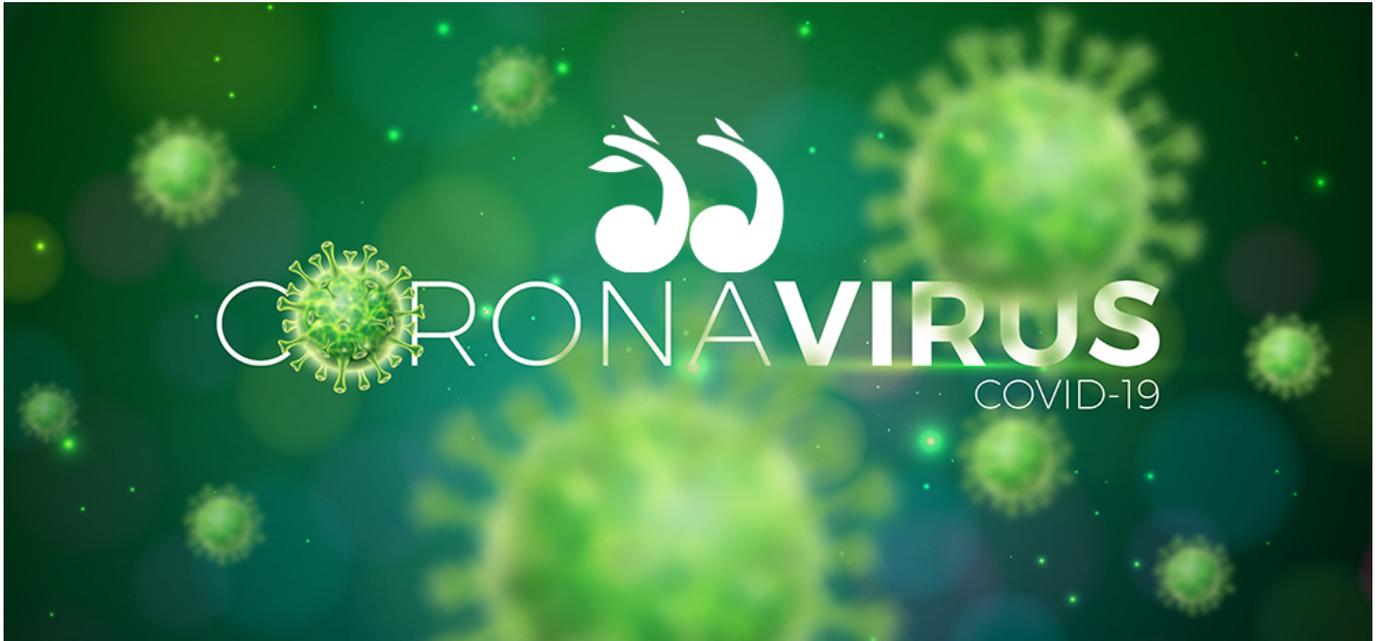


Covid: Why Muswellbrook is more dangerous than Blacktown



NSW Health assess lockdowns and covid-risk, based not just on case numbers, but on the risk of community transmission, the number of people unvaccinated and the local health capacity. Muswellbrook is at risk of continual lockdowns as the state opens up and Singleton, is not far behind.

The higher the rate of unvaccinated people in a community, the higher the risk of transmission, the higher the risk of an outbreak and the higher the risk of localised lockdowns.

As the state opens, the virus will spread. Everyone will come into contact with the virus, but if you have been vaccinated, your risk of needing hospitalisation is extremely low. But in communities where there are high numbers of unvaccinated people, there may be ongoing lockdowns to prevent the local hospitals from being overwhelmed.

In **Muswellbrook** 1 in 4 people are unvaccinated. The hospitalisation rate for delta is currently 11% and ICU 2%. With 3,181 people unvaccinated in Muswellbrook, Health need to plan for 350 hospital beds and 63 intensive care beds to be available if there is an outbreak. Muswellbrook Hospital only has 46 beds. The government currently plans to transfer all covid patients to Newcastle.

In **Singleton** 1 in 5 people are unvaccinated. Singleton Hospital is smaller than Muswellbrook hospital and local covid patients will also be transferred to Newcastle.

In **Blacktown** only 1 in 20 people are unvaccinated and their vaccination rate is still increasing by 10%. Blacktown and **Cessnock** have radically different sized populations (289,214 compared to 47,375), but in Cessnock 10,897 people

are unvaccinated and in Blacktown there are 13,598.

In terms of the risk of a covid outbreak in a community, the number of unvaccinated people is central:

LGA / People unvaccinated / % unvaccinated / People you'll encounter

• Blacktown	13,598	4.7%	1 in 20
• Upper Hunter	1,255	11%	1 in 11
• Dungog	1,258	16.5%	2 in 12
• Singleton	3,685	20.1%	1 in 5
• Cessnock	10,897	23%	2 in 9
• Muswellbrook	3,181	25.1%	1 in 4