

27-30 August Alert Level 4 Pulse Check

DEPARTMENT OF THE PRIME MINISTER AND
CABINET

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CONTEXT, OBJECTIVES, METHODOLOGY & SAMPLE

CONTEXT

On the 17th of August a COVID-19 Delta variant case was identified in the Auckland community. In response, the entirety of New Zealand moved to Alert Level 4 – Auckland and the Coromandel for at least 7 days and the rest of the country for at least 3 days.

Today (Monday 30 August), the entirety of New Zealand remains at Alert Level 4, at day 13 of lockdown. On Friday 27 August (pre fieldwork) it was announced that regions south of the Auckland border will move to Alert Level 3 at 11:59pm on Tuesday 31 August while Auckland would likely stay at Alert Level 4 for another two weeks from this date.

OBJECTIVES

This research aims to understand any shifts and changes in New Zealanders sentiment towards COVID-19 during this Delta outbreak.

Key areas of focus are the current sentiment towards COVID-19 and the Alert Level 4 lockdown, information needs of the public, compliance with Alert Level 4 guidelines and restrictions, and vaccine intentions and sentiment.

METHODOLOGY

A short survey covering COVID-19 sentiment, Alert Level 4 sentiment, information needs, compliance with key Alert Level 4 behaviours, and vaccine uptake.

Fieldwork was launched in the second week of Alert Level 4 lockdown, running over the weekend from the evening of Friday 27 August 2021 to the morning of Monday 30 August 2021.

Where possible, key comparisons are made to the 19 August lockdown pulse research – which was conducted overnight on the 19th of August, the second day of the nationwide lockdown. Comparisons are also made to the July 2021 Immediate Needs Dip research which was conducted during an Alert Level 1 period. Due to differences in the August and July surveys, comparisons are indicative only, even when significant.

SAMPLE

Our sample consists of New Zealanders 16 years and over.

Total sample of n=305

No hard quotas were set in order to achieve our sample target as quickly as possible. However, we sent out sample according to nationally representative quotas.

Our sample was post weighted to be nationally representative in terms of age, gender and region only.

Margin for error at the 95% level of confidence: +/- 5.6 percentage points.

COVID-19 SENTIMENT

The dominant emotion is neutrality – we see negative emotions beginning to subside in favour of neutrality.

We see a significant decrease in the number of people who are feeling ‘sad’, coupled with a significant increase in those who are feeling ‘neutral’.

There has been a significant uplift in neutrality across age, gender, region, employment status and household incomes, except for ages 35-54 years where it is stable.

The decrease in sadness can be seen most largely amongst females (32%, -28% from 19-Aug), non-Auckland North Islanders (24%, -25%), and those who are unemployed (28%, -22%).

Q: What are your emotions at the moment regarding the situation with COVID-19 in New Zealand?

	30-AUG	19-AUG	30-AUG VS. 19-AUG
Anger	16%	21%	-6%
Disgust	7%	7%	0%
Fear	11%	13%	-2%
Joy	9%	6%	+3%
Neutral	38%	23%	+15%
Sad	34%	46%	-11%
Surprise	9%	13%	-4%
Proud	4%	4%	0%

Base: 30-August 2021 n=305, 19-August 2021 n=308

Fatigue is evident for those who feel “neutral”, as is their concern with the ambiguity of when lockdown will be lifted.

Q: And why is that? (Neutral)

“Resigned to what we need to do to eliminate covid” – Male, Auckland, Under 35

“Just tiring that this has happened again” – Male, Auckland, Under 35

“We are stuck in lockdown with no control over our own life’s work” – Male, Auckland, 35-54 years

“I honestly don’t know what to think or feel about it all anymore” – Female, Auckland, 55 years and over

“Just don’t know what is going to happen over next few weeks” – Female, Auckland, 35-54 years

“We’re doing the right thing, but no-one is enjoying the lockdown” – Male, rest of North Island, 35-54 years

“It’s frustrating but it must be dealt with” – Male, South Island, 35-54 years

“Accepting of the current situation, but do not believe it should apply to the region I am in” – Male, South Island, 55 years and over

When it comes to the Alert Level 4 lockdown, only a minority think it's the 'wrong thing to do' (11%).

Although there has been a slight uplift in this group, this is a **non-significant** increase.

Similar to 19-Aug, most people are happy or okay about the Alert Level 4 setting, and even those who are unhappy mostly recognise that it's the right thing to do.

Q (Aug-19): How do you feel about the current Alert Level 4 in response to the COVID-19 Delta variant cases in Auckland?

Q (Aug-19): How do you feel about the current Alert Level settings in response to the COVID-19 Delta variant cases in the community?

	30-AUG	19-AUG	30-AUG VS. 19-AUG
Unhappy about it, and think it's the wrong thing to do	11%	9%	+2%
Unhappy about it, but think it's the right thing to do	24%	30%	-6%
Okay about it	29%	20%	+9%
Happy with it	34%	39%	-5%
Not sure	2%	2%	=

Base: 30-August 2021 n=305, 19-August 2021 n=308

The vast majority of New Zealanders continue to believe we're heading in the 'right direction' when it comes to handling COVID-19.

There have been no significant shifts in responses.

For the 'wrong direction' group there have been no significant uplifts across demographics, and no significant demographic skews.

Q: How do you feel the country is going with handling the impact of and response to COVID-19?

	30-AUG	19-AUG	30-AUG VS. 19-AUG
Right direction	69%	72%	-3%
Wrong direction	16%	12%	+4%
Not sure	15%	16%	-1%

Base: 30-August 2021 n=305, 19-August 2021 n=308

At a total level, we have seen a slight decline in concern surrounding the impact of COVID-19.

The effect on the NZ economy and New COVID-19 variants remain the top concerns.

In particular, we have seen a significant decrease in the number of people concerned about the impact of COVID-19 on their health (34%), and the amount of people getting COVID-19 (33%). The latter has dropped four places in rank of importance compared to 19-Aug measures.

Aucklanders are the region with the most concerns (6.7 concerns on average) compared to the rest of North Island (5.6) and South Islanders (5.9).

Under 35s remain least concerned with the impacts of COVID-19 on New Zealand (average of 4.8 concerns, stable from 19-Aug). In particular, they are significantly less likely to be concerned with border / MIQ security (11%, -19% from total). Over 55s remain the most concerned (7.3), but their concern is declining from 19-Aug (8.4).

Q: What are you thinking about in terms of the impact of COVID-19 in New Zealand?

	30-AUG	19-AUG	30-AUG VS. 19-AUG
The effect on the New Zealand economy	55%	56%	-1%
New COVID-19 variants	50%	53%	-3%
The financial impact it has on businesses	50%	52%	-2%
The effect on the mental health of New Zealanders	46%	41%	+5%
Not knowing when we will return to normal	43%	44%	-1%
New Zealand's vaccination plan and rollout	38%	37%	+1%
The impact on my health if I got COVID-19	34%	45%	-11%
The amount of people getting COVID-19	33%	50%	-17%
The impact on my family's health if they got COVID-19	32%	36%	-4%
The Border/MIQ security	30%	34%	-4%
Going in and out of different Alert Levels	27%	29%	-2%
Access for kids and people receiving education	27%	20%	+7%
Make it harder for people in need to get support	27%	21%	+6%
Access to healthcare	25%	30%	-5%
Low socio-economic areas being hit the hardest	24%	27%	-3%
New Zealand becoming more isolated	22%	17%	+5%
Managing the logistics of lockdowns e.g. roadblocks, confusion of when and how we move Alert Levels, what we need to do	22%	21%	+1%
New Zealanders becoming more distant from each other	17%	18%	-1%
AVERAGE NUMBER OF CONCERNS	6.0	6.4	-0.4

Base: 30-August 2021 n=305, 19-August 2021 n=308

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COVID-19 INFORMATION

Almost three quarters feel they're being told all the information they need to know. We have seen no significant changes since the 19-Aug Pulse.

16% feel they're not being told all the information they need to know – a slight uplift since 19-Aug, but non-significant. There are no significant demographic skews or uplifts from 19-Aug for this group.

Q: How do you feel about the quality of information about COVID-19 that is currently being provided on what you need to do, given the change in Alert Levels?

	30-AUG	19-AUG	30-AUG VS. 19-AUG
I am being told information I don't need to know	8%	8%	=
I am being told all the information I need to know	72%	75%	-3%
I am not being told all the information I need to know	16%	13%	+3%
Not sure	4%	4%	=

Base: 30-August 2021 n=305, 19-August 2021 n=308

Media briefings remain the key information source for New Zealanders. We have also seen a significant increase in the reach of the COVID-19 website and the Ministry of Health website.

Q: Where are you getting information from to keep up to date about the New Zealand Government's public health COVID-19 response, including plans, Alert Level guidelines, the COVID-19 vaccine etc.?

	30-AUG	19-AUG	30-AUG VS. 19-AUG
Media briefings	61%	64%	-3%
COVID-19 website (covid19.govt.nz)	55%	38%	+16%
Articles in the news/media	44%	45%	-1%
COVID-19 advertising	40%	37%	+3%
Ministry of Health website	40%	33%	+7%
Friends/family/whānau	20%	20%	=
Social media posts and pages	16%	17%	-1%
Searching for it on the internet	15%	17%	-2%
BookMyVaccine.nz	10%	7%	+3%
Your family doctor, GP or a health care professional	9%	7%	+2%
Community groups and networks	6%	6%	-1%
Overseas sources	3%	4%	-1%
Iwi /Māori groups/kaumatua	3%	1%	+2%
Faith/religious groups/ leaders	2%	4%	-2%
karawhiua.nz	2%	1%	+1%

Base: 30-August 2021 n=305, 19-August 2021 n=308

ALERT LEVEL 4 COMPLIANCE

Most New Zealanders remain ‘happy’ to do their part when it comes to the current Alert Level restrictions and guidelines.

They are less happy to do their part when it means limiting contact (self-isolating) with other people in their bubble, where respondents predominantly reallocate to **“I will do it, but I am not that happy about it”**.

When it comes to working from home, this is the situation where people are less happy to comply (76%). In this case, we see a reallocation to *“I will do it, but I am not that happy about it”* (9%). We also see a higher-than-average reallocation to *“not sure”* (7%) and *“I won’t do it”* (5%) – however, these responses are driven by those who are unemployed or retired.

Overall, willingness to comply is relatively similar across age and region.

Q (19-Aug): Given the shift to Alert Level 4, and the change in the COVID-19 situation in New Zealand, how willing are you to do the following in Alert Level 4?

Q (30-Aug): Given the recent changes to the Alert Level in New Zealand, how willing are you to do the following?

“I am happy to do my part”	30-AUG	19-AUG	30-AUG VS. 19-AUG
Keep 2 metres away from other people when outside your home	86%	89%	-3%
Stay within your region	84%	83%	+1%
Stay at home in your immediate household bubble, except for essential trips and exercise	83%	80%	+3%
*Only go out for necessities	83%	85%	-2%
Scan in or make a record when I enter a business or service	83%	-	-
Check locations of interest to see if you could be a close contact	80%	83%	-3%
Get a COVID-19 test if unwell	79%	77%	+2%
Use a mask whenever you leave your home	79%	76%	+3%
Isolate myself if a household member is a close contact	77%	-	-
If you feel unwell, immediately self-isolate from others in your bubble	77%	81%	-4%
*Only work outside the home when I need to, as an Alert Level 4 or 3 worker	76%	-	-

Base: 30-August 2021 n=305, 19-August 2021 n=308

*Wording altered between waves, not directly comparable

Q (19-Aug): Given the shift to Alert Level 4, and the change in the COVID-19 situation in New Zealand, how willing are you to do the following in Alert Level 4?

Q (30-Aug): Given the recent changes to the Alert Level in New Zealand, how willing are you to do the following?

“I will do it, but I am not that happy about it”	30-AUG	19-AUG	30-AUG VS. 19-AUG
Isolating myself if a household member is a close contact	13%	-	-
Use a mask whenever you leave your home	12%	16%	-4%
If you feel unwell, immediately self-isolate from others in your bubble	12%	8%	+4%
*Only go out for necessities	11%	9%	+2%
Get a COVID-19 test if unwell	11%	15%	-4%
Stay at home in your immediate household bubble, except for essential trips and exercise	11%	13%	-2%
Check locations of interest to see if you could be a close contact	10%	7%	+3%
Stay within your region	9%	11%	-2%
Only work outside the home when I need to, as an Alert Level 4 or 3 worker	9%	6%	+3%
Keep 2 metres away from other people when outside your home	6%	8%	+2%

Base: 30-August 2021 n=305, 19-August 2021 n=308
 *Wording altered between waves, not directly comparable

Very few New Zealanders say they won't comply with COVID-19 Alert Level 4 guidelines and restrictions.

This is higher when it comes to working from home (5%) and getting a COVID-19 test if unwell (4%).

Q (19-Aug): Given the shift to Alert Level 4, and the change in the COVID-19 situation in New Zealand, how willing are you to do the following in Alert Level 4?

Q (30-Aug): Given the recent changes to the Alert Level in New Zealand, how willing are you to do the following?

"I won't do it"	30-AUG	19-AUG	30-AUG VS. 19-AUG
Only work outside the home when I need to, as an Alert Level 4 or 3 worker	5%	-	-
Get a COVID-19 test if unwell	4%	4%	=
Scan in or make a record when I enter a business or service	3%	-	-
Isolate myself if a household member is a close contact	2%	-	-
If you feel unwell, immediately self-isolate from others in your bubble	2%	2%	=
Check locations of interest to see if you could be a close contact	1%	2%	-1%
Stay at home in your immediate household bubble, except for essential trips and exercise	1%	2%	-1%
Use a mask whenever you leave your home	1%	1%	=
Stay within your region	1%	1%	=
*Only go out for necessities	1%	1%	=
Keep 2 metres away from other people when outside your home	1%	0%	+1%

Base: 30-August 2021 n=305, 19-August 2021 n=308
 *Wording altered between waves, not directly comparable

We are also seeing a “not sure” group emerge, signalling some fatigue amongst the population.

Q (19-Aug): Given the shift to Alert Level 4, and the change in the COVID-19 situation in New Zealand, how willing are you to do the following in Alert Level 4?

Q (30-Aug): Given the recent changes to the Alert Level in New Zealand, how willing are you to do the following?

“Not sure”	30-AUG	19-AUG	30-AUG VS. 19-AUG
Only work outside the home when I need to, as an Alert Level 4 or 3 worker	7%	-	-
Get a COVID-19 test if unwell	4%	0%	+4%
Isolate myself if a household member is a close contact	3%	-	-
If you feel unwell, immediately self-isolate from others in your bubble	3%	1%	+2%
Check locations of interest to see if you could be a close contact	3%	1%	-2%
Stay at home in your immediate household bubble, except for essential trips and exercise	3%	0%	+3%
Use a mask whenever you leave your home	3%	2%	+1%
Stay within your region	3%	0%	+3%
Scan in or make a record when I enter a business or service	2%	-	-
*Only go out for necessities	2%	0%	+2%
Keep 2 metres away from other people when outside your home	2%	0%	+2%

Base: 30-August 2021 n=305, 19-August 2021 n=308

*Wording altered between waves, not directly comparable

VACCINE SEGMENTS & INFORMATION NEEDS

Our ‘Vaccinated or Pending’ segment continues to grow as more of the population become eligible to receive the vaccine.

With over 30s now eligible for the vaccine, we have seen a significant shift for the 35 - 54-year age group from feeling “Good to Go” (4% 30-Aug, -18% from 19-Aug) to being “Vaccinated or Pending” (77%, +19% from 19-Aug).

The significant increase in those who are “Okay with it” is predominantly driven by those who are under 35, and males.

Compared to 19-Aug we have seen significant shifts in under 35s from “Good to Go” (12% 30-Aug, -32% from 19-Aug) to “Vaccinated or Pending” (46%, +10% from 19-Aug) and also to being **“Okay with it” (26%, +20% from 19-Aug)**. Males overall have shifted from “Good to Go” (4% 30-Aug, -22% from 19-Aug) to “Vaccinated and Pending” (70%, +11% from 19-Aug) and also to being **“Okay with it” (16%, +10% from 19-Aug)**.

DPMC Vaccination Segments

Q: Have you already been offered an opportunity to get your COVID-19 vaccination?

Q: Do you intend to get the COVID-19 vaccination?

	30-AUG	19-AUG	30-AUG VS. 19-AUG
Vaccinated or Pending	70%	61%	+9%
Good to Go	6%	22%	-16%
Okay with it	11%	5%	+6%
Unlikely	3%	2%	+1%
Unengaged	5%	6%	-1%
Rejectors	5%	4%	+1%

Base: 30-August 2021 n=305, 19-August 2021 n=308

Key motivators to get the COVID-19 vaccine are wanting to ‘protect my friends and whānau’ and getting ‘freedom to do what I want back’.

Q: Which of the following are most likely to make you want to get the vaccine?

	30-AUG
I want to protect my friends/family/whānau	55%
I want the freedom to do what I want back	41%
The health concerns if I got COVID-19	30%
I don't want another lockdown	25%
I think it's the right thing to follow the rules and laws	20%
My sense of duty to NZ	18%
I want the borders to open up as soon as possible	15%
I don't want the financial impact to keep on going	15%
Others in my social group are	5%
I don't want to be seen to not be following the guidelines	2%
It's what others are doing	2%
Not sure	7%

Base: 30-August 2021 n=305

Majority of New Zealanders continue to feel they're getting enough information on the vaccine, but for some the efficacy against the Delta variant, vaccine ingredients, and side-effects remain key concerns.

Q: When it comes to the vaccine, is there any other information you would find helpful

“More information on how effective it actually is against Delta”
– Male, Auckland, Under 35

“I would like to know how effective it is against COVID-19, plus all the risks”
– Rest of North Island, Male, Under 35

“More information on the side effects would be helpful” – Male, Auckland, Under 35

“More info on side effects” – Female, South Island, 35 – 54 years

“More information about current Pfizer vaccine efficacy against delta variant, and the availability of better vaccines” – Male, South Island, 35 – 54 years

“I want to wait and see if there are major side effects. They developed it unbelievably quickly” – Female, Rest of North Island, 55 years and over

“Information on what exactly is in the vaccine... That's what's holding me up from booking” – Female, South Island, 55 years and over

For those who are older, there is also some new confusion and concern about whether a booster jab will be required.

“I would like a third one for better protection” – Male, Auckland, 55 years and over

“Thinking if we should get a third dose as this Delta Variant is very strong and dangerous” – Male, Rest of North Island, 55 years and over

“How long does the vaccine last? Will I need to get another dose every 12 months?” – Male, Rest of North Island, 55 years and over

“Do we need a third jab?” – Male, Auckland, 55 years and over

“When is the booster vaccine going to come?” – Male, Auckland, 55 years and over

“Only if we need to get a booster shot” – Female, Auckland, 55 years and over

“How long the vaccine last / when the ‘booster’ required” – Female, Auckland, 35-54 years

“Do we need another booster jab if we have already had 2” – Male, Auckland, 55 years and over

Significantly more New Zealanders feel the vaccine rollout is going ‘really well’ compared to July 2021 measures.

We have also seen a significant decrease in the number of New Zealanders who feel the rollout is going badly (20%) compared to July 2021 (27%).

Q: How well do you think the COVID-19 vaccine rollout is going in New Zealand?

	30-AUG	JULY 2021	30-AUG V JULY 2021
Really well	23%	14%	+9%
Okay	49%	51%	-2%
Badly	20%	27%	-7%
Not sure	8%	8%	=

Base: 30-August 2021 n=305, July 2021 Immediate Needs Dip n=827

Over half of New Zealanders expect they will need to continue COVID-19 health behaviours even once the majority of New Zealanders are vaccinated.

As more of the population is vaccinated against COVID-19, New Zealanders are increasingly realistic about what a world where the majority are vaccinated looks like.

Q: What do you think life will be like in New Zealand once the majority of New Zealanders are vaccinated against COVID-19?

	30-AUG	JULY 2021	30-AUG V JULY 2021
I expect to continue to undertake health behaviours	52%	36%	+16%
Small day to day differences in life compared to pre-COVID-19	40%	39%	+1%
I expect everything to be back to normal (pre COVID-19)	12%	18%	-6%
Not sure	8%	7%	+1%

Base: 30-August 2021 n=305, July 2021 Immediate Needs Dip n=827