

# Shift to Phase Three of the Omicron Response Plan

Webinar, February 2022

Presented by **Manatū Hauora | Ministry of Health**

# Kia Ora | Welcome

The **purpose of this webinar** is to discuss the shift to Phase Three of our Omicron Strategy and outline what this means for the health sector.

## Housekeeping

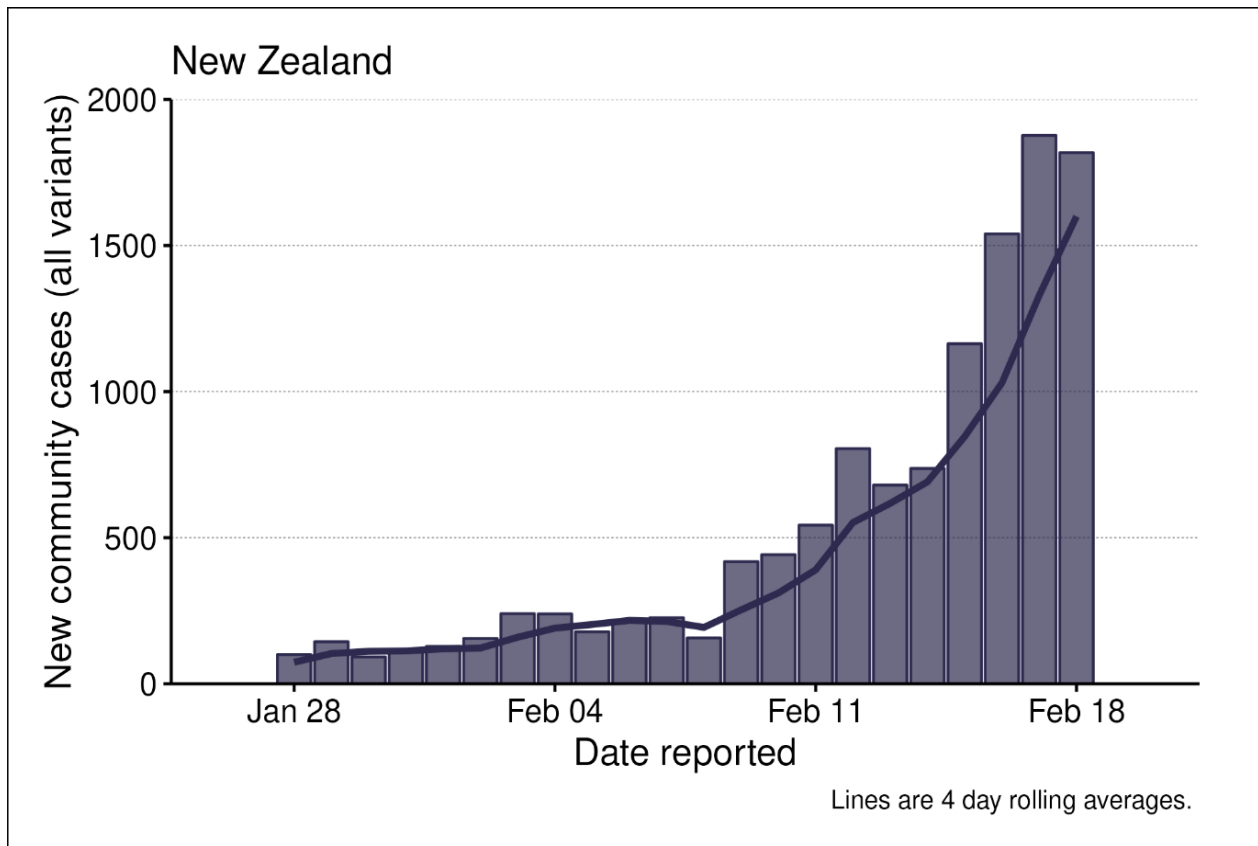
**Webinar duration:** approximately 30 minutes.

**Questions and commentary:** feel free to use the chat function to send any questions and commentary you have throughout the presentation. Please note, we won't have time to answer questions live, but we will follow up with responses in the coming days.

**Recording:** this session is being recorded and will be available shortly after the close of presentation.

# Setting The Scene: Our Domestic Situation

Cases have continued to significantly increase in the week to 18 February with 8,621 new cases reported; almost 4,000 of these cases were reported across 16 - 18 February.



- 19-23 Feb – 12,931 community cases/2-day count 5,211
- 19-23 Feb – 66 border cases
- Two-thirds of cases are in **10–39-year-olds** (64%)
- 2600 RAT positive cases as of 23 February 2022
- The outbreak continues to highlight inequities, with the majority of cases in areas with the highest housing deprivation.
- Most cases are **fully vaccinated**, which is expected due to New Zealand's high vaccination levels.
- **Testing rates and test positivity are highest in the Northern Region.** The WHO target for test positivity is <5%. Five DHBs are above this, with the highest being Counties Manukau (9%). The Southern Region remains low, apart from Nelson Marlborough DHB which has had a rapid increase to 6%.

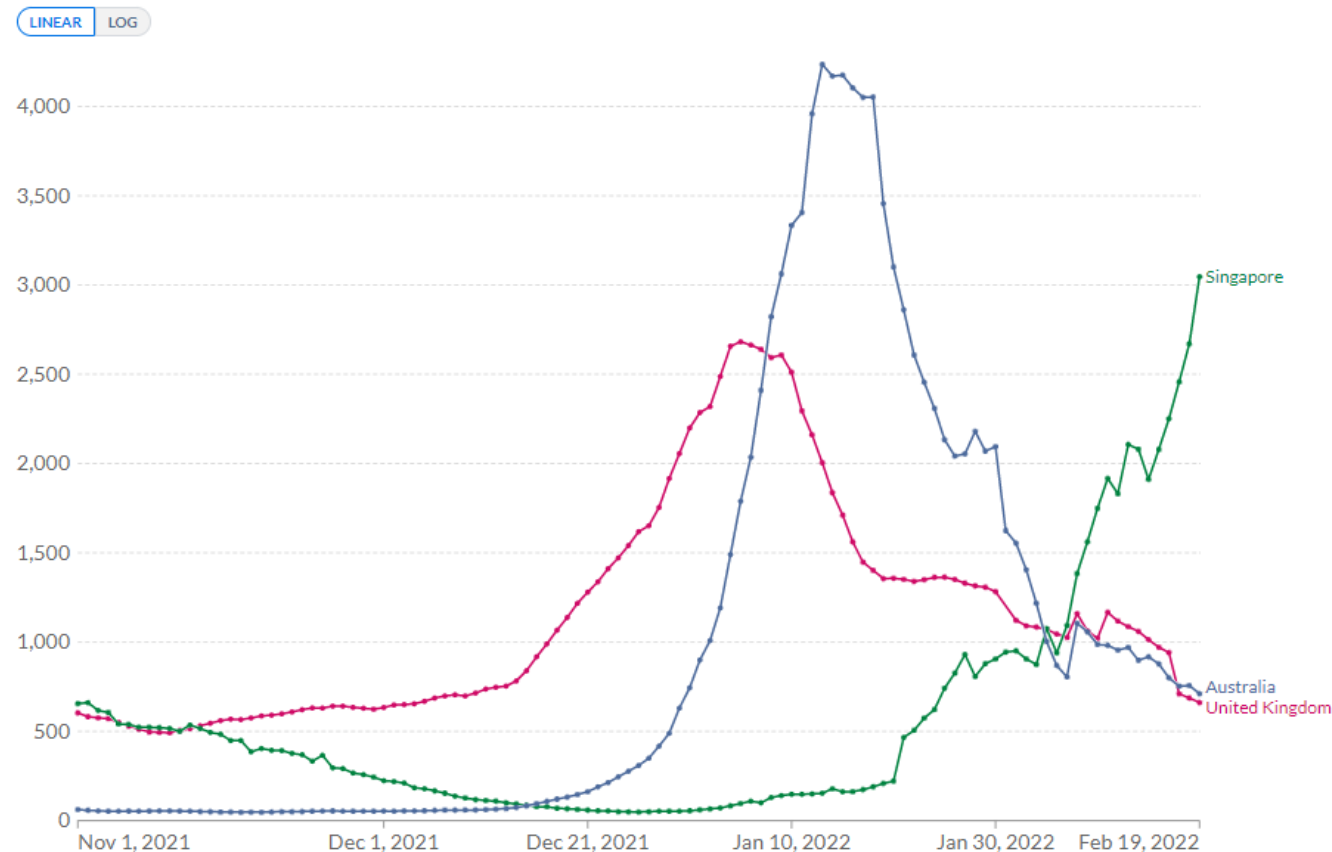
# International Context: Growth in cases

Daily reported COVID-19 cases are now **declining in most jurisdictions globally.**

## Daily new confirmed COVID-19 cases per million people

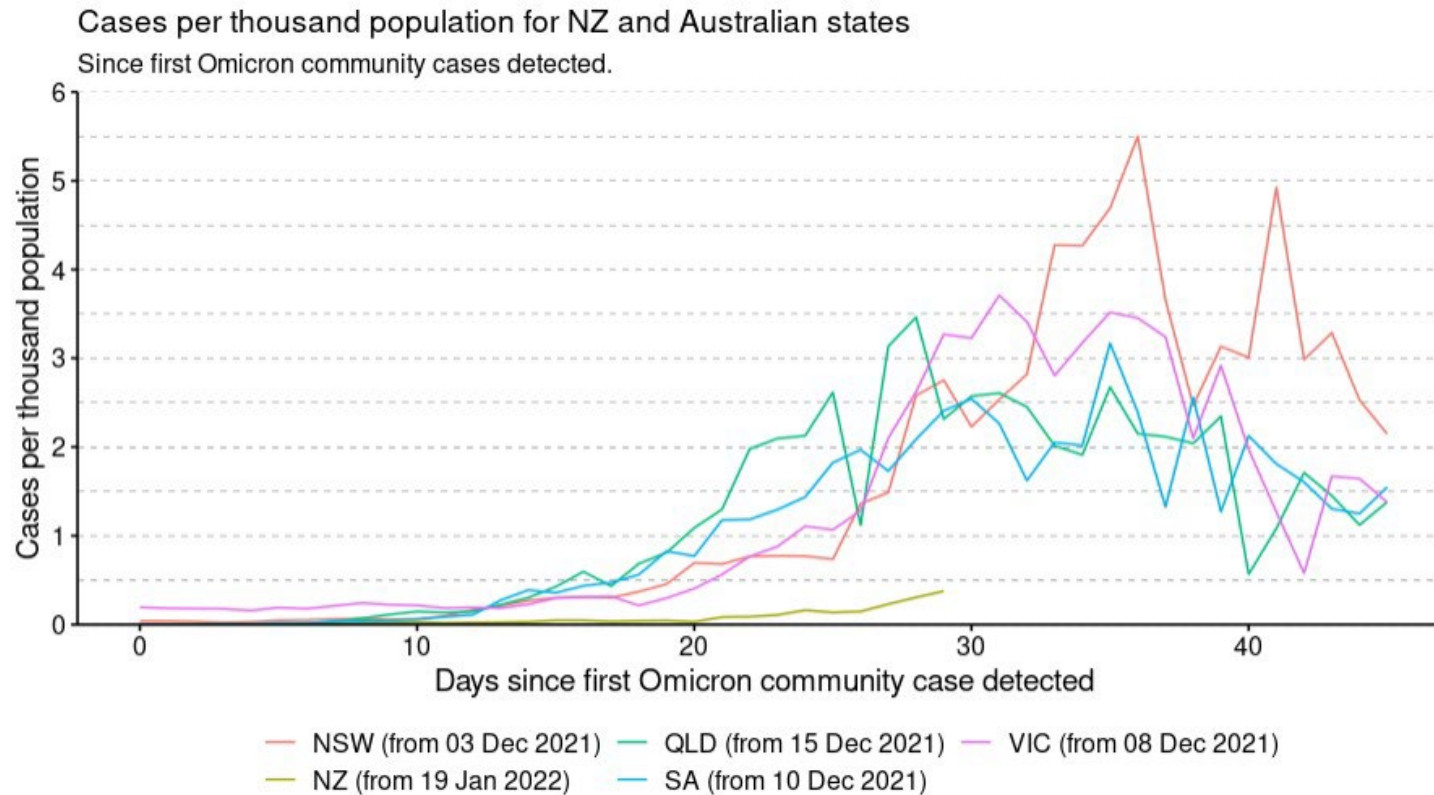
7-day rolling average. Due to limited testing, the number of confirmed cases is lower than the true number of infections.

Our World  
in Data



- Many countries have experienced rapid growth in Omicron cases following the detection of the first case, such as the United Kingdom and Victoria and NSW in Australia. Other countries have seen a slower growth in cases, likely due to the use of extensive public health measures e.g. Singapore.

# International Context: Australia and NZ outbreak comparison



- Days since first Omicron case detected in the community plotted for each jurisdiction.
- Note: each jurisdiction likely had varying number of undetected cases at 'day zero'.

# What we've done in Phase Two

**Close Contact Exemption Scheme**

**Distributed RATs to critical services**

**Schools and businesses managing close contacts**

**Reduced isolation periods**

**Continued a focus on vaccination:**

- **Booster rollout**
- **roll-out to 5 – 11 year old tamariki**

# Key Features Of Phase Three

**RATs will also be used for diagnostic purposes to help preserve laboratory PCR testing capacity.**

**Only Household contacts need to isolate, close contacts no longer required to isolate**

**Greater use of digital tools to support cases**

**Much less individual case management (e.g. such resources will be reserved for highly vulnerable people)**

**Continue delivery of vaccination with equity at the forefront**

# Phase Three

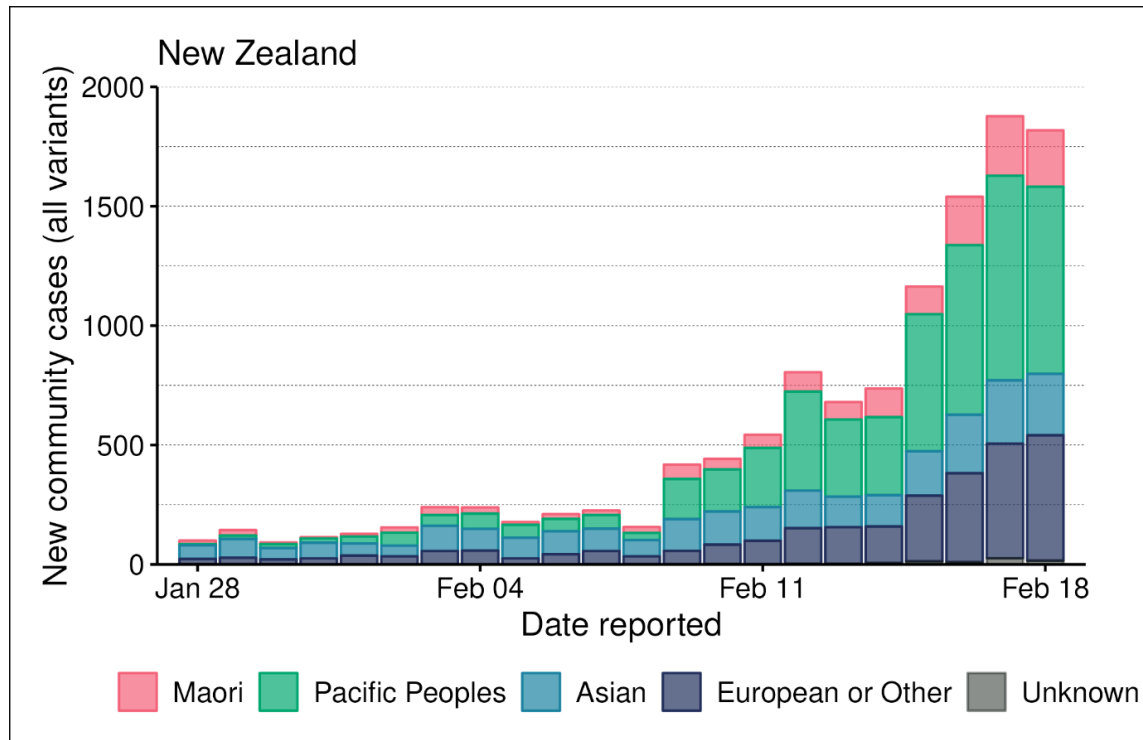
Move to self-management, protect vulnerable, preserve critical services and infrastructure by targeting resources

Phase Three		Approach
<b>Situation:</b> Widespread community cases, possibly via multiple and/or super-spreader events	Testing	<p>PCR testing focused on those who are unwell and more susceptible to the effects of COVID 19 e.g., priority populations. Move to diagnostic RATs testing for most others.</p> <p>Continuation of 'Close Contact Exemption Scheme'</p>
	Case investigation and contact tracing	<p>Majority of cases self-manage. Cases notified by text, directed to an online COVID-19 contact tracing tool which focuses on highest risk exposures. Locations of interest not published and no push notifications.</p> <p>QR scanning remains to support case investigation.</p>
	Care in the Community	<p>Support for positive cases to isolate in their usual place of residence, and alternative accommodation is prioritised for cases unable to safely isolate at home.</p> <p>Clinical care, wraparound health and welfare support focused on those with high needs.</p>
	Isolation & Quarantine	<p>Cases isolate for 10 days (self-release after day 10). Household contacts isolate with case, release on the same day as case provided no new or worsening symptoms AND negative day 10 RAT. Close contacts not required to self-isolate.</p> <p>Critical infrastructure/health workforce capacity will be supported by public health guidance to enable household contacts and if appropriate cases to work, which may include asymptomatic surveillance testing using RATs.</p>

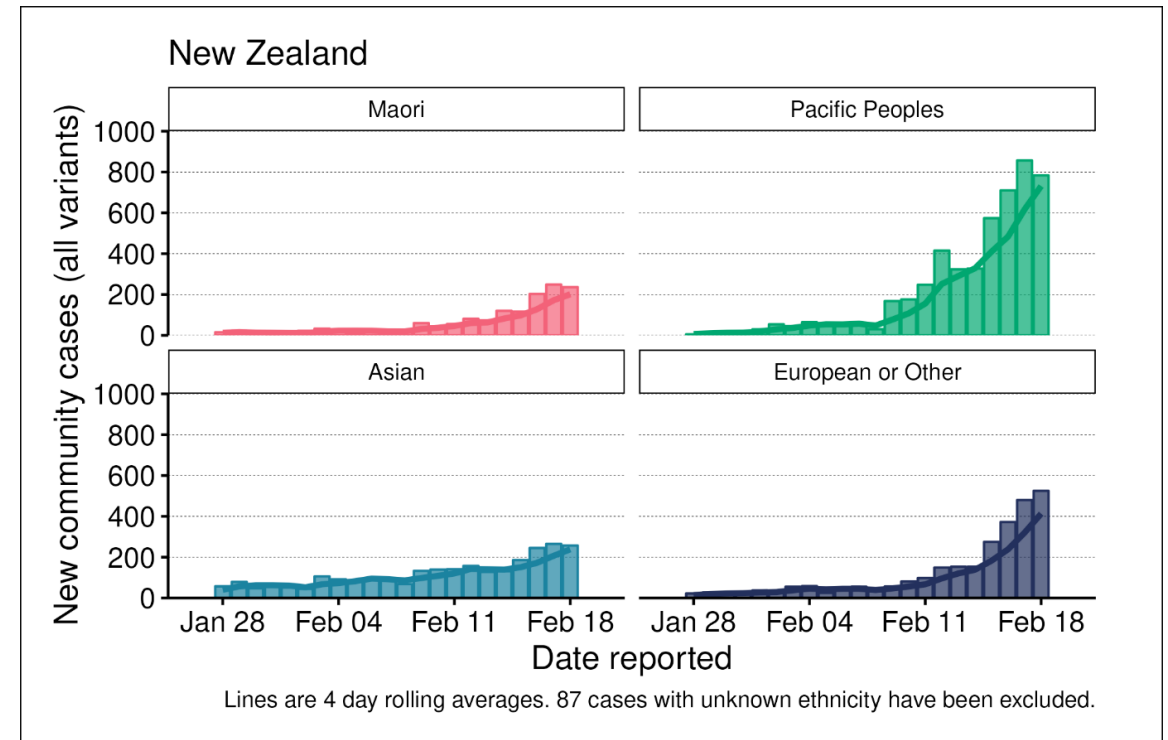


# Impact Of Omicron On Māori And Pacific Peoples

Daily community cases across New Zealand, by ethnicity from 28 January to 18 February 2022



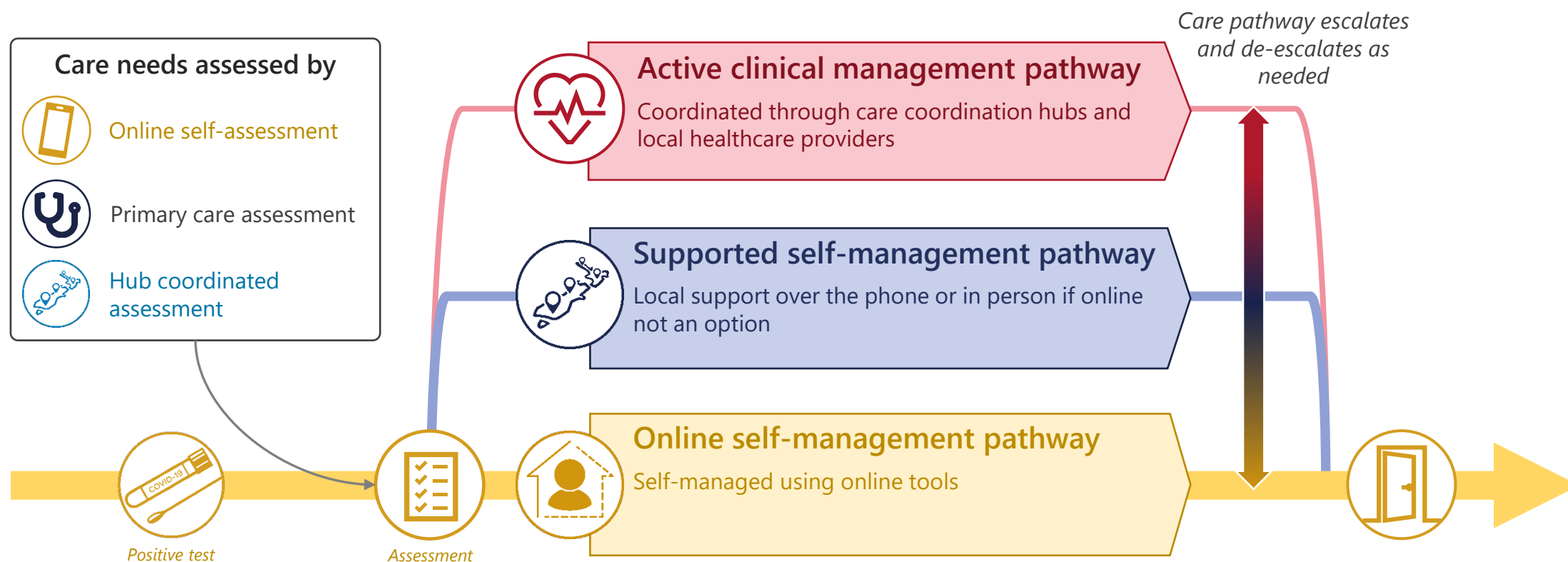
Daily and rolling 4 day of average community cases across New Zealand, by ethnicity from 28 January to 18 February 2022



# COVID-19 Care in the Community

## Care management pathways

Most cases will be able to self-manage and will follow the yellow and blue self-management pathways.  
Cases requiring more clinical support will receive active clinical management following the red pathway.



# COVID-19 Care in the Community

## Care coordination hubs



### Coordinating wraparound support

Local care coordination hubs coordinate wraparound healthcare and welfare support, following a manaaki first approach putting the individual and their whānau at the centre.



### Healthcare

- Assessing whether case can self manage, needs help self-managing, or needs active clinical support.
- Escalate and deescalate care when appropriate.



### Welfare

- Assessing what welfare support needed to isolate.
- Coordinating welfare support across government and non-government providers, including:
  - Accommodation and food
  - Income support
  - Senior services
  - Paying for essential utilities and other urgent costs
  - Community support



### 49 hubs around the motu

#### Northern region: 5

DHBs: Northland, Waitematā, Auckland, Counties Manukau

#### Te Manawa Taki region: 12

DHBs: Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Hauora Tairāwhiti, Lakes, Taranaki

#### Central region: 23

DHBs: Hawke's Bay, Whanganui, MidCentral, Wairarapa, Capital & Coast, Hutt Valley

#### Southern region: 7

DHBs: Nelson Marlborough, West Coast, Canterbury, South Canterbury, Southern



### Interagency collaboration

Local DHBs, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Oranga Tamariki, Ministry of Social Development, Whānau Ora (Te Puni Kōkiri)



### Local providers

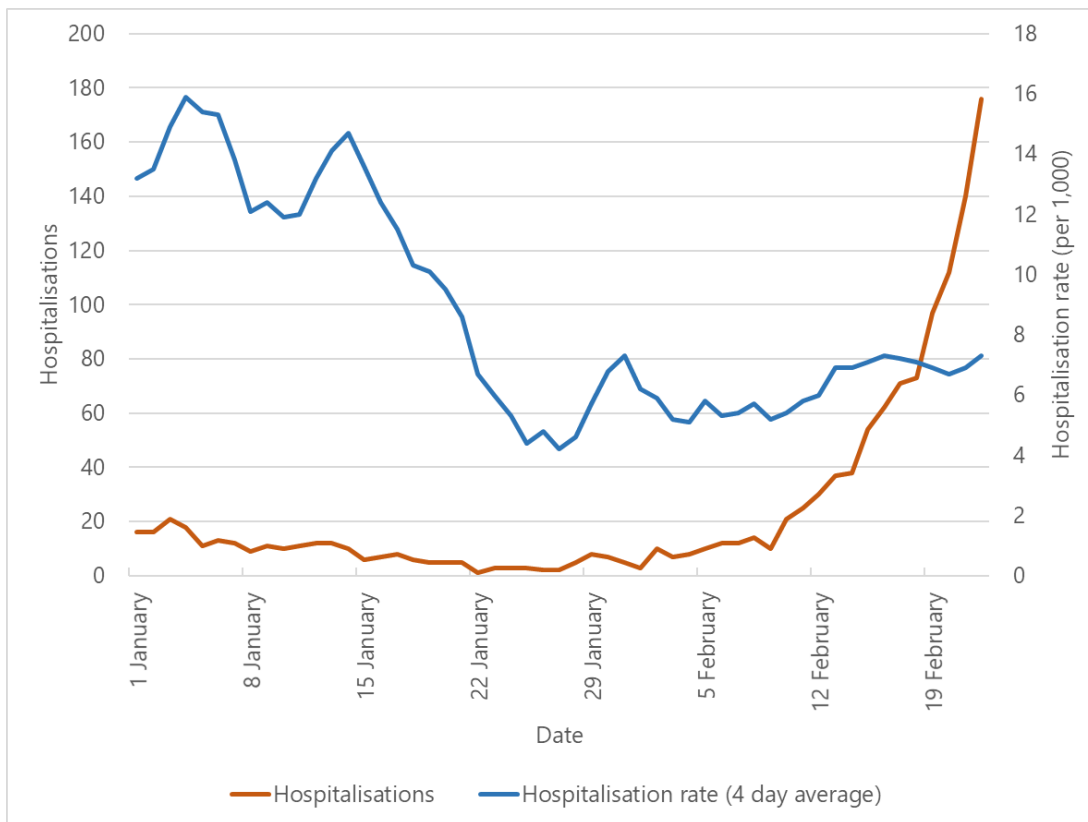
Local community health and welfare providers

# COVID-19 Care in the Community

## Early indications

### Hospitalisation rates are comparatively low

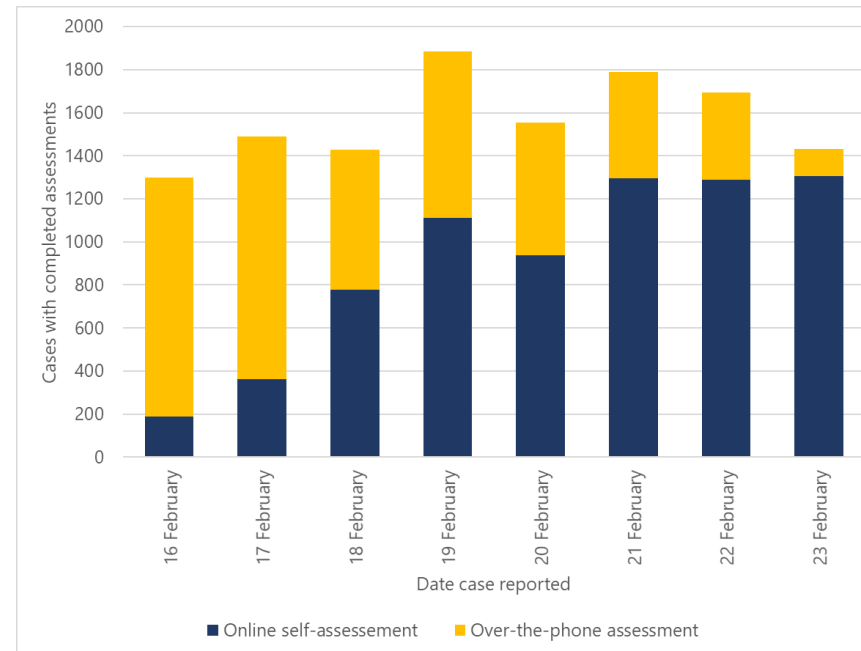
Hospitalisation rates have halved since Omicron replaced Delta as the dominant variant.



### The new self-service tools are now operating

Since self-service tools launched last week:

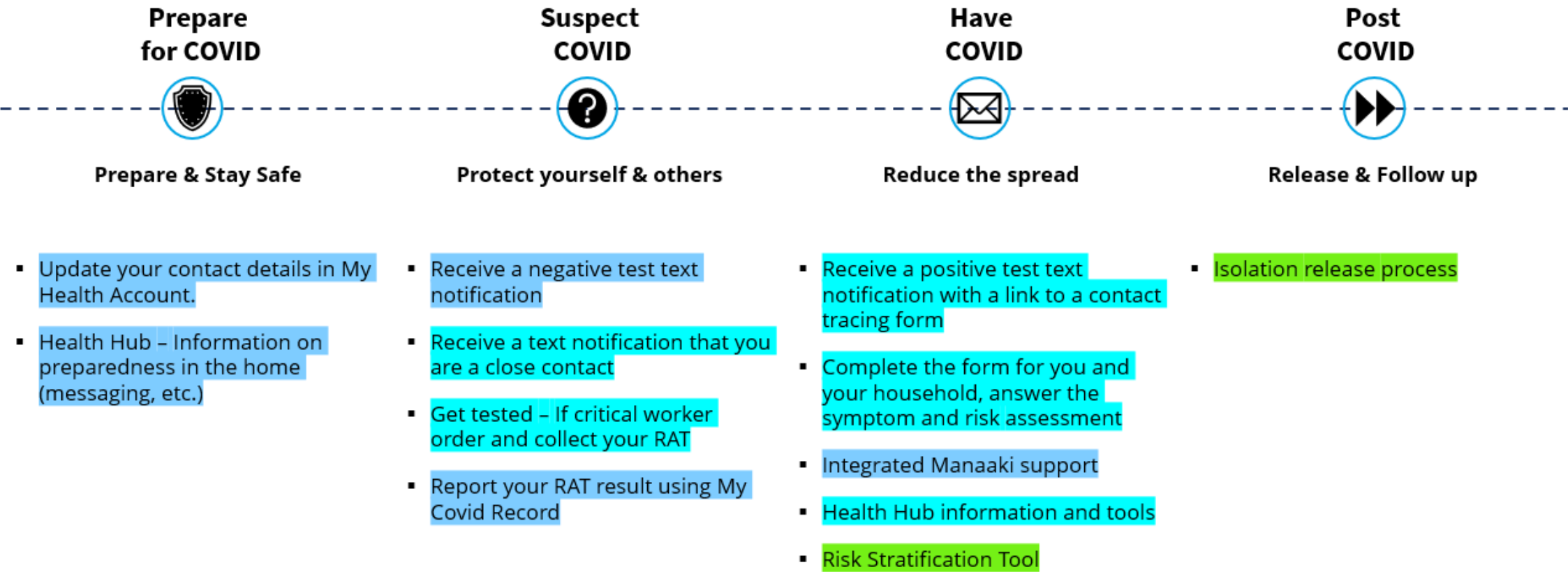
- Around 80% of positive cases were successfully notified of their positive test result by text message
- Almost half of cases notified by text have completed an online self-assessment – this proportion is increasing over time



Omicron Response Phases

- Phase 1 (begin shift to self-service)
- Phase 2 (transitioning to cases using self-serve)
- Phase 3 (majority of positive cases are self-managed)

# COVID Care Digital Self-management Pathway<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup>Assistance will be provided through a Contact Centre (0800) for those who don't have access to a digital device or who can't use one. Free text and data applies to pre-paid plans.

# Phase 3 Readiness

## 24 Feb

- Automation for high volumes of self-reported RAT results to testing systems – 700 in there already.
- Automate GP RAT results
- Update the wording that a RAT result is diagnostic rather than surveillance

## 25 Feb

- Self-isolation for inbound traveler (Reconnecting NZ)

## 25th Feb to 1st Mar

- Progressive simplification of Contact Tracing self-service forms

## 1 Mar

- Consumer request a RAT (beyond the critical worker service which exists today)

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