

Thursday 16 September
For immediate release

Media Release

Auckland's first fleet of vaccination buses drive off into the community

Walk-ins now available at all community vaccination centres

Auckland's first fleet of mobile vaccination buses has been launched into action, and walk-in vaccinations are now available at all community vaccination centres across the metro Auckland region.

The six buses, with 'Vaccinate for Auckland' displayed on the side and rear, were blessed at an event at the Airport Park and Ride drive-through centre in Māngere this morning.

The first three buses are operating this afternoon at sites near supermarkets in Pukekohe, Papakura and Henderson. Another three buses are having their final kit out and will be ready to go this week.

The buses will go to places where vaccination numbers are low or where local communities may be finding it more difficult to access other existing services.

Matt Hannant, COVID-19 Vaccination Programme Director at NRHCC, said the new bus fleet and walk-in vaccinations at all community vaccination centres at removing any barriers for Aucklanders to get vaccinated.

"We want to make it as easy as possible for people to get their free COVID-19 vaccine. This includes allowing people to just walk into any of our centres and get a vaccination whenever it suits them, and taking our vaccinations on the road and into local communities."

Mr Hannant said the fleet is intended to offer communities both information and vaccinations.

"We're encouraging people to come for a kōrero, and get what you need in order to make a decision for you and your whānau," he said.

"We will also be connecting with community groups to help answer any questions they might have before we visit their areas."

Key bus facts

- As many as 12 buses are expected to be operating in the coming weeks.
- The buses will be run by Māori and Pacific providers while others will be staffed by the DHBs.
- The buses will initially focus on locations in south and west Auckland. Māori and Pacific providers and the DHBs will work closely with communities to identify locations for the buses to visit.
- At Alert Levels 3 and 4, vaccinations will be provided outside the buses to allow for social distancing measures. The buses will focus on locations people can go under these alert levels, such as supermarkets.
- At lower Alert Levels, vaccinations will be provided inside the buses.
- There will be around 12 staff on board, including vaccinators, observers, cold chain managers and administration staff.
- The buses have been provided by Auckland Airport Park and Ride.

The NRHCC has also announced that from today onwards, anyone aged 12 and over can walk into any of the 14 community vaccination centres and 3 drive-throughs across metro Auckland to get the vaccine.

“We’re encouraging everyone who hasn’t had their first dose to come along to one of our centres along with their bubble,” Mr Hannant said.

“We have lots of space available this week so you can walk in or book an appointment at a time that works for you.”

People can ‘drive up’ to the following drive-throughs: the Auckland Airport Park and Ride centre in Māngere, the North Shore Airport centre in Dairy Flat, and the Papakura Marae centre.

Walk-ins and appointments are available at the following community vaccination centres: Albany, Birkenhead, CBD, Epsom, Mt Wellington, Westgate, Henderson, Trusts Arena, Tāmaki, Manurewa Marae, Ōtara, Pukehohe, Takanini, and Highbrook.

People wanting to just turn up are asked to come at least an hour before the centre closes and allow for a short wait.

Information on opening times and centre locations are available at immunisation.northernregion.health.nz.

People wanting to get a vaccination through a GP or pharmacy will still need to book.

People can make a booking online at bookmyvaccine.nz or call Healthline on 0800 28 29 26.

There are currently 14 community vaccination centres, 3 drive-throughs, 130 general practitioners and 54 pharmacies taking part in the vaccine roll-out, with more coming on board every week.

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Note: The Northland and Auckland DHBs are operating a regional response to the COVID-19 pandemic through the Northern Region Health Coordination Centre (NRHCC).