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(Beehive, 2021hh)
[2 Dec 2021]

29 NOVEMBER 2021

Traffic light levels announced

RT HON JACINDA ARDERN(/MINISTER/RT-HON-JACINDA-ARDERN)

Prime Minister (/portfolio/labour-2020-2023/prime-minister)

The levels at which different parts of New Zealand will move forward into the COVID-19 Protection Framework this Friday have been announced.

- Northland, Auckland, Taupō and Rotorua Lakes Districts, Kawerau, Whakatane, Ōpōtiki Districts, Gisborne District, Wairoa District, Rangitikei, Whanganui and Ruapehu Districts will move in at Red
- The rest of the North Island will move in at Orange
- The whole of the South Island will move in at Orange
- Cautious approach taken initially as we transition into the new framework

"On Friday the traffic lights are turned on for all of New Zealand, as we move forward safely into the next phase of our world-leading COVID-19 response," Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said.

"We've prepared well for this moment by maintaining a cautious approach focused on protecting people and their jobs. Our next phase is focused on minimising the impact of COVID-19 and protecting people.

"We've vaccinated a significant portion of the team of 5 million, and now is the time to move to a new framework.

"We've come through the past two years of COVID in better shape than nearly anywhere in the world, with the lowest case and death rates in the OECD, a growing economy, and among the highest rates of vaccination in the world.

"We're now in the strongest position to move forward into the next phase.

"The certainty and stability of the traffic lights replaces the sudden lockdowns and restrictions of Alert Levels. Our schools will stay open at every colour and businesses will have protection through My Vaccine Passes to keep operating.

ner than the existing Auckland boundary, which lifts on January 17, there will be no new restrictions on travel between regions.

"Vaccinated New Zealanders using vaccine passes will be able to do many of the things that were previously treated as high risk like safely going to bars and restaurants, getting a haircut, and going to a concert or the gym. In Auckland, it means seeing friends and family indoors again.

"But there is more to do. There are 160,889 Kiwis due for a second dose – if everyone got it this week we would be at 89.3 per cent fully vaccinated. I encourage those people to get their second dose today to benefit from the full protection of the vaccine, and to be able to get their Vaccine Pass.

"Red is the highest level in the new system, which is why Auckland has moved in at Red as the epicentre of the current outbreak, and we've taken strong account of vaccination rates and vulnerable populations in the other regions at Red.

"Red provides extra protections against COVID-19 such as requiring both Vaccine Passes and some capacity limits in the most-high risk settings – that's because if someone has COVID-19, the virus will find it harder to spread among fewer people who are at a distance.

"As we see what happens to cases and vaccination levels we can look to move regions down to Orange over time, where there are no gathering limits for those who are using vaccine passes.

"We are not moving any regions to Green immediately while we continue to get vaccination rates up and transition the country to the new framework. To achieve this, $120 million continues to be distributed to support Māori communities to fast-track vaccination efforts and prepare for the traffic light system.

"But COVID-19 is still with us, and the emergence of the Omicron variant overseas is a reminder of why we need to maintain a careful approach and keep public health measures in place to protect us.

"We have been cautious with this initial designation of traffic lights as the new framework beds in. Cabinet will review settings and provide an update on Monday 13 December. The next update by Ministers will be on Monday 17 January, and will continue on a fortnightly basis.

"The factors considered when setting the colours in each region include vaccination, the state of the health system, testing, contact tracing and case management capacity, as well as the rate and effect of COVID-19 transmission.

"With 85 percent of New Zealanders now fully vaccinated, 92 percent with their first dose and boosters being already rolled out, we are ready to move forward in our next stage of the COVID response.

"Thank you New Zealand. We're getting through our toughest period to date, it's been long but we're well set to move forward with caution into the traffic lights, into summer, into 2022, and beyond," Jacinda Ardern said.

Related Documents

Traffic Light Levels North Island (http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2021-11/Traffic%20Light%20Levels%20North%20Island%20No%20Placenames%20A3.jpg)	(1.09 MB)
Traffic Light Levels North Island with Placenames and Auckland Alert Level Southern Boundary (http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2021-11/Traffic%20Light%20Levels%20North%20Island%20with%20Placenames%20and%20Auckland%20Alert%20Level%20Southern%20Boundary%20Depic	
Traffic Light Levels South Island (http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2021-11/Traffic%20Light%20Levels%20South%20Island%20A3.jpg)	(802.77 KB)
Covid Protection Framework (http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2021-11/291121_UAC_CPFSummary_A3.pdf) (65.96 KB)	

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