



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Health**

Aboriginal Sector Communication Update #27

Wednesday 22 September 2021 14:00 Hours

COVID-19 is a continually changing situation, please check the latest information and updates to find the most current public health advice, please go to the [WA government website](#) and [HealthyWA](#)

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

COVID-19 Case numbers

As of **22 September 2021**, there are **1094** confirmed cases, **103** historical cases and **5** active cases of Coronavirus (COVID-19) in Western Australia (WA). **1080** people have recovered from COVID-19 in WA. There have been **9** deaths from COVID-19 in WA.

To date **1,741,317** COVID-19 tests have been conducted in WA.

WA: [Daily snapshot](#) & [Vaccination dashboard](#)

National: [Current National Status](#) & [Australia's vaccine rollout](#)

Worldwide: [WHO Situation Reports](#) & [WHO Dashboard](#)

National COVID-19 Aboriginal epidemiological profile

Disclaimer – this information is current at 29th August 2021. The outbreaks occurring in NSW and Vic are rapidly evolving and data provided here does not reflect the situation as it is today. Revised statistics will be provided in the next communication update.

Below is the summary of Aboriginal positive cases, data as at **29th August 2021** (Please note some of the data presented here is preliminary and is subject to changes, updates and corrections):

2021 Focus:

- Between **1st January 2021** and **29th August 2021**, there have been **743** confirmed cases recorded as Aboriginal people in the NNDSS, representing around **3.1%** of all Australian confirmed cases for this year.
- The first COVID-19-associated death in an Aboriginal person was notified during the most recent reporting period and was associated with the western New South Wales regional outbreak.
- The majority of Aboriginal cases in 2021 have been reported as locally acquired (**99%**) with **five** cases overseas acquired.
- There have been no COVID-19 positive cases reported in Western Australia.
- The median age of all Aboriginal positive cases was **22 years old** (range 0 to 79 years). **53%** (**393** cases) of all Aboriginal positive cases were females and **47%** (**349** cases) were male.

Latest updates

Public health advice issued for Western Australians

WA Health was notified by NSW Health that a NSW truck driver, who was in Western Australia from 16 to 18 September, returned a positive PCR test for COVID-19.

The driver had returned a negative test result in NSW on 13 September, and therefore was not subject to a rapid antigen test when entering Western Australia.

NSW Health reports the second driver in the truck returned a negative PCR test result.

The drivers informed WA Health they were wearing masks, at all times, when outside of the truck.

A list of [exposure locations](#) is available and will be regularly updated. People who have visited exposure sites at the relevant times need to get tested immediately and quarantine until they receive a negative test result.

A list of [testing clinics](#) is available on the HealthyWA website.

Roll up for WA – New TV commercial

A new 'nostalgic' television commercial forms part of the next phase of the Roll up for WA campaign and is aimed at helping get as many Western Australians vaccinated as possible.

The advertisement stars Sheree, an 18-year-old Aboriginal nursing student, whose roots stretch between the Nyiyaparli and Banjima people originating from Port Hedland. Sheree is eager to educate people about COVID-19 vaccines, and this was a key motivator behind her wanting to appear in the ad.

The campaign's next phase coincides with the recent announcement that all Western Australians aged 12 years and over can now receive a COVID-19 vaccine at a state-run clinic, participating GPs, participating pharmacies or Aboriginal Medical Services.

The campaign also includes an informative video series with respected medical professional Dr Karl, who answers the most common questions about the COVID-19 vaccines.

You can watch the commercial on the [Roll up for WA](#) website.

Continuing COVID safe practices

Businesses and patrons are reminded to be vigilant with [COVID safe practices](#) despite there being no instances of COVID-19 community transmission.

Businesses should refer to trusted sources (see the [Business and industry](#) section below), when reviewing COVID Safety Plans (see the [COVID Safe Guidelines](#)), company website and social media accounts to ensure they include the most up to date advice. Consider utilising the visual [resources](#) and fact sheets (including [translated](#) resources) available to remind staff and patrons how to protect against COVID-19. Strategies include:

- physically distance
- stay home and get tested if unwell
- perform regular hand hygiene
- receive a COVID-19 vaccination or register at [Rollup for WA](#) (if eligible)
- sign into [SafeWA](#) or a manual contact register upon entering a premises.

Encourage [contact register](#) use by displaying SafeWA QR codes in prominent places and clearly advise where the manual contact register is held. This is a vital step to ensure the Public Health team can promptly trace contacts if COVID-19 is identified in the community.

Controlled border arrangements - jurisdiction risk rating

New South Wales is considered 'extreme risk'. Victoria is considered 'high risk'. ACT is considered 'medium risk'. Queensland is considered 'low risk'. South Australia, Northern Territory and Tasmania are considered 'very low risk'. New Zealand is no longer a jurisdiction in WA's controlled border. For more information on WA's border arrangement, see the WA Government's controlled interstate border [webpage](#).

COVID-19 vaccination program

Vaccination is the best way to protect our community from COVID-19.

All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 12 and over are now eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccination.

People can book in to receive the COVID-19 vaccine that is appropriate for them at their local Aboriginal Medical Service (AMS) OR at a state-run COVID-19 vaccination community clinic or at a regional public hospital-based vaccination clinic. Alternatively, participating AMS or GP clinics can be found by using the Vaccine Eligibility Checker [here](#).

Pregnant and breastfeeding women, and those planning to become pregnant are now recommended to have the Pfizer vaccine. The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RANZCOG) and ATAGI advise no significant safety concerns have been identified through global surveillance data. Read the full statement from the Australian Government Department of Health [here](#) and the updated COVID-19 vaccination – shared decision making guide for women who are pregnant, breastfeeding or planning pregnancy [here](#).

Community clinics

A new community vaccination clinic is now open in Midland:

Midland: Centrepoint Shopping Centre (between Australia Post and Pharmacy 777)
307 Great Eastern Highway Midland, short walk from Midland train station.
Offering Comirnaty (**Pfizer Vaccine**) 7 days a week.
Monday - Saturday 8.30am-4.30pm, Sunday 11am-5pm.

Existing [Community clinics](#) in WA are located in Claremont (Showgrounds), Joondalup, Kwinana, Bunbury, and Perth Convention and Exhibition centre.

The **Comirnaty (Pfizer)** COVID-19 vaccine is now being rolled out to, and administered by, (GPs) in WA. Approved pharmacies can also now administer the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine for eligible populations **and will soon commence administering the Spikevax (Moderna) vaccine**. Participating GPs and pharmacies can be found by using the COVID-19 Vaccine [Eligibility Checker](#).

Alternatively, you can contact your local Aboriginal Medical Service or General Practice to find out if they are offering COVID vaccinations.

Anyone having difficulties booking on VaccinateWA can call 13 COVID (1326843) for assistance.

The WA COVID-19 Vaccine Myths and FAQ factsheet has now been updated and can be found [here](#).

School-based vaccination program announced

On the 17 September 2021 the state government [announced](#) that the COVID-19 vaccination school based program will begin in week 1 of term 4. The rolling school-based vaccination program for students aged 12 and above and school staff will begin at around 20 schools across WA next

month. Priority schools will include residential, agricultural and boarding colleges, and education support settings.

During the school holidays, designated times will be available for walk-in opportunities outside of school hours for students aged 16 and above - many of whom are in Year 11 and 12. These walk-in opportunities will be available at clinics in Midland, Kwinana and the city centre, as well as Joondalup and Claremont. School staff are also able to access the dedicated vaccination slots without an appointment after school hours and during the school holidays. Bookings can be made at [VaccinateWA](#) or by calling 13COVID (13 268 43).

Vaccination of residential aged care facility workers now mandatory

The vaccination of residential aged care workers became mandatory on the 17 September. Currently approximately 98% of residential aged care workers are vaccinated. Further information for residential aged care worker is available in the [frequently asked questions](#).

Moderna COVID-19 vaccine available at selected pharmacies

On the 22 September Minister for Health [announced](#) that the Spikevax (Moderna) COVID-19 vaccine will be available in participating community pharmacies from this week.

People aged 12 and over will be eligible to receive the Spikevax (Moderna) vaccine. To find a participating pharmacy please visit the Australian Government's [Vaccine Clinic Finder](#) or [findapharmacy](#).

Mandatory COVID-19 vaccination of health workers

On 2 September 2021 the Minister for Health [announced](#) that COVID-19 vaccination would become mandatory for Western Australian health care and health support staff from 1 October 2021. This will be done in a staged approach to ensure impacted health staff who work with the most vulnerable Western Australians get the COVID-19 vaccine.

The new public health [directions](#) make COVID-19 vaccination for WA health care workers and health support staff compulsory within public and private hospitals and public health service facilities. This decision is based on the latest health advice from the Chief Health Officer considering the evolving Delta variant and risks of COVID-19. Transmission of COVID-19 in healthcare settings has the potential to cause serious illness and death in staff, patients and visitors and, based on the public health advice, hospitals need to take reasonable precautions to protect from these risks. Health care and health support staff will be eligible to receive a Comirnaty (Pfizer) COVID-19 vaccine, regardless of their age.

Further information can be found on the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) page.

Comirnaty (Pfizer) COVID-19 vaccine for people aged 60 and over

On 14 September 2021 the Minister for Health [announced](#) that all Western Australians aged 60 years and over will be eligible to receive the Comirnaty (Pfizer) COVID-19 vaccine at **state-run vaccination clinics** from the 20 September 2021.

People aged 60 or older who have already had a first dose of Vaxzevria (AstraZeneca) COVID-19 vaccine are urged to get a second dose of the same vaccine in line with the advice provided by the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI). Those aged 60 or older who had booked a first Vaxzevria (AstraZeneca) COVID-19 dose but not yet received it, can cancel their booking and re-book an appointment for the Comirnaty (Pfizer) COVID-19 vaccine if they wish. Bookings can be made and changed at [VaccinateWA](#) or by calling 13COVID (13 268 43).

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:

- get a COVID vaccine as soon as it is your turn
- physical distance where possible
- 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

COVID-19 resources for Aboriginal people

Statewide Aboriginal resources

A suite of statewide Aboriginal tailored resources has been developed by the Department of Health WA. 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
- ensuring 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.

To access previous Aboriginal Communication Updates and other information specific to people working in the Aboriginal Sector, please visit [WA Department of Health – Aboriginal Sector](#).

To access general resources for your community (including factsheets, posters and video/radio messages) relating to COVID-19 and vaccination, please visit [HealthyWA - Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) for Aboriginal People](#). GP and other support phone lists are also provided on this site.

Health services are welcome to tailor WA Department of Health COVID-19 Aboriginal resources to meet community needs. Please reference the Department of Health WA and contact PHEOC (pheoc@health.wa.gov.au) for further information.

COVID-19 Vaccination resources

- The WA COVID-19 Vaccine Myths and FAQ factsheet can be found [here](#).
- [Mary G interview with Dr Carapetis \(part 1\)](#)
- [Mary G interview with Dr Carapetis \(part 2\)](#)
- [Dr Dan McAullay: COVID-19 and flu vaccination](#)
- [Dr Dan McAullay: COVID-19 vaccination](#)
- [Dr Sandra Eades: COVID-19 vaccination – young people can protect their families and elders](#)
- [Dr Sandra Eades: COVID-19 vaccination – vaccination protects vulnerable people](#)
- [Dr Sandra Eades: COVID-19 vaccination – vaccination myths](#)
- [Dr Sandra Eades: COVID-19 vaccination – how it strengthens your immune system](#)
- [Dr Sandra Eades: COVID-19 vaccination – common side effects](#)
- Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Service (KAMS) Pfizer vaccination [animated video](#)
- KAMS - [Get vaccinated against COVID-19 - 30 sec video](#)
- KAMS - [Get vaccinated against COVID-19 – 60 sec video](#)
- KAMS - [Get vaccinated against COVID-19 - 15 sec video](#)

- [Roll up for WA – nostalgic moments - TV commercial](#)

Further resources can be sourced on the [WA Government website](#) including a variety of new posters that promote Roll up for WA for you to use. The posters include stories from people who have received the COVID-19 vaccine and information about how to book an appointment, what to expect at the community vaccination clinic and where to find more information.

Check the [stakeholder kit](#) regularly for updates. If you would like to receive a Roll up for WA poster pack, please send an email to COVID19Vaccines@dpc.wa.gov.au with:

- the best mailing address to contact you
- which posters you'd like, or to tell us a bit about your community so we can make a selection
- where you plan to put up the posters

National Aboriginal resources

The Australian Government has produced a collection of materials created for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander vaccine providers to download and print to utilise in their health clinics and practices. These materials include posters, social media resources, handouts and web banners. These are all available on their [website](#).

A collection of general COVID-19 resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and remote communities is also available [here](#).

New vaccination resources include:

- Updated guidance on TGA advertising restrictions. This includes [social media](#), [posters](#) and [web content](#).
- A [video animation](#) in plain English that could be sent to patients' emails or used in clinic waiting rooms explaining what to expect on vaccination day, side effects and the need for two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine.
- A suite of [talking points](#) designed for healthcare workers, to help them have conversations with patients about COVID-19 vaccines.
- Updated [social resources](#) with suggested captions to use across social media.

Getting a COVID-19 test resources

- **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](#)
 - [Symptom poster #swab4mob](#)

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)
- **Crisis Care** (1800 199 008) if you require emergency accommodation.
- **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 **22 September 2021**

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

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