



This Situation Report is jointly issued by PNG National Department of Health and World Health Organization once weekly. This Report is not comprehensive and covers information received as of reporting date.

Situation Summary and Highlights

- ❑ As of 13 June 2021 (12:00 pm), there have been 16 728 COVID-19 cases and including COVID-19 deaths reported in Papua New Guinea. From the period of 7 June to 13 June, there were 335 new cases and 1 new death reported.
- ❑ As of 14 June 2021, a total of 41,988 people have been vaccinated in PNG. This includes 6,679 health workers and 34,234 essential workers and 1,075 people over the ages of 45 with those with comorbidities.
- ❑ East New Britain has been the most successful in reaching their health care workers having vaccinated over 60% of the health workforce.
- ❑ International Emergency Medical Teams (EMTs) continue to provide care for COVID and non-COVID patients in West New Britain.
- ❑ Air Niugini has partnered with International SOS to deliver PCR testing at Jacksons Airport for all passengers departing in Air Niugini International flights. This test is compulsory for all passengers prior to checking in for flights.
- ❑ Police Commissioner and Controller of the PNG COVID-19 National Pandemic Response David Manning issued revised measures effective from 11 June. Full details of all measures can be found at www.covid19.info.gov.pg

Pillar Updates & Priorities

Surveillance:

- ❑ Development of an expanded testing strategy providing suggestions for provinces on different population groups, industries, and at-risk populations that could be targeted to increase testing for COVID-19.
- ❑ An additional 600 samples have been sent from CPHL to the Doherty Institute in Australia for Whole Genome Sequencing.
- ❑ Meetings have taken place with 7 of the 10 priority provinces that will be involved in the GoData rollout to assess readiness, capacity, identify current gaps, and address any concerns.

Table 1. Newly reported COVID-19 cases in PNG¹

	New Cases (7 June to 13 June 2021)	Cumulative Total
Autonomous Region of Bougainville	31	399
Central	7	268
East New Britain	36	1114
East Sepik	1	231
Eastern Highlands	11	710
Enga	5	272
Gulf	13	115
Hela	9	121
Jiwaka	4	152
Madang	32	423
Manus	59	439
Milne Bay	35	194
Morobe	3	1178
National Capital District	43	5116
New Ireland	7	527
Northern (Oro)	0	196
Simbu	4	229
Southern Highlands	0	196
West New Britain	9	1007
West Sepik	2	447
Western	0	2385
Western Highlands	24	1009
Total	335	16728

Table 2. COVID-19 GLOBAL AND REGIONAL UPDATE²

	Confirmed Cases	Deaths
Global	175,306,598	3,792,777
Western Pacific	3,262,112	49,877

² WHO COVID-19 Dashboard as of 13/06/2021, 16:45 CEST

COVID-19 Hotline

- For the period of 7-13 June, the COVID-19 National Hotline received 4100 calls.
- Of these, 31 (about .76%) were health-related calls. 18 of these were referred to the Rapid Response Team/PHA.
- As of 14 June, the hotline had received a total of 250,979 calls. Of these, 6,182 (2.5%) were health-related calls. A total of 2549 calls to date have been referred to Rapid Response Team/PHAs.
- The hotline is receiving a high number of calls from people seeking results of Covid-19 tests.
- There have also been a high number of callers seeking information about identifying symptoms, preventative measures, provincial vaccination programs and travel related queries

Laboratory:

- Training of laboratory staff in Angau on RT-PCR testing continued last week while the commissioning and certification of the laboratory was completed.
- An abridged copy of the testing strategy was developed with the aim of increasing testing in the country.
- Construction work, electrical and plumbing has begun at the site of the Mindero Air Lab and the cooling container is also expected to arrive this week.
- The School of Medicine is in the process of finalising quotations on the renovation of the laboratory designated for the PCR laboratory.

Emergency Medical Teams (EMTs)

- There are currently 1 EMT team operating in PNG.
- Heart to Heart international (HHI) has a 5-person team in Kudjip and Kimbe which has been helping to strengthen clinical practices as well as conduct training and awareness on IPC and vaccines.
- The HHI team in Kudjip have been actively participating in clinical care in the Surgical and Obstetrics and Gynaecology Units.
- The process of developing a national EMT team has also commenced with consultations between the team in country and international EMT consultants.

Clinical Management and Infection Prevention and Control:

- The clinical management team's focus for this week has been strategizing to optimise the COVID-19 response for the next 3 months.
- There will be a focus on improving acute care in the provinces by providing scenario based training, sufficient biomedical equipment and improving nursing care.
- Teams will be sent out to the provinces to train keeping these priorities in mind. Planned visits to urban clinics in the NCD continue with the aim of providing clinical management and IPC support.
- A series of guidelines which include handling deteriorating patients, swabbing of the dead and health-worker risk assessment post exposure continue to be developed.
- A member of the IPC team is supporting the PHA and RRT training in Manus this week in IPC and clinical management.
- Weekly meetings of the correctional facilities TWG continue to be held.

Risk Communication & Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions (NPIs):

- Vaccine advocacy by NDoH/WHO and PHA teams continued in Jiwaka and Chimbu where health, frontline and essential workers made informed decisions to be vaccinated once provided with factual, evidence-based information.
- Production of 'Sleeves up Covid-19 Vaccine Champion' IEC Key awareness materials commencing, with distribution scheduled next two weeks. Partners are to provide quantity requests for brochures and posters to UNICEF Communications for Development team
- A focus on increased engagement with NGO sector and RCCE Cluster identified areas of opportunity for collaboration and valuable feedback on Advocacy and Communications plan for July.
- Social listening systems have identified the most discussed and shared topics and data is being fed back into message development to address public concerns and fill information gaps.
- Highlight from the Social and digital campaign last week included Prime Minister Marape and Controller Manning receiving their second vaccine as well as the country reaching the 40,000 Vaccines milestone. These events resulted in total of 147 shares on social media and 8700 direct engagements from the NDoH Facebook page.

Logistics and Supplies:

- 1.5 tons of COVID 19 supplies including PPE, IPC and laboratory supplies were dispatched to Western Highland, Gulf, Oro, NCD and Milne Bay. Supplies were also dispatched to St Johns Ambulance, NDoH, Rita Flynn and Sky Medical Clinic.
- A site has been identified at Port Moresby General Hospital to establish a new Oxygen Generator Plant and preparation works are being quoted prior to installation.

Quarantine & Point of Entry:

- As of 13 June, there were 518 people under quarantine (PUQ) of which 65 were in home quarantine, 316 in hotels, 93 in company sites and 44 in company apartments.
- There were no reported positive COVID-19 cases in quarantine during this reporting period.

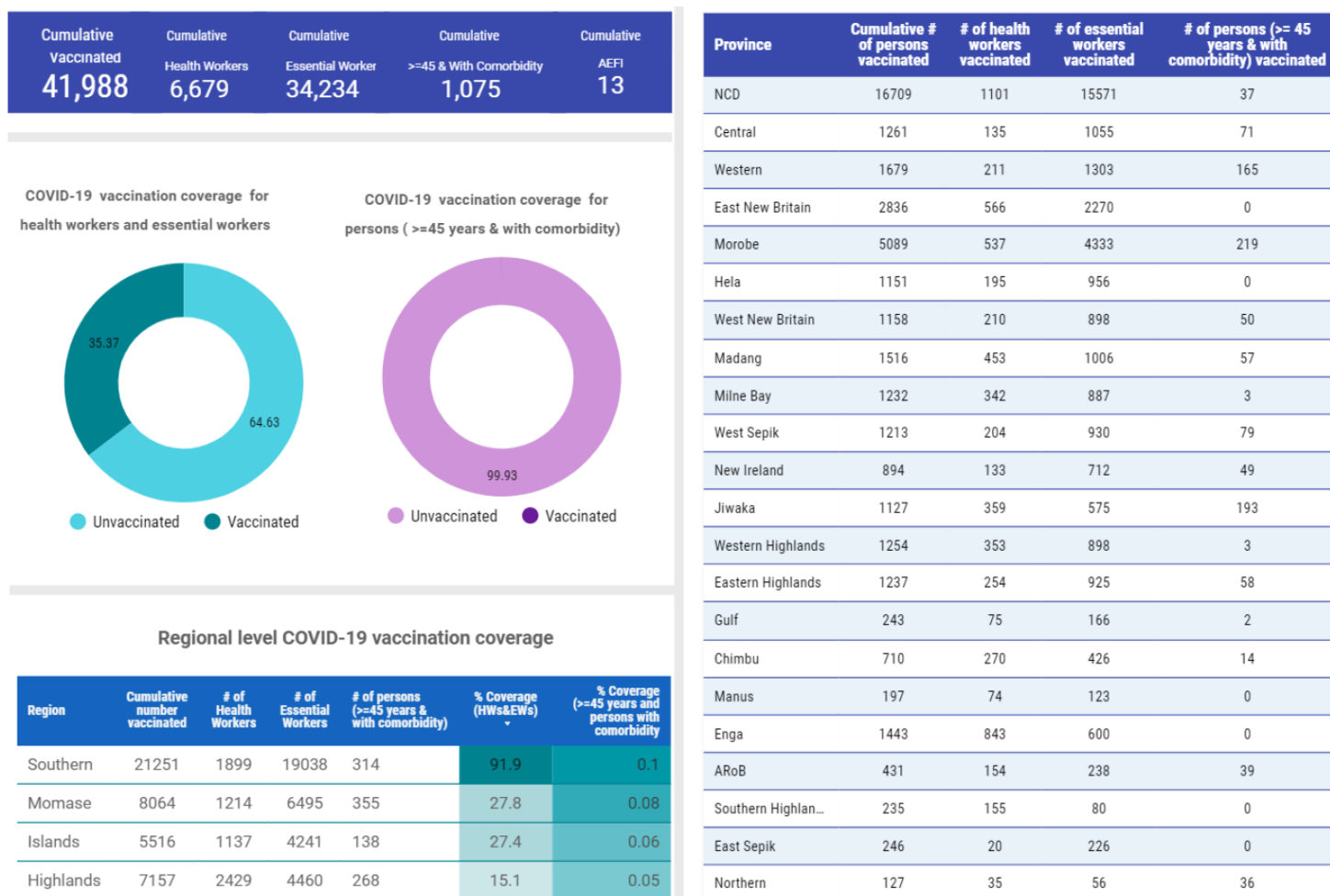
Table 4. Persons Screened by Point of Entry

Total Number of Travelers Screened before SOE (until 22 March 2020)	29,387	
Total Number of Travelers Screened during SOE (23 March – 16 June 2020)	3,788	
Total Number of Travelers Screened after SOE (17 June 2020 – 12 June 2021)	Air	21,783
	Sea	671
	Land	6
	Total	22,440

National Vaccine Rollout

- ❑ A total of 123 vaccination sites have started vaccinations, out of 164 sites planned to provide COVID-19 vaccinations nationwide.
- ❑ Eligibility for vaccination now includes all persons 45 years and older and all adults having comorbidity.
- ❑ As of 14 June 2021, a total of 41,988 people have been vaccinated in PNG. This includes 6,679 health workers and 34,234 essential workers and 1,075 people over the ages of 45 with those with comorbidities.
- ❑ Efforts continue for the vaccination of health care workers and other essential workers.
- ❑ East New Britain has been the most successful in reaching their health care workers having vaccinated over 60% of the health workforce.
- ❑ The Southern region has vaccinated over 90% of its targeted essential workers continue for the vaccination of health care workers and other essential workers.

Figure 1. Cumulative number of persons vaccinated by Region and Province



National and Provincial Public Health Response

- The Pandemic Response Coordination Group and the Health Operations Team continue to meet regularly at the National Control Centre.

COVID-19 Control Measures

- Police Commissioner and Controller of the PNG COVID-19 National Pandemic Response David Manning issued revised measures effective from 11 June:

Measure 2 – International travel

- Children under 5 entering the country are no longer required to be tested for COVID
- Any traveler who has spent the last 21 days in a low- or medium-risk country (schedule 10) and has not been to any other country not on schedule 10 and who has been fully vaccinated (schedule 11) qualifies to quarantine for 7 days either in a designated quarantine facility (schedule 4) or at home (home quarantine request required)

Measure 3 – Domestic travel

- The requirement for COVID-19 testing prior to domestic travel is left up to the discretion of the destination provincial government

Measure 12 – Vaccination

- Port Moresby General Hospital and provincial health authorities may engage non-governmental organizations and private-sector organizations to administer COVID-19 vaccines with a memorandum of understanding.
- Full details of all measures can be found at www.covid19.info.gov.pg

PCR testing for International Travel

- Air Niugini has partnered with International SOS to deliver PCR testing at Jacksons Airport for all passengers departing in Air Niugini International flights. This test is compulsory for all passengers prior to checking in for flights.
- There is no longer a requirement to have a separate COVID-19 PCR test conducted at other locations prior to this test.

Report for Morobe PHA

- Morobe province has reported a dramatic reduction in the incidences of COVID-19 cases in the month of May 2021 comparing to March and April.
- The total cases in April was 594 but reduced to 273 in May. This has occurred concurrently with the increase in the number of testing sites in the country.
- The PHA reported that advocacy visit from the NCC team made an impact on the health workers perception of the vaccine as many health workers took the vaccination the next day and committed to encouraging others by sharing the information they received from the advocacy session.
- The majority of tests for Morobe in the month of April and May were conducted through PCR by the Sky Health Medical Services, which provides health services to Morobe Mining Limited.
- Morobe province will be the second province after CPHL in POM to have its own functional PCR laboratory. The staff training is now underway for the PCR machine and it will shortly be commissioned for reporting.

Transmission Assessment

There are currently COVID-19 cases being reported across PNG, with cases reported from all 21 provinces, except for Oro Province. Manus was reporting very low number of cases in the previous weeks but this week it accounts for 17% of all the positive cases throughout the country. The data is strongly suggestive of ongoing community transmission in all 22 provinces. The epidemic curve, although showing a marked decline in the trend, should be interpreted with caution as it may not be reflective of true positivity.

The current positivity has reduced from 20% from last week to 17% this week but is highly reliant on testing data from all testing facilities in the country.

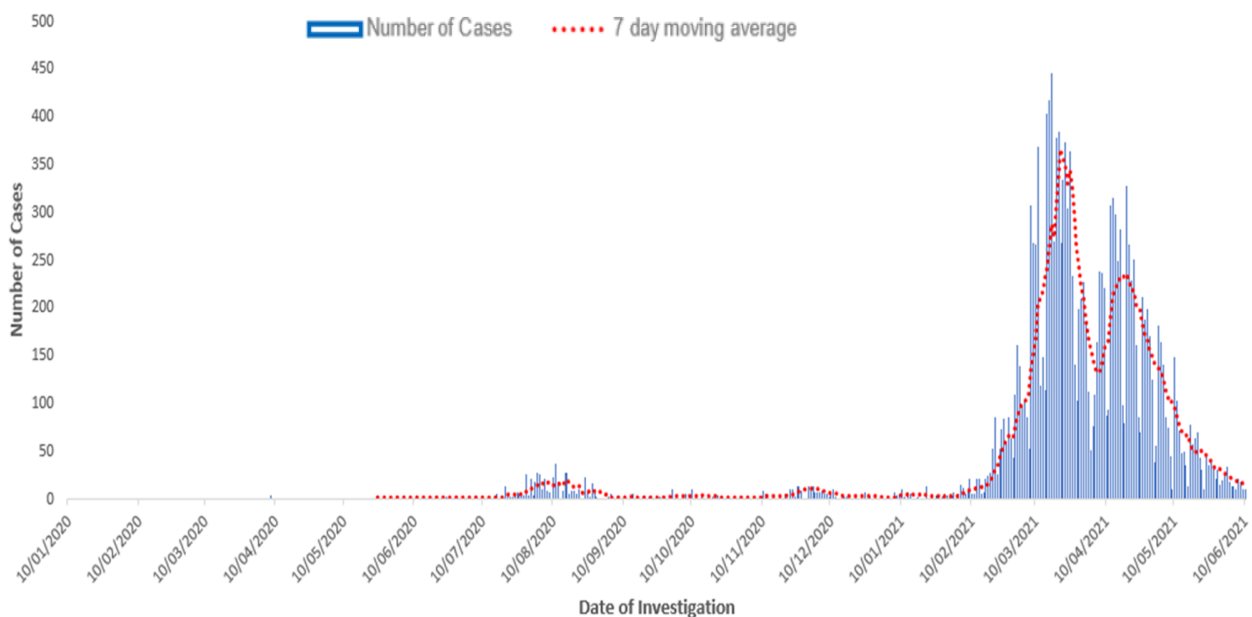
Challenges around obtaining the swabbing, testing and reporting is still observed and strategies are currently being explored to improve and strengthen current response.

While there continue to be low rates of testing and limited contact tracing, it is believed that community transmission of COVID-19 is occurring throughout much of PNG. With a low level of confidence based on the available data, National Capital District (NCD), Morobe, East New Britain and Western Highlands, Madang, Eastern Highlands, appear to be in Stage 3, widespread community transmission. In addition, AROB, Central, East Sepik, Enga, Hela, Manus, New Ireland, Northern, West New Britain, and Western appear to have localised community transmission (stage 2).

More information on the WHO Western Pacific Regional Office COVID-19 transmission stages can be found here: bit.ly/WPRODashboard

Epidemiology

Figure 3. Epidemiological curve of COVID-19 cases in Papua New Guinea, 15 March 2020 to 13 June 2021



Please note: The true extent of the decreasing trend must be interpreted with caution as there are delays in receiving and reporting results from provinces.

Figure 4. Percentage age and sex distribution of COVID-19 cases (63% male, n=10533), 15 March 2020 to 13 June 2021

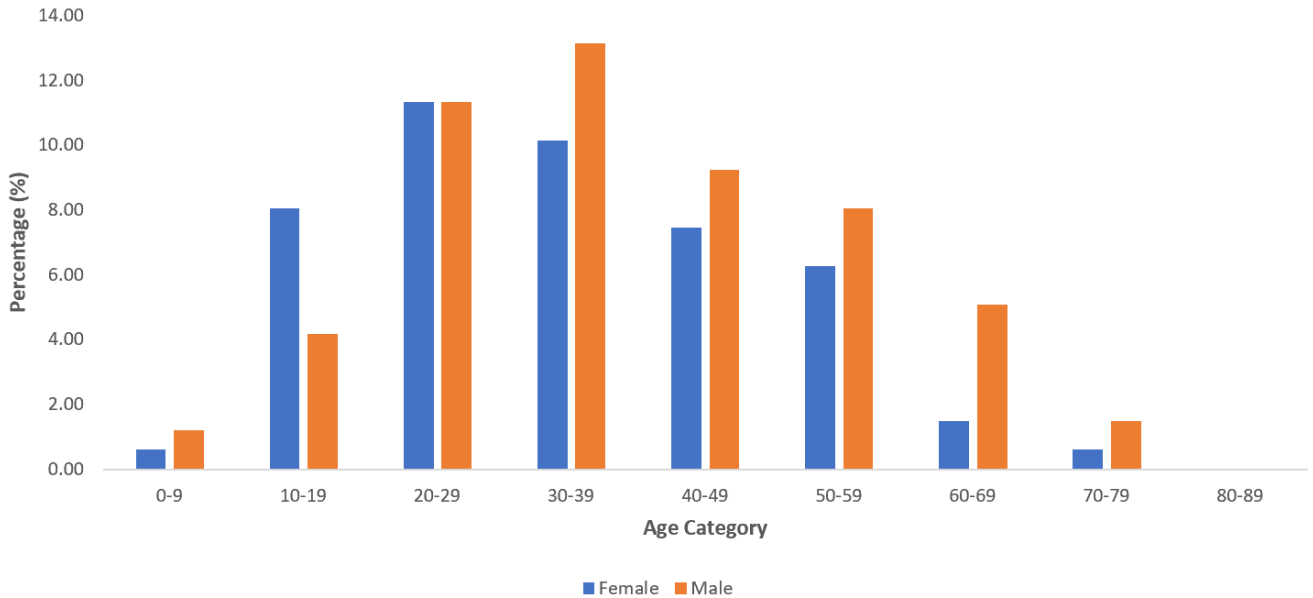
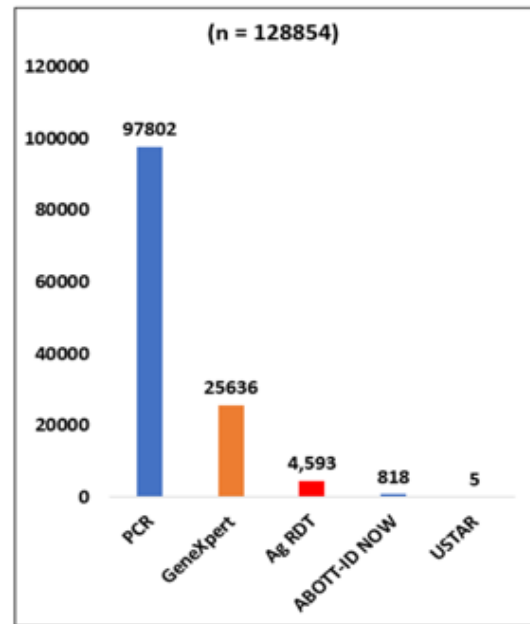


Table 3: Number of swabs taken (tests) by type of test and province from 16 Jan 2020 to 13 June 2021

Provinces	Ag RDT	ABBOT-ID NOW	USTAR	GeneXpert	PCR	Total Tests
ARoB	1			795	2405	3,201
CEP	8	322		28	1696	1,732
Chimbu				454	270	724
EHP	90			969	3358	4,417
ENB	29			1778	4748	6,555
Enga	1			684	1650	2,335
ESP	34			403	1404	1,841
Gulf	297			282	470	1,049
Hela		156		648	2050	2,698
Jiwaka	89			319	201	609
Madang	389			1527	252	2,168
Manus	513			179	2338	3,030
MBP	1			562	937	1,500
Morobe	891			657	5956	7,504
NCD	970	296	5	12245	29460	42,675
NIP				471	6127	6,598
Oro				49	724	773
SHP		44		146	3990	4,136
Western				883	11907	12,790
WHP	804			837	5212	6,853
WNB	476			1099	9796	11,371
WSP				621	1916	2,537
MISSING				0	935	935
Grand Total	4,593	818	5	25,636	97,802	128,854



ANNEX A – Photos



Photos 1: Laboratory team visit to Kundiawa, Simbu Province



Photos 3: Laboratory team visit to Goroka laboratory



Photos 2: Laboratory team visit to Manus

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