



GOVERNMENT OF NIUE

MEDIA RELEASE

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A NEW PHASE IN OUR COVID-19 RESPONSE: GON ANNOUNCES SHIFT FROM COVID DISASTER RESPONSE TO RECOVERY

Alofi, Niue – 4 October 2022 – The Government of Niue (GON) today announced that Niue will be moving from our COVID Response (Alert Levels Blue, Yellow and Red) to Recovery in the Niue Emergency Response Plan to Coronavirus Disease 2020.

For the past three years, Niue’s COVID-19 response has been guided by the Niue Emergency Response Plan to Coronavirus Disease 2020 (COVID-19).

This plan was developed to guide the disaster response to pandemic and has been amended as needed. This plan worked in conjunction with the Niue Disaster Response plan and included three (3) colour codes based on the risks to Niue and the desired response from government departments, the private sector, and the public.

Also contained in the COVID response plan is a section entitled recovery. The recovery stage is also referred to as the post-event and is triggered when “the disease is declining and can be managed under normal business arrangements. The transition from emergency response to business as usual.” This does not, however, mean there is no response. Instead, it means this will transition to a health response and not a disaster response while Niue moves toward “business as usual”.

Niue’s COVID response has been one of the most effective in the entire world. We were able to delay the entry of COVID in Niue for more than two (2) years. Since that time, we have been able to effectively eliminate the Omicron variant of COVID multiple times. This is a feat that only Niue has accomplished.

Because we were able to delay the entrance of COVID into Niue, we have been able to prepare our health system to deal with the effects of the virus. Some of those preparations include:

- One of the highest vaccination rates in the world (including boosters)
- A new isolation ward at Niue Foou Hospital
- Developed health protocols to treat and prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the community
- New medical equipment to assist in the treatment of COVID patients
- A robust testing regime both prior to and after arriving in Niue
- Robust border controls in an attempt to keep the virus out of Niue, and
- Introduced new methods of contact tracing.

Since the introduction of COVID to Niue, the Niue Health Department has identified 80 positive cases, most at the border. These cases were all treated effectively with no hospitalisations or serious complications. In fact, all COVID cases in Niue have experienced either no symptoms or mild symptoms similar to influenza.

Niue has experienced one (1) community spread event. With the help of RockSafe and traditional contact tracing methods, cases were quickly identified and isolated within a few days and the community spread was limited to under 20 people. This demonstrates Niue's ability to effectively manage COVID cases both at the border and in the community.

Many of the countries around the world have dropped all COVID-related restrictions for both travels and for their citizens and residents returning to pre-COVID settings.

The management of Niue's COVID response as a disaster is no longer necessary for the reasons mentioned above. There is no indication that COVID will ever be eradicated from the world, and Niue is normalising its response to COVID as a health matter instead of a disaster or emergency management response.

GON reminds the public that travellers to Niue will still be required to be vaccinated, must provide a negative PCR test result taken within 48 hours of travel to Niue, and must obtain a Niue Travellers Pass by completing the forms on the Niue COVID-19 website www.covid-19.nu.

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For further information or any questions, please contact the DG of the Ministry of Social Services, Gaylene Tasmania, Gaylene.Tasmania@mail.gov.nu or the Secretary of Government at +683 4308 or email on Niue.secgov@mail.gov.nu