



Events and mass gatherings position statement

The WA Government has implemented a staged lifting of COVID-19 restrictions. Phase 4 of the State's COVID-19 restrictions has been extended until 24 October 2020.

Under the current Directions, events of any size are permitted (except music festivals), with a minimum of 2 square metres required per person. Event organisers and local governments are advised that this is under review.

It is understood that many event organisers are planning rescheduled and new events, due to the time-frames involved in the planning process.

The WA Government is committed to supporting event organisers in a way that also ensures public health and safety are prioritised. A protocol is being developed under which COVID-safe events can be permitted.

Further decisions related to music festivals, and the nature and scale of events permitted in WA, will hinge on the position of the Federal and State Government, National Cabinet and the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC), and the evolving risk of COVID-19.

Events review update

Representatives from the Environmental Health Directorate (EHD), Public Health Emergency Operations Centre (PHEOC), WA Police, Department of Premier and Cabinet, State Solicitor's Office and the Department of Local Government, Sports and Culture have contributed to a review of the Directions, as they pertain to events in WA. It is anticipated that updated Directions will be released mid-late September.

Local government approvals

In view of the fact that events scheduled to take place after the release of the updated Directions are likely to be impacted, it is requested that local government do not issue final approvals for applications under Section 178 of the *Health (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1911* or Regulation 9A of the *Health (Public Buildings) Regulations 1992* until after updated Directions are released.

It is acknowledged that in some cases this may cause some difficulties, particularly for events being planned for the long weekend and school holidays at the end of September and early October. If your local government is in this situation, please contact the EHD to discuss further via: Public.Events@health.wa.gov.au

The Department of Health seeks to reassure local governments and event organisers that events in WA will not be prevented under the updated Directions. Rather, the additional proposed measures in an updated Directions will aim to ensure there is a clear process that allows COVID safe events to occur in a way that minimises potential risks to public health.

COVID event Plan

It is anticipated that event organisers will be required to develop an approved **COVID Event Plan** before an event can proceed, to support planning and risk-mitigation strategies, and to demonstrate compliance with current Directions safety guidance.

Guidance materials and templates are being developed to assist local government and event organisers with this new requirement. It is intended that these will be available prior to the release of the update Directions. Further details of these changes will be communicated to the environmental health workforce and events industry as soon as the review process permits it.

Event organisers should continue to refer to the WA Government website www.wa.gov.au to ensure they meet all mandatory requirements and follow any relevant Phase 4 COVID safety guidelines. Guidance and templates related to COVID Events Plan will be provided in due course.

Registration of events

Event organisers and local governments are currently requested to advise the Department of Health of all approved events. This is likely to become a **mandatory requirement** under the updated Directions.

This information is crucial, as many events previously cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions are being rescheduled, while new events are being planned. Details will be used to generate a coordinated calendar of events occurring in WA. In turn, this will be used to inform emergency services and other relevant agencies/departments.

Events can be [registered online](#) through a simple form process. Alternatively, event details can be emailed to: Public.Events@health.wa.gov.au

Compliance with COVID-19 Directions

Authorised officers (the WA Police), under the *Emergency Management Act 2005*, have the power to close an event that they consider to be in breach of the current Directions or that puts the community at risk.

Local government environmental health officers are not authorised under the *Emergency Management Act 2005*, and therefore will not play a role in enforcing adherence to the Directions. They remain responsible for enforcing the *Health (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1911* and public building legislation.

Public Health Principles

The decision to proceed with, restrict, modify, postpone, or cancel an event should be based on compliance with current COVID-19 related [Directions](#) (*Emergency Management Act 2005*), and the undertaking of a detailed risk assessment.

In addition to the normal risk assessment conducted as part of an events approval process, the following public health principles related to COVID-19 will also need to be considered. It should be noted that the principles and considerations summarised in the table below will be relevant well beyond Phase 4 of the WA Roadmap, as the risk of COVID-19 is likely to remain for some time.

Consideration	Explanation
Status of COVID-19 activity in WA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increase in COVID-19 activity may result in events being cancelled or postponed.
Current Directions at the time of event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Events must adhere to State department advice and legal Directions current at time of event.
Prevailing position of Federal /State Govt, AHPPC, National Cabinet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Position will dictate the timeline, type and nature of events permitted in WA.
Anticipated crowd size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Larger crowd sizes may increase the size of a potential outbreak, should a person at the event test positive for COVID-19. Larger crowd sizes have implications for risk mitigation strategies. Crowd sizes must not exceed patron limit specified in the Directions that are in place at the time of the event.
Nature and duration of contact between patrons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The longer individuals are in contact, and the closer the contact is, the greater the risk of transmission of COVID-19.
Ability to maintain physical distancing between patrons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical distancing reduces the risk of transmission of COVID-19.
Event venue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outdoor venues are lower risk for transmission of COVID-19 than indoor venues, provided physical distancing is practised.
Ability to trace patrons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registered events will ensure individuals can be contacted if a person attending the event tests positive for COVID-19.
Alcohol / Drugs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to alcohol and/or drugs may result in difficulties managing physical distancing and other risk mitigation strategies.
Health and age of patrons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patrons who are older and those with co-morbidities are at greater risk of more serious illness with COVID-19.

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