



Aboriginal Sector Communication Update #8

Tuesday 22 September 2020 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 September** 2020, there are **665** confirmed cases, **34** historical cases and **6** active cases of Coronavirus (COVID-19) in Western Australia (WA). **650** people have recovered from COVID-19 in WA. There have been **9** deaths from COVID-19 in WA.
- To date **395,402** COVID-19 tests have been conducted in WA.
- **WA:** [Daily snapshot](#)
- **National:** [Current National Status](#)
- **Worldwide:** [WHO Situation Reports](#)

National COVID-19 Aboriginal epidemiological profile

Updates on COVID-19 among Aboriginal Australians, key insights #10, data as of **30th August** 2020:

- **0.5% (134 cases)** of all COVID-19 positive (confirmed) cases (**23,686**) notified in the Australian *National Notifiable Disease Surveillance System* (NNDSS) were recorded as Aboriginal people – an increase of **2** cases from the previous update (10 September).
- Of the total **134** Aboriginal COVID-19 positive cases, **76% (102 persons)** acquired their infection locally, while **23% (30 persons)** acquired their infections overseas, and **one** case had an unknown source of infection.
- Of the total **102** Aboriginal persons who acquired their infections locally, **76% (78 persons)** acquired the infection in a major city, **15% (15 persons)** acquired the infection in an inner regional area, **6% (6 persons)** acquired the infection in an outer regional area, and **3% (3 persons)** acquired the infection in a remote area.
- Of the **31** Aboriginal people who acquired the infection overseas, **45% (14 persons)** were linked to cruise ships.
- **11% (15 cases)** of Aboriginal cases required hospital admission, while **89% (119)** required quarantine/isolation. **No deaths** were recorded among Aboriginal positive cases.
- The median age of Aboriginal positive cases is **33** years; compared to **37** years for non-Aboriginal people.
- Overall, Aboriginal females recorded a higher proportion of cases (**59%; 79 cases**) than Aboriginal males (**41%; 55 cases**):
 - The highest proportions of Aboriginal positive cases for both males and females were in the 20 to 29 year age groups (**26%** and **22%** respectively).

- 5% of females and 8% of males Aboriginal positive cases were aged under 10 years of age.
- Aboriginal females in the 10 to 19 year age group recorded more than double the proportion of positive cases compared to non-Aboriginal females in the same age group; 17% compared to 8%.
- The proportion of cases for Aboriginal males in the 60 to 69 year age group was twice as high as those for Aboriginal females; 12% compared to 6%.
- No cases were recorded for Aboriginal males in the 80 years and over age group, while 2% of Aboriginal females were reported as positive in the 90 year and over age group.
- The completeness of Aboriginal identification fields in the NNDSS was 88%.

Latest updates

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group on COVID-19 Communiqués

The latest versions of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group on COVID-19 Communiqués published and current areas of focus are available [here](#).

New COVID Clinic at Kununurra

As part of ongoing efforts to support our community transmission-free status here in WA, a new [regional testing clinic opened at Kununurra District Hospital](#). The clinic will help with the regular testing of transport, freight and logistics personnel entering WA, and is aimed at protecting some of our most vulnerable communities in the East Kimberley.

GeneXpert rollout complete

WA now has 14 [GeneXpert machines](#) deployed around the state. These machines can be used for the rapid testing of COVID-19 for higher risk COVID-19 testing scenarios, such as health care workers, police, hospital patients, people living in Aboriginal communities and those from an area with an increased risk of community transmission. The rollout of these machines is particularly important for regional WA, as samples from these areas would normally involve longer transport times, delaying COVID-19 results. The last three sites to go live included Esperance, Northam and Carnarvon.

Clarifying COVID-19 restrictions for First Nations people

The National Justice Project, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services and University of Technology Sydney Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research have worked together to clarify and communicate restrictions relating to COVID-19 activities for the First Nations people living in remote communities across Australia.

They have developed a series of information guides and fact sheets that summarise the various state and territory public health directions issued as a result of the pandemic and address the stricter measures being imposed on Aboriginal Australians living in remote communities. By disseminating the information, the contributors hope to ensure those living in these communities are aware of their rights under the lockdown measures as they currently stand.

The information guides and fact sheets provide the latest COVID-19 guidance for each state and territory and can be accessed at the National Justice Project website [here](#).

- **National Justice Project**
 - [WA Information Guide](#)
 - [WA Fact Sheet](#)

COVID-19 prevention measures for the workplace

Although workplaces may be exempt from the 2m² rule under the [Closure and Restriction \(Limit the Spread\) Direction \(No. 5\)](#), the Department of Health WA continues to recommend physical distancing wherever possible. For information on how to do this, see our updated factsheet - [Advice for physical distancing in the workplace](#). The fact sheet provides advice on other prevention measures such as encouraging workers to stay home if unwell, and practising good hand hygiene and cough etiquette.

It is important that workplace cleaning regimes are reviewed to ensure they are appropriate during the COVID-19 pandemic. For advice on cleaning in the home and workplace (non-healthcare settings) see our factsheet [Environmental cleaning for workplaces](#).

Aboriginal COVID-19 resources

COVID-19 messages for Aboriginal young people

- **Delivered through music and dance**
 - [Covid-19 Hand Wash rap](#) a message from Baker Boy
 - [One Point 5](#) was co-written by Aboriginal recording artists Nooky and Mi-kaisha, and produced by First Nations media, communication and events agency 33 Creative in partnership with NSW Health Centre for Aboriginal Health to complement the NSW Government Keep our Mob Safe campaign.

Impacts of COVID-19: Social emotional wellbeing for Aboriginal young people

During the COVID-19 pandemic, young people are likely to be staying home more and likely to experience the cancellation of special plans and events due to restrictions, such as NAIDOC celebrations and school social functions. The increased time at home combined with economic strains due to the impacts of the pandemic can mean (for some young people); increased family obligations such as caring for younger siblings, reduced freedoms and exposure to economic stress experienced by parents, carers and family.

This can make young people feel a variety of emotions that can include frustration, unease related to the uncertainty and change, loneliness, boredom and stress. For some young people, increased time at home can mean they are less safe than when they were able to spend time elsewhere.

To support Aboriginal young people to stay strong during this time it is important to find COVID-safe ways to connect to Country, culture, family and community to maintain good mental health and social emotional wellbeing. For example bush walking and talking with family on Country can benefit Aboriginal young people culturally, socially, emotionally and physically.

For information to help you to support Aboriginal young people during the pandemic you can visit:

- **Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC)**
 - [Our kids and COVID-19](#)
This video includes tips to help parents and carers of Aboriginal children during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.
- **Headspace Yarn Safe**
The headspace [Yarn Safe page](#) offers culturally safe cultural social emotional wellbeing advice targeted to Aboriginal children and young people.
 - [Got A Lot Going On – Yarn Safe Music Video](#)
 - [Mental Health and Wellbeing](#)
 - [Stress and Pressure](#)
 - [Relationships](#)
 - [Alcohol and Drugs](#)

- **Kids Helpline**

The [Kids Helpline](#) website offers a wide-range of resources and information that offer coping tips during COVID-19 pandemic targeted to children, teens and young adults:

- [COVID got you stressed out and anxious?](#)
- [What if things don't go back to normal?](#)
- [I'm worried about coronavirus COVID-19 and isolating. What should I do?](#)
- [I lost my job](#)
- [Stressful money stuff](#)
- [I've been fighting with my family](#)
- [Feeling unsafe at home](#)

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 the [COVIDSafe app](#)
- 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-9 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

In development

- **COVID-19 general information for Aboriginal people to stay safe**

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**
- **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
 - Information for Aboriginal people (HealthyWA)
- **External stakeholder resources**
 - Resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and remote communities
 - COVID-19 resource toolkit for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health professional (NATSIHWA)
- **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**
 - 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 low risk contacts 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 – Stay strong when you are sick
 - Poster – Staying well on my travels

- Poster – Symptoms and what to do if unwell
- Poster – Visit your doctor
- **Video/radio messages**
 - TV commercial – Good hygiene with Mary G
 - TV commercial – Social distancing with Mary G
 - Video - Beating the bugs, colds and viruses
 - Radio – Protect yourself and other with good hygiene
 - Video - Mary G telehealth and regular checkups
 - Radio – Physical distancing – let’s work together to protect our mob
 - Radio – Stay at home if you are sick
- **Other resources available**
 - Aboriginal Health Council of WA (AHCWA)
 - Resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and remote communities (Australian Government)
 - Phase 4 Update available in Plain English, Kriol, Martu and Ngaanytjarra
- **GPs and other support phone lists**
 - Goldfields
 - Great Southern
 - Kimberley
 - Midwest
 - Perth
 - Pilbara
 - South West
 - Wheatbelt

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 September 2020**

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

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