



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

Aboriginal Sector Communication Update #14

Monday 22 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 **22 February** 2021, there are **912** confirmed cases, **53** historical cases and **4** active cases of Coronavirus (COVID-19) in Western Australia (WA). **899** people have recovered from COVID-19 in WA. There have been **9** deaths from COVID-19 in WA.
- To date **853,710** 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 **31th January** 2021:

- **0.52% (154 cases)** of all COVID-19 positive (confirmed) cases (**28,794**) notified in the Australian *National Notifiable Disease Surveillance System* (NNDSS) were recorded as Aboriginal people – (the number of cases has increased from the last update by **four**).
- The **four new cases** (notified in January 2021) included **two** overseas-acquired cases, **one** locally-acquired case associated with the Avalon cluster in New South Wales and **one** historical case from South Australia's cluster of locally-acquired cases.
- Of the total **151** Aboriginal COVID-19 positive cases, **75% (113 persons)** acquired their infection locally, while **22% (33 persons)** acquired their infections overseas, and **2% (4 persons)** acquired their infections from interstate.
- Of the total **113** Aboriginal persons who acquired their infections locally, **81% (91 persons)** acquired the infection in a major city, **13% (15 persons)** acquired the infection in an inner regional area, **5% (6 persons)** acquired the infection in an outer regional area, and **1% (1 persons)** acquired the infection in a remote area.
- Of the **33** Aboriginal people who acquired the infection overseas (including one case from WA), **42 (14 persons)** were linked to cruise ships.
- Between July to December 2020, there were no new overseas-acquired cases notified in the NNDSS, while no new locally-acquired cases recorded in the NNDSS between September and December 2020.
- **11% (16 cases)** of Aboriginal cases required hospital admission, while **89% (135)** 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 **16 February 2021** there are around **250** SARS-CoV2 or COVID-19 candidate vaccines (an increase of **15** candidate vaccines from the last update) being developed across the world with total of **69** candidate vaccines (an increase of **6** candidates from the last update) are already progressed into Phase 1, 2 or 3 of clinical trials.

Latest Updates

COVID-19 vaccination program

The Australian Government COVID-19 vaccines [hub](#) has been significantly updated to include the latest news and information about the development, approval process and rollout plans for the COVID-19 vaccines. A key highlight was the [Update](#) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples about Australia's COVID-19 vaccines released 17/02/2021 and the Update for and information about COVID-19 vaccines [translated](#) into multiple languages. COVID-19 vaccination resources for the WA Aboriginal community will be made available soon.

Following the recent [announcement](#) by the Director General of the WA Department of Health regarding WA's COVID-19 vaccination program, plans are well underway for the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine to the first eligible group (phase 1a) from the week beginning February 22, 2021. More information is available on the following sites [check these regularly for updates]:

- **HealthyWA** - [COVID-19 Vaccine](#) (for consumers including general FAQs, Phase 1a FAQs for Quarantine and border workers)
- **WA Health** - [COVID-19 Vaccination Program](#) (for health professionals) including links for COVID-19 vaccination training for health providers and how to [subscribe](#) to the WA COVID-19 Vaccine Update.

Return to Pre-lockdown life for Perth Metro and Peel Regions

Face masks are no longer required to be worn inside or outside and there are no longer travel restrictions within WA, however a few restrictions still apply:

- contact registration is mandatory for most businesses;
- the controlled interstate border arrangement;
- additional protection measures for aged care facilities;
- 2 sqm rule and standard capacity limits for events; and
- travel restrictions for entry to remote Aboriginal communities.

COVID safe protective behaviors are still encouraged by all Western Australians, including physical distancing where possible, good personal hygiene and getting tested if unwell with COVID symptoms. More information can be found [here](#).

Interstate travellers

Safe travel is permitted into WA from a 'very low risk' state, and travellers under this jurisdiction will be subject to the following updated 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 and temperature test 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 and pending no further outbreaks, from 12.01am Saturday,

20 February, Victoria will be reclassified as 'low risk' and travel from this state into WA will allowed following these 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;
- self-quarantine for 14 days in a suitable premise;
- present for day 11 testing;
- undergo a health screening and temperature test upon arrival at Perth Airport;
- be prepared to take a COVID-19 test at the airport, if required,
- have G2G Pass checked and at WA's border checkpoint, if arriving by land.

More information for WA's controlled interstate border and the current category of each state and territories can be found [here](#).

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. Remember to ask for their permission beforehand.

Masks at airports

It is now mandatory to wear a face masks at all airports in Western Australia. This is a 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](#).

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 (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
- **Communication update #14**
- **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

Discussing COVID-19 with children

- **Tips for discussing coronavirus with your kids**
Dr Monique Robinson, a registered psychologist and Telethon Kids Institute child health researcher, has provided this guide to help navigate coronavirus and explain its impact to your kids.
 - [Tips for discussing coronavirus with your children](#)
- **Hi. This is coronavirus**
The Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of New South Wales (AHMRC) has developed a colourful children's book that explains what the COVID-19 pandemic is and how to prevent the spread of the virus in an easy to understand way.
 - [Hi. This is coronavirus – kids COVID-19 book](#)
- **Staying strong for your kids during COVID-19**
Yorgum Healing Service has developed a factsheet with tips for looking after children, elders and community members as well as your wellbeing during COVID-19.
 - [Staying Strong for Your Kids During COVID-19](#)
- **Our Kids and COVID-19**
Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Care (SNAICC) audiovisual resource provides some useful tips on how to support your child's safety and wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the importance of culture in keeping them strong.
 - [Our Kids and 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)
- **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](tel:1800313223) (Note: **NOT** for GP referred testing or private pathology clinic tests)
- **COVID-19 WA Public Information Line:** [132 6843 \(13 COVID\)](tel:1326843)
- **COVID-19 Travel Restrictions Exemption Application:** Visit the [G2G PASS](#) website or complete the [exemption application form](#)
 - **COVID-19 WA Police Line:** [131 444](tel:131444) to report breaches of: self-isolation, business closures, border controls and other State of Emergency Directions.

Last updated **22 February 2021**

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

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