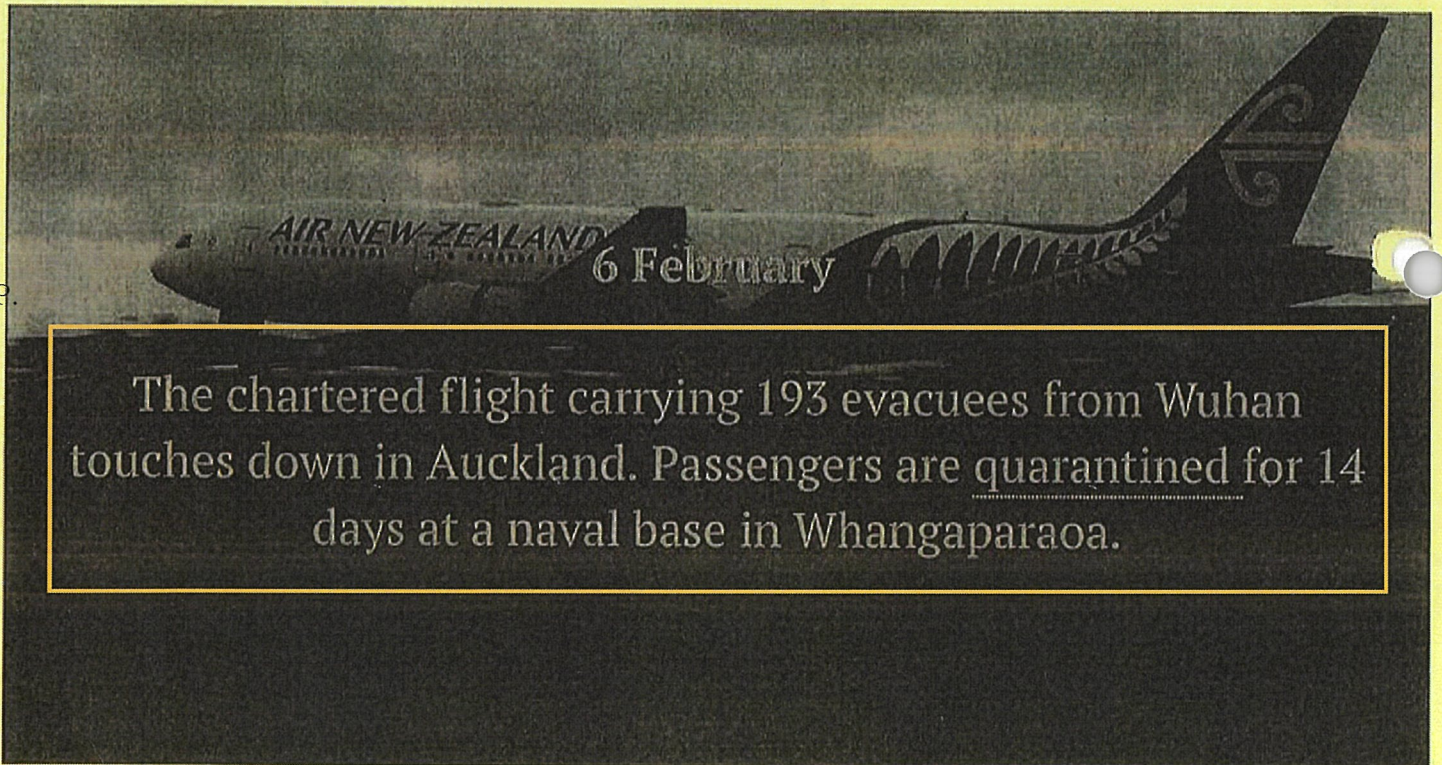
On 30 January, the government charts an Air New Zealand flight to evacuate New Zealanders from Wuhan. The following day, the WHO declares the outbreak to be a "public health emergency of international concern".

FEBRUARY 2020

Reports of transmission of the virus among people who have not visited China begin to emerge. By 2 February, there are 14,557 confirmed cases of the virus and 305 deaths - including one in the Philippines, which is the first outside of China. A joint WHO-China

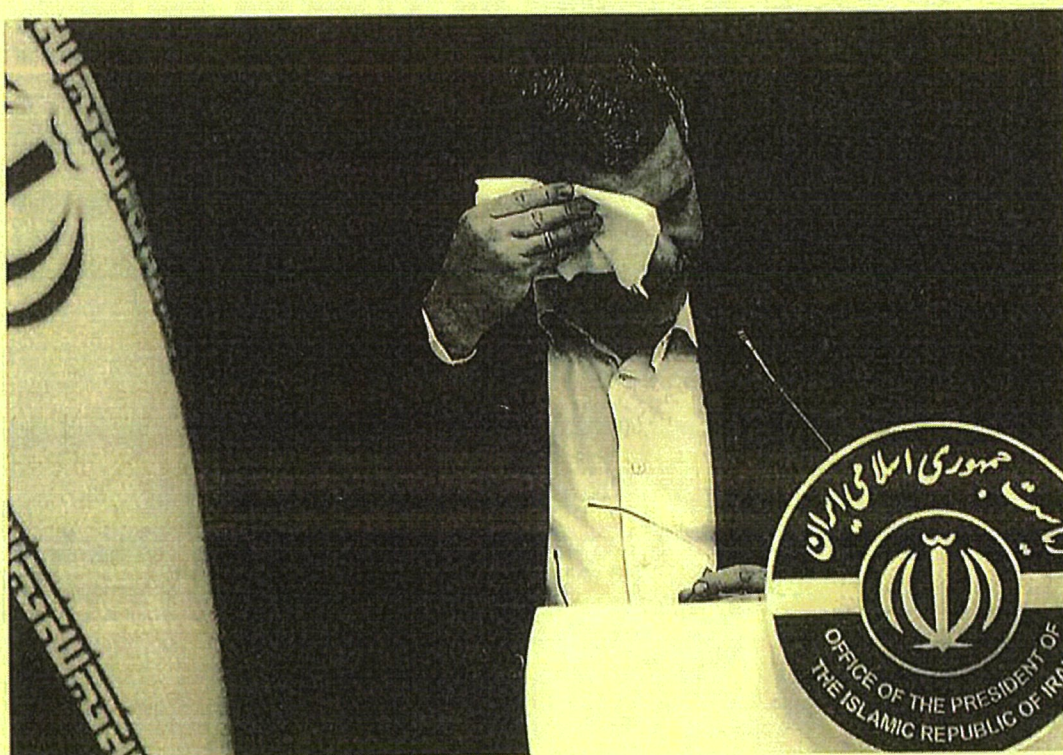
research team says the epidemic peaked and plateaued in China between the 23 January and 2 February, and has been declining steadily since.

On 3 February, the New Zealand Government places entry restrictions on foreign nationals travelling here from, or transiting through, mainland China. Those who can enter the country must self-isolate for 14 days.



On 8 February, two New Zealanders aboard the cruise ship Diamond Princess, which is harboured in Yokohama, Japan, are confirmed to have the virus. A total of 64 passengers are infected and are quarantined in their cabins.

By 24 February, there are 79,331 cases confirmed globally, 2069 of which are outside of China. The following day, Iran's deputy health minister Iraj Harirchi tests positive for covid-19, as the country struggles to contain the outbreak.



Iraj Harirchi shows signs of illness at a press conference

On 26 February, for the first time, there are more new cases reported from countries outside of China (459) than from in China (412). The number of cases in Italy, Iran and South Korea is increasing.

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New Zealand reports its first case of covid-19 on 28 February, in a person in their 60s who has travelled to Auckland from Iran. The government places restrictions on people travelling to New Zealand from Iran.

On 29 February, health staff begin meeting direct flights landing at New Zealand airports from Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, Singapore and Thailand. Some supermarkets are swamped by people buying toilet paper, hand sanitiser and tinned