



# COVID event update: Event organisers

## Key points:

- Ticketing of events is recommended for ease of contact registration and to facilitate contact tracing, should it be required.
- If ticketing is not possible at an event, contact registers should be implemented. This may involve the use of the SafeWA app and QR code system.
- A follow-up review of high-risk events in WA is currently underway and will be finalised in January 2021. Additional conditions have been placed on certain high-risk events in the interim.
- The Chief Health Officer has reviewed the presence of stages and activities involving a focal point of interest at events.

## Contact registers at events

The WA Government recently announced the reintroduction of contact registers at prescribed businesses and venues from 5 December 2020. Maintaining a contact register is an extra safety measure and one of the most effective ways to ensure rapid contact tracing to control the spread of COVID-19 in the event a case is detected in the community.

Ticketing of events is encouraged wherever possible, as this provides an efficient means of collecting contact registration details for patrons. The ticketing process should facilitate the collection of the minimum required contact information for each attendee. Where ticketing is not possible, event organisers are strongly encouraged to implement a contact register system.

A free, simple and secure contact register app, **SafeWA**, has been developed by the State Government to make it easy for businesses and venues to check in patrons. SafeWA can be downloaded from the Apple App Store or Google Play Store. Event organisers are encouraged to register for a QR code via the SafeWA app for all unticketed events. The QR code should be displayed around the event to promote use by patrons.

## Review of high-risk events

While approved COVID Event Plans have been well implemented at many different types of events in WA, a [recent review of high risk events in WA](#) determined that despite a comprehensive COVID Event Plan and the presence of COVID Safety Marshals, it has not been possible for a small number of events involving significant alcohol consumption and a primary focal point of interest where crowds congregate in close proximity (e.g. stages, some performances, dance floors, mosh pits) to occur in a COVID safe manner.

At the time of the review (5 November 2020), a small number (four) of events were not approved in their current format, as they were deemed too high risk. The Department of Health engaged with impacted event organisers and agreed to trial a range of different formats. The purpose of this trial was to determine whether events of this nature could be delivered in a COVID safe manner by changing the way in which they were delivered. Three of these reformatted events have taken place to date.

Department of Health officers have attended these, and a significant number of other high-risk events, over recent months. Additional conditions have had to be applied as a direct result of observations about the capacity of certain high-risk events to comply with their approved COVID event plans. For unseated formats, where alcohol and an entertainment focal point may be present, the following conditions will apply:

- Maximum of 10,000 patrons
- Maximum of 6 hours alcohol service (New Years' events permitted 7 hours)
- No visible stages/entertainment/performances permitted (where a substantial crowd can be expected to congregate).

The final observations from event attendance will be provided to the Chief Health Officer to inform a follow-up review of high-risk events, due for completion mid-January 2021. The findings of this follow-up review will be used to inform updated guidelines for events in WA, whilst COVID-19 continues to present a risk to the State.

## **Stages, live music, DJs and similar activities**

On the advice of the Chief Health Officer, stages and/or associated activities (e.g. DJs, live music or other similar activities) that are likely to result in difficulty maintaining physical distancing and an inability to comply with an approved COVID Event Plan for the duration of an event will not be supported. The event itself may still be approved if the activity is removed altogether or reformatted in such a way that the risk is considered adequately reduced.

A practical, common sense approach needs to be taken towards the presence of stages at events. Christmas carols, acoustic ensembles, ambient music and/or symphony/orchestral performances are unlikely to draw unmanageable crowds in front of stage where physical distancing cannot be maintained and are therefore generally considered acceptable.

While all proposals are considered on a case-by-case basis, stages are generally acceptable for:

- seated/ticketed concerts where it can be expected that individuals will remain seated;
- unticketed concerts with a contact registration system in place, where patrons are expected to remain seated on picnic rugs/camping chairs and will not congregate in front of the performance (e.g. Christmas carols); and
- artists or ensembles playing ambient music only (e.g. acoustic soloist).

Stages, DJs or live performances at unseated festivals, concerts or similar event formats, that are likely to lead to crowds congregating in close proximity, that cannot be adequately managed, will not be supported. The exception to this, is if the total number of patrons at the event is less than 1,500 (see *Stages for events with less than 1500 patrons*). Consideration is currently being given to hosting a stage/performance on site, but out of view of patrons at the event.

The Department of Health encourages event organisers who may be impacted by this to contact the [Public Events](#) team to discuss alternative formats that may be considered acceptable.

## **Stages for events with less than 1,500 patrons**

Stages and live music are currently permitted in some venues, including nightclubs and hotels. Whilst this presents a degree of risk, it is generally considered lower due to the reduced number of patrons at these venues, compared to those at music festivals.

To align the Department of Health's event guidelines with indoor venues, the Chief Health Officer has advised that stages with DJs or live performances likely to draw a crowd will be permitted for events with less than 1,500 patrons in total. This number has been calculated based on the average capacity of indoor venues currently permitting stages, DJs and live music.

Maintaining physical distancing remains a key strategy in reducing the potential risk associated with COVID-19 transmission. Whilst a stage/performance is permitted at events involving less than 1,500 patrons, the Department of Health strongly encourages event organisers to reconsider their inclusion if it will not be realistic for organisers to ensure that patrons maintain physical distancing for the duration of the event.

## Events into the future

The Department of Health remains committed to working with event organisers and supporting events in WA, however, public health remains our priority. It is therefore important for event organisers to ensure they develop a comprehensive, achievable COVID Event Plan and remain agile in their response to any unforeseen issues that may arise during the event, to maintain compliance with their plan.

Please note, organisers must ensure all events comply with their approved COVID Event Plan, the Directions and Department of Health guidelines current at the time of the event. Relevant Directions or guidelines may change based on the advice of the Chief Health Officer or risk of COVID-19, potentially requiring modification of the event format, postponement or cancellation at very short notice. It is the event organiser's responsibility to ensure they are aware of any relevant changes, discuss the implications with their insurer, and address all actions relating to modification, delay or potential cancellation of their event in their Risk and Emergency Management Plans.

## Further information

For further information, please contact the Department of Health Events Team on (08) 9285 5500 or email [Public.events@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:Public.events@health.wa.gov.au)

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

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