



Aboriginal sector communication update #13

Friday 5 February 2021 15:00 Hours

This regular statewide communication update is to keep health professionals abreast of the state-wide public health messages and resources that have been developed by Public Health Emergency Operations Centre (PHEOC) for the Aboriginal community and health professionals for COVID-19.

In this update we provide a focus on the impact of COVID-19 on the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal children and young people, and highlight a range of resources available to support this age group.

COVID-19 case numbers

- As of **5 February** 2021, there are **907** confirmed cases, **50** historical cases and **11** active cases of Coronavirus (COVID-19) in Western Australia (WA). **887** people have recovered from COVID-19 in WA. There have been **9** deaths from COVID-19 in WA.
- To date **779,033** COVID-19 tests have been conducted in WA.
- **WA:** [Daily snapshot](#)
- **National:** [Current National Status](#)
- **Worldwide:** [WHO Situation Reports](#) & [WHO Dashboard](#)

National COVID-19 Aboriginal epidemiological profile

Updates on COVID-19 among Aboriginal Australians, key insights **#14**, data as of **17th January** 2020:

- **0.53% (148 cases)** of all COVID-19 positive (confirmed) cases (**28,050**) notified in the Australian *National Notifiable Disease Surveillance System* (NNDSS) were recorded as Aboriginal people – (the cases remain unchanged from the last update with **one correction/adjustment**).
- Of the total **148** Aboriginal COVID-19 positive cases, **76% (113 persons)** acquired their infection locally, while **21% (31 persons)** acquired their infections overseas, and **3% (4 persons)** acquired their infections from interstate.
- Of the total **112** Aboriginal persons who acquired their infections locally, **80% (90 persons)** acquired the infection in a major city, **14% (15 persons)** acquired the infection in an inner regional area, **5% (6 persons)** acquired the infection in an outer regional area, **4% (4 persons)** acquired the infection from interstate and **1% (1 persons)** acquired the infection in a remote area.
- Of the **31** Aboriginal people who acquired the infection overseas (including one case from WA), **45% (14 persons)** were linked to cruise ships.
- Since July 2020, there have not been any new overseas-acquired cases notified in the NNDSS, while no new locally-acquired cases recorded in the NNDSS after September 2020
- **11% (16 cases)** of Aboriginal cases required hospital admission, while **89% (131)** required quarantine/isolation. **No deaths** were recorded among Aboriginal positive cases.
- The median age of Aboriginal positive cases is **31** years; compared to **37** years for non-Aboriginal people.
- According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), as at **6 January 2021** there are around **235** SARS-CoV2 or COVID-19 candidate vaccines (an increase of **33** candidate vaccines from the last update) being developed across the world with total of **63** candidate vaccines (an increase of **16** candidates from the last update) are already progressed into Phase 1, 2 or 3 of clinical trials.

Latest updates

5-day lockdown for Perth metro, Peel and South West regions

From 6pm, January 31, 2021, the Perth, Peel and South-West regions entered a 5-day lockdown. The lockdown is due to end 6pm Friday, February 5. The State Government Direction was introduced to limit the spread of COVID-19 in the WA community. More information about what you can and cannot do [here](#).

These measures were implemented due to a fast-evolving situation involving a hotel quarantine worker who tested positive to COVID-19.

Everyone is required to wear a face mask when outside their place of residence during this period, including workplaces and on public transport. The HealthyWA website provides more information on mask use, found [here](#).

If anyone has been to these [locations](#) on the days and times mentioned, even if you have no symptoms, you must get tested at a [COVID clinic](#) immediately and self-isolate until you get a negative result back.

WA Health's contact tracing team is working diligently to identify close contacts of the hotel quarantine worker.

Anyone who feels unwell and has any of the following symptoms should get tested and self-isolate until you get a negative result back. Symptoms include:

- a fever of 37.5°C or above OR a fever in the last few days;
- coughing, shortness of breath, sore throat, runny nose; and
- loss of smell or taste.

To accommodate the demand, Perth Metropolitan COVID-19 testing clinics have extended their opening hours. Testing is free at all COVID clinics. Please be mindful of the heat and take water and a hat. Our elders and disabled community members will be made priority.

Key Aboriginal resources for testing include:

- [All testing locations in WA](#)
- [Self-isolation information after getting tested for coronavirus](#)
- [Where to get tested for COVID-19 in regional and remote WA](#)

Post-lockdown transition from 6pm, Friday 5 February

Perth and Peel will enter a post-lockdown transition period from 6pm on Friday 5 February until 12.01am, Sunday 14 February. This allows the full 14-day incubation period to run its course. South West will return to pre-lockdown conditions.

Important messages for our community in the Perth and Peel regions during this time.

- To keep ourselves and our mob safe you must continue to wear a mask when in public, on public transport and while at work. You should only take your mask off in public if you are doing vigorous exercise or when you are eating or drinking.
- You can visit friends and family but don't have more than 20 people at a gathering.
- Let's keep our vulnerable safe by not visiting aged care or disability care facilities unless we have to for compassionate reasons.
- Residential school and boarding facilities can resume with a COVID Safety Plan.
- Businesses and venues will reopen, but NOT the casino and nightclubs.
- Get the little ones back to school and learning. Schools will start from Monday 8 February. Masks need to be worn by all school staff and secondary students. They are not required for

primary school students.

- You can only travel in and out of Perth and Peel regions to other parts of WA if it is essential. If you do need to leave the Perth and Peel region for essential purposes, you must always wear a mask, as per the rules in place for Perth for Peel.

More information and details on the postlockdown transition period can be found [here](#).

Department of Health has released a collection of culturally appropriate public health messages to urge our community to stay safe by wearing a mask and get tested if they have any COVID symptoms or have been to an exposure location. These messages have been broadcast across social media; follow the HealthyWA Facebook page @HealthyWA to share these messages with your networks. Links to the Facebook posts are below:

- <https://facebook.com/HealthyWA/posts/3572068272847459>
- <https://facebook.com/HealthyWA/posts/3572084482845838>
- <https://facebook.com/HealthyWA/posts/3577523398968613>

SafeWA

From 6am Tuesday, 02 February, the Western Australian Government expanded the range of businesses required to keep a [Mandatory Contact Register](#), to further assist contact tracing systems. This expansion is an added precautionary measure to control the spread of COVID-19 in the WA community. It is mandatory for visitors to check in to places including shopping centers, retail outlets, hospitals, commercial buses and takeaway services. The full list of additional business and venues required to keep a contact register can be found [here](#).

Some information about contact registers for remote communities:

- **Why do I have to use the SafeWA App?**
 - The SafeWA App is an easier and safer way for a business to record the contact details of their patrons. If someone in the community tests positive to COVID-19, contact registers can assist the WA Department of Health in quickly identifying and contacting anyone who may have been in the same locations. Your personal information will be kept securely by the WA Department of Health and will only be used for contact tracing by public health. More information can be found on the SafeWA Privacy Policy page. (<https://safewa.health.wa.gov.au/privacy>)
- **I don't own a mobile phone, what should I do?**
 - You can write your details down on a paper register instead.
- **I have trouble reading and writing, what should I do?**
 - If there is someone with you, ask them to write your details down for you. If not, the store owner or store assistant may be able to write your details down for you.
- **If I do not have a phone number to register, what do I use?**
 - Put down your name and the phone number of someone who knows you and can get in contact with you, if required. This could include a family member, community leader, Aboriginal Medical Service or teacher/ school principal.

Interstate travellers

Safe travel is permitted into WA from a 'very low risk' state, and travellers will be subject to the following conditions:

- complete a mandatory [G2G PASS](#) registration and declaration, stipulating:
 - they do not have any COVID-19 symptoms;
 - which jurisdictions the traveller has been in over the previous 14 days;
- undergo a health screening upon arrival at Perth Airport;
- be prepared to take a COVID-19 test at the airport, if required,
- undergo a health screening and have G2G Pass checked and at WA's border

checkpoint, if arriving by land.

Based on the latest health advice, the small number of recent interstate arrivals from who are serving their 14 days of Self-quarantine are permitted to end their period of quarantine on the same day this state moves to 'very low risk'.

More information for interstate travel and which the current category of state and territories can be found [here](#).

Masks at airports

It is now mandatory to wear a face masks at all airports in Western Australia. This is a new requirement to further prevent the spread and risk of the deadly virus coming into the WA community. It is compulsory for a face mask to be worn while:

- in a WA airport;
- travelling on an aircraft (domestic and international);
- transporting a person subject to a quarantine direction (including in a personal vehicle, private car, ride-share or taxi), to a place a quarantine or from self-quarantine to a COVID-19 clinic for day 11 testing.

More information about wearing face masks can be found [here](#) and FAQs [here](#). Instructions on how to wear a facemask safely and correctly [here](#).

Concerns about the new UK COVID-19 variant

The key messages concerning the new COVID-19 strain:

- The WA Government has put tighter border measures in place to protect our community from the transmission of the virus.
- Daily saliva tests have started for WA's quarantine workforce on top of existing PCR testing
- International arrivals cap have been halved to around 512 people a week until mid-February
- Masks are mandatory on international, domestic and intrastate flights and must be worn at all times in airports

This is a strong reminder that COVID-19 is not over yet and we must continue to stay COVID safe. We cannot afford to become complacent, it is still important for all of us to maintain strong vigilance, get tested if symptoms develop, and remain in self-isolation until a negative result is received.

COVID-19 vaccination program

WA Health has created a [new webpage](#) on the corporate site for the latest updates on the WA Health COVID-19 vaccination program. The page includes a link to the Australian Government's [COVID-19 vaccines hub](#) which now outlines the *COVID-19 National Vaccine Rollout Strategy* released on 7/01/2021. The strategy indicates that the first vaccinations (Phase 1a) are to be administered from mid to late February 2021. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged over 55 years will be included in Phase 1b, with people aged 18-54 years of age included in Phase 2a. Stay informed and subscribe [here](#) for WA Government updates and [here](#) for Australian Government updates on the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccination program.

Phase 1 campaign refresh

The Department of Health is re-releasing the phase 1 campaign to remind communities continue to receive COVID-19 prevention messages of good hygiene practices and physical distancing, over the summer months. Two new COVID Safe Summer posters have been published for use in the community, [Visiting family](#) and [Planning a trip](#). If you would like to localise the images used in the posters to suit your community or region, please send them to pheoc@health.wa.gov.au.

Priority COVID-19 health messages for Aboriginal people

Aboriginal health professionals and sector representatives are encouraged to promote and reinforce the following key messages to Aboriginal clients and community. Remember to:

- continue to physical distance where possible
- continue to practise good hand hygiene and cough etiquette
- stay at home if unwell and rest to stay strong
- if unwell with flu-like symptoms, get tested (make sure to self-isolate until you receive your test result)
- make sure your family gets the flu vaccine
- keep attending your regular health checks, especially for chronic illnesses
- download and use the free [SafeWA app](#) for your phone
- look after your mental health and social emotional wellbeing during this time.

Statewide Aboriginal resources

A suite of statewide Aboriginal tailored resources has been developed by the Department of Health WA for the community and health professionals, to promote awareness and provide up-to-date COVID-19 information that is culturally safe.

The aim of providing culturally-appropriate communications is to increase awareness and reduce anxiety and fear in our communities. We encourage Aboriginal health professionals to demonstrate leadership when working with the Aboriginal community by:

- Being “on message”
- Reinforcing and encouraging people to ‘stay vigilant’ and ‘don’t get complacent’
- Using positive strength-based messaging and language
- Ensure consistent, accurate and timely communication is provided, based on the official public health messages and health information issued by the Chief Health Officer from the Department of Health.

Refer to the Department of Health COVID-19 website for up-to-date information

Health services are welcome to tailor and localise Department of Health COVID-19 Aboriginal resources to meet community needs.

Please reference the Department of Health WA and contact [PHEOC](mailto:pheoc@health.wa.gov.au) (pheoc@health.wa.gov.au) for further information.

All resources for the Aboriginal sector

[WA Department of Health – Aboriginal Sector](#)

• Aboriginal sector communication updates

- Communication update #1
- Communication update #2
- Communication update #3
- Communication update #4
- Communication update #5
- Communication update #6
- Communication update #7
- Communication update #8
- Communication update #9
- Communication update #10
- Communication update #11

- Communication update #12
- **Communication update #13**
- **Aboriginal health professionals**
 - Aboriginal ethical position statement
 - Video - Beating the bugs, colds and viruses
 - Guide for Aboriginal health staff
 - Guide for Funeral and Sorry Business
 - How to identify Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander clients
- **External stakeholder resources**
 - Resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and remote communities (Australian Government)
 - COVID-19 resource toolkit for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health professional (Indigenous Health/InfoNet)
- **Remote and rural planning**
 - COVID-19 resource toolkit for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health professional (NATSIHWA)
 - Remote Aboriginal communities – restrictions on entering (WA Government)
 - Remote Aboriginal communities – safety and support measures (WA Government)
 - Checklist for remote clinics in Aboriginal communities (WACHS)
 - Health guidance for remote Aboriginal communities of Western Australia (DoH)

[HealthyWA - Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) for Aboriginal People](#)

- **Fact sheets**
 - General COVID information to stay safe
 - Information flyer for Aboriginal people – what you need to know
 - Information for a confirmed case
 - **Information for a close contact of a confirmed case**
 - Information for your quarantine stay
 - Self-isolation information after testing for COVID-19
 - Where to get tested for COVID-19 in Regional and Remote WA
- **Posters**
 - Poster – Essential tips for travellers
 - Poster – Personal hygiene
 - Poster – Physical distancing
 - Poster - Planning a trip?
 - Poster – Stay strong when you are sick
 - Poster – Staying well on my travels
 - Poster – Symptoms and what to do if unwell
 - Poster – Visiting family?
 - Poster – Visit your doctor
- **Video/radio messages**
 - Phase 4 update in English, Kriol, Martu, Ngaanyatjarra | Transcript (WA Government)
 - Radio – Physical distancing – let's work together to protect our mob
 - Radio – Protect yourself and other with good hygiene
 - Radio – Stay at home if you are sick
 - TV commercial – Good hygiene with Mary G
 - TV commercial – Social distancing with Mary G

- Video - Beating the bugs, colds and viruses
- Video - Mary G telehealth and regular checkups
- **Other resources available**
 - Aboriginal Health Council of WA (AHCWA)
 - Resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and remote communities (Australian Government)
- **GPs and other support phone lists**
 - Goldfields
 - Great Southern
 - Kimberley
 - Midwest
 - Perth
 - Pilbara
 - South West
 - Wheatbelt

Getting tested for COVID-19

- **WA Department of Health COVID-19 resources for Aboriginal people**
The WA Health Department has developed a suite of culturally-appropriate resources to support the Aboriginal community and health services in being COVID-19 safe and informed. They are found [here](#).
 - [COVID Clinics location in WA](#)
 - [Where to get tested for COVID-19 in regional and Remote WA](#)
 - [Self-isolation information after getting tested for Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- **Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council**
QAIHC have been developing [culturally appropriate resources](#) to keep ACCHOs and their community informed and protected against COVID-19.
 - [How are you tested for COVID-19?](#)
- **Getting the COVID-19 test: story books**
The Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency has developed two easy-to-understand story books to help children understand what a COVID-19 test is and what will happen during the process.
 - [Getting the COVID-19 test at the testing station or hospital](#)
- **AHMRC's COVID-19 testing resources.**
The Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of New South Wales has provided various resources on their website <https://www.ahmrc.org.au/coronavirus/> to support their member services across NSW during a COVID-19 outbreak and to minimise the impact on Aboriginal communities. Below are some resources on COVID-19 testing.
 - [Getting ready for a COVID-19 test](#)
 - [Do what's best. Get a COVID-19 test](#)
- **#swab4mob**
The Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of New South Wales has initiated the #swab4mob campaign to encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to get tested and protect their families and communities by getting a COVID-19 test if they feel unwell. You can find a link to the video below.

- [#swab4mob campaign](#)
- **New South Wales COVID-19 Aboriginal Health Resources**
The NSW Government has developed a suite of COVID-19 resources to be used in the Aboriginal community. Some of resources includes information about getting tested if your unwell. These resources can be found [here](#).
- [Just got tested for COVID-19?](#)

Crisis hotlines

- **Brother to Brother 24 hour crisis hotline** (1800 435 799) for Aboriginal men to provide extra support during the pandemic.
- **1800RESPECT** (1800 737 732) for advice concerning sexual, domestic or family violence.
- **Women's Domestic Violence Helpline** (1800 007 339) for support and referral for women experiencing domestic violence (incl referrals to women's refuges)
- **National COVID-19 Older Persons Support Line** (1800 171 866)
- **Kids Helpline** (1800 55 1800)
- **Beyond Blue** (1300 224 636)
- **Lifeline** (13 11 14)
- **Suicide Call Back Service** (1300 659 467)

Who to contact for more information

- **COVID-19 Clinic ONLY Test Results Enquiry Line:** [1800 313 223](#) (Note: **NOT** for GP referred testing or private pathology clinic tests)
- **COVID-19 WA Public Information Line:** [132 6843 \(13 COVID\)](#)
- **COVID-19 Travel Restrictions Exemption Application:** Visit the [G2G PASS](#) website or complete the [exemption application form](#)
 - **COVID-19 WA Police Line:** [131 444](#) to report breaches of: self-isolation, business closures, border controls and other State of Emergency Directions.

Last updated **5 February 2021**

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with disability.

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