



REPUBLIC OF NAURU
Government Information Office

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE
by
Hon. Isabella Dageago, MP
Minister for Health and Medical Services

Wednesday, 15 December 2021

In today's update, Minister for Health Isabella Dageago says Nauru's 'Capture & Contain' strategy continues to keep Nauru free of COVID-19.

Nauru's arrival testing procedures for crew on shipping vessels has identified one member of crew on the landing craft, Kiwai Chief, with a positive COVID test result.

Our maritime border protocols require several measures for arriving ships, including minimum quarantine periods at sea and testing all persons on board before they are allowed to undertake contact operations on Nauru. Regardless and where possible, ships operate a no-contact procedure in Nauru.

The landing craft Kiwai Chief arrived in Nauru waters on the 10th of December having spent 10 days at sea and continued to drift off Nauru to complete 14 days at sea as per our maritime border protocols.

This positive COVID result was identified late yesterday, Tuesday 14th of December. The crew member is well and has had no symptoms.

This vessel has been in quarantine at sea for the last 14 days and there has been no unprotected contact with anyone on Nauru. With the ship's logs and arrival declarations supplied to the Taskforce and Health Department, it appears likely that this is a historical case with the original source of infection probably originating a few weeks ago when the vessel was in Lae, Papua New Guinea as they set sail to Brisbane Australia where the Kiwai Chief picked up heavy machinery destined for Nauru.

The lab results show the crew member has very low levels of virus, suggesting that his infection likely started some time ago and that he is likely no longer contagious. The crew member is also fully vaccinated which may also explain why the test result was so weak and further reinforces that it is unlikely that the crew member is still contagious.

The Nauru COVID Taskforce discussed the findings and despite the very low risk from this case, and with an abundance of caution, the Taskforce has advised the Kiwai Chief to drift and quarantine at sea for a further period. The crew will be reassessed and tested before any contact procedures will be able to be undertaken in port.

In accordance with World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines, a person who tests positive to COVID, is cleared and safe to leave isolation and carry on normal activities if they have been well and have had no COVID symptoms for 10 days.

In the meantime the Taskforce will reassess the current situation and if safe and practical, a strict no-contact unloading procedure may be considered, ensuring there is no risk of COVID entering Nauru.

This is a case we have identified at the border before entry to Nauru. This case remains on a vessel, and has not been in Nauru.

As other countries have started relaxing some border restrictions we need to expect and not be surprised if we begin to catch more cases on our border. However, if we either continue to contain these cases at the border, or ensure we have everyone protected by vaccination, including our children, then we should no longer fear cases being picked up at the border. In fact, we should feel safe and confident that the capture and contain strategy is working.

The Taskforce and Public Health teams will monitor and provide updates as needed.

May God continue to bless and protect Nauru.

ENDS///

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