

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **100% of COVID-19 cases recovered in the Nelson Marlborough region**

Nelson Marlborough residents can celebrate their contribution towards preventing sustained community transmission of COVID-19 in the region, with the last active case discharged from isolation on 21 May.

Nelson Marlborough Health Director of Public Health Dr Stephen Bridgman says that without the co-operation of people in our region this achievement would not have been possible.

The last close contacts (of confirmed cases) being monitored by the Nelson Marlborough Public Health Service were discharged from isolation on 16 May by Dr Bridgman, followed by the last recovered case the next week in Marlborough.

“I’d like to thank all cases and their local close contacts, who co-operated with strict isolation and quarantine requirements. The general public have also made a phenomenal effort to follow the Alert Level rules, and to get symptoms assessed and tested.

“It’s timely also to acknowledge our health professionals and health support staff across the region – in particular the Public Health Service team managing case investigation, contact tracing, and monitoring and the support of cases and contacts. Primary health teams such as those working from community-based assessment centres, and our hospital services who cared for confirmed cases and many suspect cases in isolation wards also played a critical role.”

“This huge collective effort has prevented sustained community transmission – the spread of the virus in our community between people who do not know each other. This is clear in our testing data – of the nearly 7000 local tests over the past two months, we have identified only 37 cases through testing,” Dr Bridgman says.

### **Nelson Marlborough cases – a snapshot**

- The first case in the region was notified to the Nelson Marlborough Medical Officers of Health on 20 March, and the last one on 29 April, with a total of 50 cases in total.
- 49 of locally notified cases were reported to the World Health Organization by New Zealand. One further case was reported by Slovakia; while this case was not reported in the NZ figures it was part of the Nelson Marlborough Health workload and illustrates global collaboration in trying to control the pandemic.
- Of the 50 cases, 27 cases are considered to have been infected while overseas, 15 cases were infected in a chain of transmission linked to someone who was known to be infected overseas, 4 cases were locally infected from an unknown source, 3 cases were locally infected from someone infected from an unknown source, and 1 case remains under investigation but was likely infected during travel from an overseas destination.

- Three cases required acute hospital care for some stage of their illness – two at Wairau Hospital and one at Nelson Hospital. Two people required intensive care. 32 acute hospital bed-days were used to care for COVID-19 patients, across intensive care and general wards. No COVID-19 deaths were recorded locally.
- 47 cases were managed in home isolation, monitored and supported by the Nelson Marlborough Public Health Service team.
- 27 cases were women, 23 were men. The ages ranged from 12-82 years, with a median age of 45 years. The ethnicity breakdown is:
  - 41 cases European or 'other'
  - 7 cases ethnicity Māori
  - 1 case NZ European/Māori
  - 1 case Pasifika
- The regional breakdown for cases under territorial authorities (the national requirement for case reporting) is:
  - 22 cases were resident in the Marlborough District
  - 21 in the Tasman District
  - 7 in Nelson City.
- Between 18 March and 24 May, 6840 tests for COVID-19 have been conducted in our region, across primary care, hospitals, aged residential care facilities, community-based assessment centres (CBACs) and mobile testing. Of these the most tests (69%) were taken at CBACs.

## What happens now?

Dr Bridgman says that while the virus is not circulating locally, there is a high risk that the virus will re-appear at some time in the future, so we should not be complacent and we should remain vigilant.

This is why people are asked to stay the course and continue to follow the Alert Level rules and – at any level – the public health advice.

- Cover coughs and sneezes – preferably with a disposable tissue
- Wash your hands in hot water and soap thoroughly for twenty seconds, and regularly. Don't forget to dry them (with a clean towel).
- Avoid touching your mouth, nose and eyes with hands that might be contaminated with viruses
- Keep a 1-2m distance from people you don't know in public. Co-operate with contact tracing registers and consider downloading the NZ COVID Tracer app.
- Stay at home, away from work, school and public places, if you have COVID-19 symptoms. Get assessed or tested by your GP or at a community-based assessment centre.
- Individuals and businesses continue to think of ways to reduce risk in future, such as better design to reduce the risk of picking up COVID-19 from the environment

ENDS

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