

19 August Alert Level 4 Pulse Check

DEPARTMENT OF THE PRIME MINISTER AND
CABINET

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OBJECTIVES, METHODOLOGY & SAMPLE

OBJECTIVES

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.

This research aims to understand the current sentiment towards COVID-19 and the Alert Level 4 lockdown, information needs of the public, and compliance with Alert Level 4 guidelines and restrictions.

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 on the second day of the nationwide lockdown, running from the evening of Thursday 19 August 2021 to the morning of Friday 20 August 2021.

Where possible, key comparisons are made to the July 2021 Immediate Needs Dip research – which was conducted during an Alert Level 1 period. Due to differences in these surveys comparisons are indicative only, even when significant.

SAMPLE

Our sample consists of New Zealanders 16 years and over.

Total sample of n=308

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: +/- 6 percentage points.

COVID-19 SENTIMENT

The dominant emotion around the COVID-19 situation is sadness.

We have seen a significant shift from neutrality and joy in July, to negative emotions in August – sadness, anger, and fear.

South Islanders are significantly more likely to feel disgust (23%) than the total sample (7%).

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

	AUGUST PULSE	JULY 2021	AUG V. JULY
Anger	21%	10%	+11%
Disgust	7%	4%	+3%
Fear	13%	5%	+8%
Joy	6%	23%	-17%
Neutral	23%	40%	-17%
Sad	46%	15%	+31%
Surprise	13%	9%	+4%
Proud	4%	7%	-3%

Base: August 2021 n=308, Immediate Needs Dip 1 – July 2021 n=827

Only 9% are unhappy about the move to Alert Level 4 and think it's the wrong thing to do.

Under 35s (16%) and middle income (15%) skew towards being “unhappy about it, and think it's the wrong thing to do”.

Most people are happy or okay about the shift to Alert Level 4, and even those who are unhappy mostly recognise that it's the right thing to do.

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

	AUGUST PULSE
Unhappy about it, and think it's the wrong thing to do	9%
Unhappy about it, but think it's the right thing to do	30%
Okay about it	20%
Happy with it	39%
Not sure	2%

Base: August 2021 n=308

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

There have been no significant shifts since July.

Over 55s (81%) are significantly more likely to think we are heading in the "right direction". However, under 35s (61%) are significantly less likely to think we are heading in the "right direction".

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

	AUGUST PULSE	JULY 2021	AUG V. JULY
Right direction	72%	69%	+3%
Wrong direction	12%	15%	-3%
Not sure	16%	16%	=

Base: August 2021 n=308

Compared to July, New Zealanders are more concerned about the impact of COVID-19 on New Zealand.

In particular, we have seen significant increases in the number of New Zealanders concerned about “the amount of people getting COVID-19” (+33%, +12 in rank from July 2021) and “the impact on my health if I got COVID-19” (+19%, +3 in rank from July 2021).

Despite being at the centre of the outbreak, Aucklanders are less concerned with the impacts of COVID-19 – averaging 5.2 concerns compared to other North Islanders at 7.2 and South Islanders at 6.7. Namely, Aucklanders are significantly less concerned than total about the mental health of New Zealanders (28%) and the impact on their health if they got COVID-19 (34%). South Islanders are significantly more likely than total to be concerned with low socio-economic areas being hit the hardest (41%).

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

	AUGUST PULSE	JULY 2021	AUG V. JULY
The effect on the New Zealand economy	56%	49%	+7%
New COVID-19 variants	53%	47%	+6%
The financial impact it has on businesses	52%	40%	+12%
The amount of people getting COVID-19	50%	17%	+33%
The impact on my health if I got COVID-19	45%	27%	+18%
Not knowing when we will return to normal	44%	33%	+11%
The effect on the mental health of New Zealanders	41%	34%	+7%
New Zealand's vaccination plan and rollout	37%	38%	-1%
The impact on my family's health if they got COVID-19	36%	25%	+11%
The Border/MIQ security	34%	39%	-5%
Access to healthcare	30%	20%	+10%
Going in and out of different Alert Levels	29%	18%	+11%
Low socio-economic areas being hit the hardest	27%	19%	+8%
Managing the logistics of lockdowns e.g. roadblocks, confusion of when and how we move Alert Levels, what we need to do	21%	18%	+3%
Make it harder for people in need to get support	21%	18%	+3%
Access for kids and people receiving education	20%	13%	+7%
New Zealanders becoming more distant from each other	18%	13%	+5%
New Zealand becoming more isolated	17%	21%	-4%
AVERAGE NUMBER OF CONCERNS	6.3	4.9	+1.4

Base: August 2021 n=308, Immediate Needs Dip 1 – July 2021 n=827

Under 35s are least concerned with the impacts of COVID-19 on New Zealand (4.8), while over 55s (8.4) are most concerned.

Under 35s top concerns are relatively similar to the total sample. However, the effect on the economy and the impacts on their health if they got COVID-19 are of lower importance to them.

Contrastingly, 87% of over 55s are thinking about the effect of COVID-19 on the New Zealand economy – this is their top concern by far. They are also significantly more concerned by the potential impact of COVID-19 on their health (their #4 concern).

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

	AUGUST PULSE	UNDER 35s	OVER 55s
The effect on the New Zealand economy	56%	34%	87%
New COVID-19 variants	53%	46%	63%
The financial impact it has on businesses	52%	45%	67%
The amount of people getting COVID-19	50%	47%	52%
The impact on my health if I got COVID-19	45%	33%	64%
Not knowing when we will return to normal	44%	35%	56%
The effect on the mental health of New Zealanders	41%	37%	46%
New Zealand's vaccination plan and rollout	37%	27%	55%
The impact on my family's health if they got COVID-19	36%	34%	46%
The Border/MIQ security	34%	19%	55%
Access to healthcare	30%	18%	47%
Going in and out of different Alert Levels	29%	24%	37%
Low socio-economic areas being hit the hardest	27%	16%	35%
Managing the logistics of lockdowns e.g. roadblocks, confusion of when and how we move Alert Levels, what we need to do	21%	12%	28%
Make it harder for people in need to get support	21%	15%	26%
Access for kids and people receiving education	20%	17%	20%
New Zealanders becoming more distant from each other	18%	11%	26%
New Zealand becoming more isolated	17%	14%	22%
AVERAGE NUMBER OF CONCERNS	6.3	4.9	8.4

Base: August 2021 total sample n=308, Under 35s n=108, Over 55s n=87

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COVID-19 INFORMATION

Three quarters of New Zealanders feel they are being told all the information they need to know. This is a significant increase since July 2021 (+9%).

And only 13% feel they're not being told all the information they need to know.

Q (August): 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 to Alert Level 4

Q (July): How do you feel about the quality of information about COVID-19 that is currently being provided on what you need to do?

	AUGUST PULSE	JULY 2021	AUG V. JULY
I am being told information I don't need to know	8%	9%	-1%
I am being told all the information I need to know	75%	66%	+9%
I am not being told all the information I need to know	13%	18%	-5%
Not sure	4%	7%	-3%

Base: August 2021 n=308, Immediate Needs Dip 1 – July 2021 n=827

For those who feel they're not being told all the information they need to know, they are wanting more information on the duration of lockdown and the source of the outbreak.

Q: What information would you find helpful?

"Times for possible moving out of lockdown"

"If they had a rough idea of how long we are looking at staying in lockdown it would be great to know a rough idea"

"How it keeps getting in to NZ"

"More information on how widespread the outbreak is and how long it has been in the community"

"I would like to know how the outbreak initially happened"

Media briefings are the key information source for New Zealanders, with over two thirds of the population using them to keep up to date.

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.?

	AUGUST PULSE	JULY 2021	AUG V. JULY
Media briefings	64%	42%	+22%
Articles in the news/media	45%	48%	-3%
COVID-19 website (covid19.govt.nz)	38%	35%	+3%
COVID-19 advertising	37%	45%	-8%
Ministry of Health website (health.govt.nz)	33%	29%	+4%
Friends/family/whānau	20%	24%	-4%
Social media posts and pages	17%	20%	-3%
Searching for it on the internet	17%	19%	-2%
BookMyVaccine.nz	7%	-	-
Your family doctor, GP or a health care professional	7%	15%	-8%
Community groups and networks	6%	6%	=
Faith/religious groups/ leaders	4%	3%	+1%
Overseas sources	4%	6%	-2%
Iwi / Māori groups / kaumatua	1%	3%	-2%
Karawhiau.nz	1%	0%	-1%

Base: August 2021 n=308, Immediate Needs Dip 1 – July 2021 n=827

ALERT LEVEL 4 COMPLIANCE

Overall, most New Zealanders are “happy” to do their part when it comes to Alert Level 4 restrictions and guidelines.

They are less happy to do their part when it comes to guidelines which are inconvenient in a physical capacity, such as getting a COVID-19 test if unwell and wearing a mask whenever they leave their home. In these cases, respondents reallocate to “I will do it, but I am not that happy about it”.

Willingness to comply is relatively similar across age and region.

Q: 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?

“I am happy to do my part”	AUGUST PULSE
Keep 2 metres away from other people when outside your home	89%
Only go out for essential supplies	85%
Stay within your region	83%
Only work outside the home if you’re an essential worker	83%
Check locations of interest to see if you could be a close contact	83%
If you feel unwell, immediately self-isolate from others in your bubble	81%
Stay at home in your immediate household bubble, except for essential trips and exercise	80%
Get a COVID-19 test if unwell	77%
Use a mask whenever you leave your home	76%

Base: August 2021 n=308

Q: 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?

“I will do it, but I am not that happy about it”	AUGUST PULSE
Use a mask whenever you leave your home	16%
Get a COVID-19 test if unwell	15%
Stay at home in your immediate household bubble, except for essential trips and exercise	13%
Stay within your region	11%
Only go out for essential supplies	9%
If you feel unwell, immediately self-isolate from others in your bubble	8%
Keep 2 meters away from other people when outside your home	8%
Check locations of interest to see if you could be a close contact	7%
Only work outside the home if you’re an essential worker	6%

Base: August 2021 n=308

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

Q: 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?

"I won't do it"	AUGUST PULSE
Get a COVID-19 test if unwell	4%
Only work outside the home if you're an essential worker	3%
Check locations of interest to see if you could be a close contact	2%
If you feel unwell, immediately self-isolate from others in your bubble	2%
Stay at home in your immediate household bubble, except for essential trips and exercise	2%
Use a mask whenever you leave your home	1%
Stay within your region	1%
Only go out for essential supplies	1%
Keep 2 meters away from other people when outside your home	0%

Base: August 2021 n=308

VACCINE SEGMENTS & INFORMATION NEEDS

Our vaccine segments have shifted significantly since July, with 61% of our sample vaccinated or pending.

As more of the population becomes eligible, we would expect our “Good to Go” group to start getting vaccinated and book their vaccine, and our “Okay with it” group to shift towards being “Good to Go”. **Bear in mind that samples may not be directly comparable, however.**

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?

	AUGUST PULSE	JULY 2021	AUG V. JULY
Vaccinated or Pending	61%	40%	+21%
Good to Go	22%	20%	+2%
Okay with it	5%	15%	-10%
Unlikely	2%	5%	-3%
Unengaged	6%	7%	-1%
Rejectors	4%	8%	-4%

Base: August 2021 n=308

Most New Zealanders feel they have all the information they need on the COVID-19 vaccine. For those that feel they are missing information, key areas of ambiguity are side effects of the vaccine, and the efficacy against new variants of COVID-19.

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

“I need to know the after effects of the vaccine”

“A list of side effects, how effective the vaccine is, what variants it protects against”

“Just side effects and how helpful the vaccine is in preventing and easing the covid19 variants”

“What to expect from the vaccine”

“What the side effects are”

“What chance is there of getting the virus with each vaccine. The actual percentage of each of the bad side effects”

“Long term side effect”

“Up to date long term health impacts”

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