



Aboriginal sector communication update #15

Tuesday 23 March 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 **23 March** 2021, there are **931** confirmed cases, **60** historical cases and **10** active cases of Coronavirus (COVID-19) in Western Australia (WA). **912** people have recovered from COVID-19 in WA. There have been **9** deaths from COVID-19 in WA.
- To date **923,448** 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 #15, data as of **28th February** 2021:

- 0.52% (150 cases)** of all COVID-19 positive (confirmed) cases (**28,937**) notified in the Australian *National Notifiable Disease Surveillance System* (NNDSS) were recorded as Aboriginal people – (a decrease of **1** case from the last update due to: **one** overseas-acquired case being notified while **two** positive cases being officially de-notified or removed from the NNDSS records).
- Of the total **150** Aboriginal COVID-19 positive cases, **76% (114 persons)** acquired their infection locally, while **23% (34 persons)** acquired their infections overseas, and **1% (1 person)** acquired their infections from interstate and **1% (1 person)** had an unknown source of infection or is under investigated.
- Of the total **114** Aboriginal persons who acquired their infections locally, **80% (91 persons)** acquired the infection in a major city, **14% (16 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 **34** Aboriginal people who acquired the infection overseas (including few cases from WA), **41% (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 October 2020.
- 11% (16 cases)** of Aboriginal cases required hospital admission, while **89% (134 cases)** 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 March 2021** there are around **264** SARS-CoV2 or COVID-19 candidate vaccines (an increase of **14** candidate vaccines from the last update) being developed across the world with total of **82** candidate vaccines (an increase of **13** candidates from the last update) are already progressed into Phase 1, 2, 3 or **4** of clinical trials.

Latest updates

COVID-19 vaccination program

Western Australia's COVID-19 vaccine rollout is well underway with priority groups being offered the first doses, including people most at risk of becoming very ill with COVID-19, and people at greater risk of becoming infected through their work.

The Australian Government [COVID-19 vaccines hub](#) now includes the latest updates and new features, such as an vaccine eligibility checker, list of clinics for the phase 1b rollout, evidence-based answers to questions about COVID-19 vaccines, and campaign materials.

There is an update in the [information for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples](#). This page features rollout plans, communication resources and a common questions factsheet. Remember to [subscribe here](#) for the latest COVID-19 vaccine updates and select Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities as the target audience.

A new COVID-19 vaccination myth buster/FAQ sheet has been developed for the Aboriginal community. This print friendly factsheet can be found [here](#). Further materials are being developed to address vaccine hesitancy in the WA Aboriginal community.

WA's Chief Health Officer Dr Andrew Robertson has issued a [media statement](#) providing reassurance and advice of the continued safety of the COVID-19 vaccination program, as well as addressing [vaccine safety and side effects](#).

More information on COVID-19 vaccination is available on these sites, please check these trusted sources regularly for updates:

- **HealthyWA** – [COVID-19 vaccine](#) (for consumers) includes [new FAQs](#) for the WA community about the COVID-19 vaccination program and eligibility criteria.
- **WA Health** – [COVID-19 vaccination program](#) (for health professionals) including links for COVID-19 vaccination for health providers and how to [subscribe](#) to the WA COVID-19 vaccine update.

WA Health advice for travellers

The Department of Health WA has issued the current advice for recently returned Queensland travellers, following a public health alert issued for parts of Brisbane. Anyone in WA who has arrived in WA since March 10 and visited the listed Queensland [locations during the relevant times](#) should get tested immediately for COVID-19 and quarantine until March 25 – 14 days from March 11 when the case was considered infectious.

The Department of Health WA has also issued this advice for any returned travellers from New South Wales, following public health advice issued for parts of Sydney. While the risk is deemed to be low, anyone who has arrived in WA since March 13 and who visited the listed NSW [locations at the stated times](#) should get tested immediately and quarantine. They should also get tested 11 days after visiting the location until March 27 – 14 days from March 13 when the case was considered infectious.

Controlled interstate border

Under the ‘very low risk’ jurisdiction, safe travel into WA 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 and temperature test upon arrival at Perth Airport;
- be prepared to take a COVID-19 test at the airport COVID Clinic, if required,
- if arriving by land, undergo a health screening and have G2G Pass checked and at WA’s border checkpoint.

More information for WA’s controlled interstate border and the current category of each state and territories can be found [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.

New resources for the Aboriginal sector

- COVID-19 vaccine myth buster/FAQ sheet available on the HealthyWA website

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
- **Communication update #15**

- **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**

- 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

- **Vaccination**

- **COVID-19 vaccine myth busters and FAQs 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

COVID-19 vaccine FAQs

- **Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services (KAMS)**

KAMS have developed a list of FAQs to assist the community with the COVID-19 vaccine rollout.

- [Frequently Asked Questions page](#)

- **Department of Health South Australian (SA Health)**

SA Health have developed an FAQ Sheet to assist Aboriginal communities during COVID-19 vaccine rollout.

- [COVID-19 vaccine FAQs](#)

- **Australian Government Department of Health**

The Federal Health Department has collated common questions and answers about COVID-19 vaccines suitable for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

- [COVID-19 vaccine common questions](#)

- **Western Australian Department of Health**
WA Health has developed a myth buster/factsheet to address the concerns of the COVID-19 vaccine rollout for the Aboriginal community.
 - [Vaccination Mythbusters and frequently asked questions](#)

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 **23 March 2021**

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

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