

Resilience to Nature's Challenges National Science Challenge Research Symposium 2023 - Covid-19 policy



The aim of this policy is to ensure that the RNC Symposium provides and maintains a Covid-19 safe environment for all attendees. Covid-19 remains active in our communities and continues to pose a health risk to vulnerable people. If you test positive for Covid-19, you are required by the government to self-isolate for 7 days.

Covid-19 considerations in event planning

- The RNC organising team will work to ensure that the Research Symposium meets any government requirements for the Wellington region.
- The RNC organising team will work with the venue to understand the ventilation systems in place within the event footprint and plan the use of space accordingly.
- The RNC organising team in conjunction with the Venue will ensure that alcohol-based hand sanitisers are widely available for attendees, particularly in high touch areas.
- The RNC organising team in conjunction with the Venue will ensure that there is adequate access to handwashing facilities and that these are well maintained throughout the day.
- The RNC organising team in conjunction with the Venue will ensure that thorough event space cleaning is undertaken overnight between event days.

Pre-event testing

About 40% of Covid-19 cases are asymptomatic. This means that people can be infectious and not know it. The best tool to detect infectious cases are rapid antigen tests (RATs).

- Attendees are asked to take a RAT test BEFORE travelling to the Symposium each day.
- If a RAT test is positive, do not attend the Symposium venue and advise the organising team as soon as possible.
- If you have not RAT tested before arriving at the venue, advise the organising team on your arrival. The registration desk will have a supply of RAT tests on hand, and a dedicated space to undertake testing before entering the Symposium.

If you test positive for Covid-19

- Do not enter the Symposium.
- You are required to self-isolate for 7 days. Day 0 is counted as the first day you developed symptoms OR the day of the positive test, whichever is earliest.
- If you are from outside the Wellington region and have tested positive, you will need to return to your accommodation and begin isolation. Contact your host organisation to make appropriate arrangements. The RNC Directorate are not liable for costs incurred and we recommend that you book flexible travel where possible in case you need to adjust your travel itinerary. Please keep the RNC Directorate informed, we will take reasonable steps to help ensure wellbeing and welfare during this time.

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- If you are resident within the Wellington region, you will be required to return home as soon as possible to begin isolation.

Mask wearing

Transmission risk is greatly reduced when attendees are wearing well fitted masks. Masking is about keeping yourself and the people around you safe, and it works best when all people are well masked. We ask that all attendees wear masks while indoors, except for when presenting (and can maintain physical distancing) and when eating / drinking in breaks.

- Bring your own mask(s) with you for the Symposium and wear them at all times.
- The RNC organising team will have a supply of masks available at the registration desk.
- All attendees must be masked before entering the Symposium.

During the event

- If you feel unwell, do not attend. Contact the RNC organising team as soon as possible to advise.
- All attendees are required to complete a RAT test before entering the Symposium.
- All attendees are required to wear masks while inside the Symposium. Masks can be removed for eating / drinking.
- Use hand sanitisers regularly, especially before eating and drinking. Alcohol-based sanitisers will be available inside each space, at the registration desk and at catering stations.
- The RNC organising team in conjunction with the venue team will ensure doors and windows are open, if possible, preferably on different sides of the room to cross-ventilate.
- The RNC organising team will keep track of any Covid-19 cases that arise from the Symposium.
- The RNC organising team will notify event attendees if a fellow attendee tests positive during the Symposium, so that they can take appropriate precautions.
- At all times, the RNC organising team will uphold the privacy of attendees and not divulge any personal information when making notifications related to positive test results.

After the event

- The RNC organising team ask attendees to contact them ASAP if they test positive for Covid-19 after attending the Symposium.
- The RNC organising team will notify event attendees if anyone tests positive soon after the event, so that they can take appropriate precautions.