

Waikato SARS-CoV-2 Laboratory Report

Week 52 2021

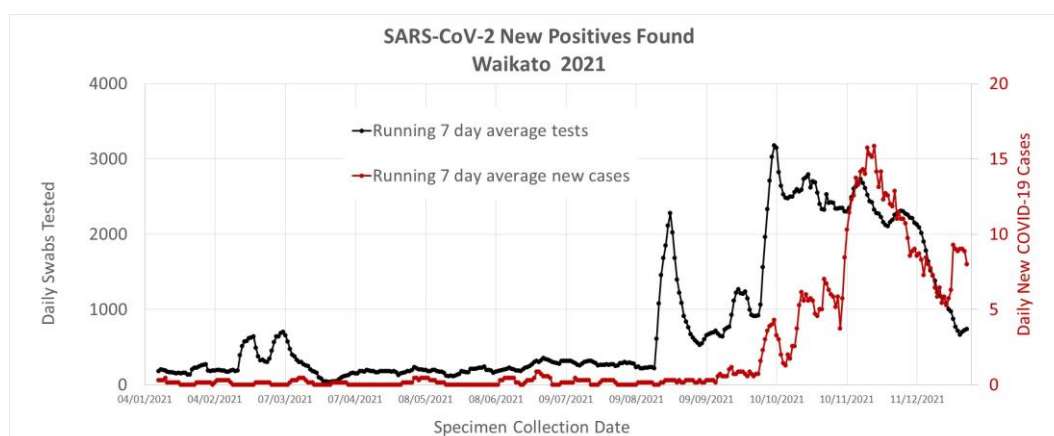
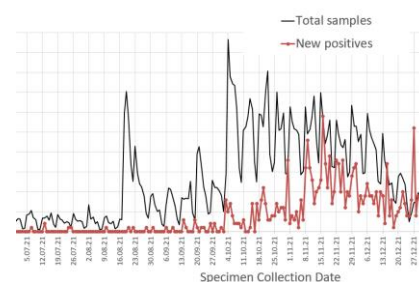
Year 4 Jan 2021 to 2 Jan 2022

This report covers laboratory testing for SARS-CoV-2 for the Epidemiological Year of 2021. Geographical scope: Waikato District Health Board. SARS-CoV-2 tests performed: 297961. Positive samples: 912. Positive cases: 788.

Almost all testing was done with nasopharyngeal swabs and the majority were processed by an in house PCR targeting E gene and RDRP gene, generally in pools of 4 specimens. Positive pools were tested by GeneXpert® to ascertain which sample was the positive and to confirm the result. A few samples were tested by Abbott Alinity m® and a few (from Emergency Department) by pools of 4 in the GeneXpert®.

From January 2021 till mid August, there was no circulation of SARS-CoV-2 in the Waikato community and only the only detections were from returned travellers in managed isolation facilities. In mid August, a large outbreak of the Delta strain in Auckland prompted increased testing in the Waikato but cases were not detected until small outbreaks occurred in the Upper Hauraki area in late September, then in Raglan in early October and later in Hamilton and Waitomo areas. Vigorous population testing, contact tracing and testing and isolation of known cases continued throughout October and November. As local case numbers declined in December, so did test numbers. The percentage of specimens positive has now risen from 0.5% to around 1.2 % over the Christmas-New Year period. No cases of Omicron variant have been found in the Waikato yet.

Daily sample numbers fluctuate widely, showing a weekly pattern with few collected during weekends and typically a peak on Mondays. Swab collection efforts were characterised by overnight increases in testing rates, responding to national and local Waikato outbreaks.



Waikato laboratory web site and virus report archive: <https://lab.waikatodhb.health.nz/news/>
NZ Ministry of Health COVID data page: <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-data-and-statistics>
Radio New Zealand data visualisation: <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/in-depth/450874/covid-19-data-visualisations-nz-in-numbers>
WHO COVID-19 dashboard: <https://covid19.who.int/>