



Aboriginal Sector Communication Update #25

Wednesday 18 August 2021 16:00 Hours

COVID-19 is a continually changing situation. Please check the latest information and updates to find the most current public health advice on the [WA government website](#) and [HealthyWA](#)

This regular statewide communication update is to keep health professionals abreast of the state-wide public health messages and resources for COVID-19 that have been developed by the Public Health Emergency Operations Centre (PHEOC) for the Aboriginal community and health professionals.

COVID-19 Case numbers

- As of **18 August 2021**, there are **1062** confirmed cases, **101** historical cases and **3** active cases of Coronavirus (COVID-19) in Western Australia (WA). **1050** people have recovered from COVID-19 in WA. There have been **9** deaths from COVID-19 in WA.
- To date **1,596,064** COVID-19 tests have been conducted in WA.
- **WA:** [Daily snapshot](#) & [Vaccination dashboard](#)
- **National:** [Current National Status](#) & [Australia's vaccine rollout](#)
- **Worldwide:** [WHO Situation Reports](#) & [WHO Dashboard](#)

National COVID-19 Aboriginal epidemiological profile

Updates on COVID-19 among Aboriginal Australians, key insights **#18**, data as of date **20th June 2021**:

- Since the beginning of pandemic to 20 June 2021, **0.51% (153)** of **30,028** all person Australian positive cases notified in the Australian National Notifiable Disease Surveillance System (NNDSS) were identified as Aboriginal people (**no deaths** and **no new cases** since the last update).
- Between **Jan and Jun 2021**, there have been **5** confirmed cases recorded as Aboriginal people in the NNDSS, representing **0.33%** of all Australian confirmed cases for this year.
- Of the total **153** Aboriginal COVID-19 positive cases, **76% (116)** persons) acquired their infection locally in their states/territories (or intrastate-acquired), **23% (35)** persons) acquired their infections internationally, **1% (2 person)** acquired their infection outside their states/territories (interstate acquired).
- Of the **116** Aboriginal people who acquired their infection intrastate, **80% (93)** persons) acquired their infection in Australia major cities, **14% (16)** persons) acquired the infection in the inner regional areas, **5% (6)** persons) acquired the infection in the outer regional areas and **1% (1)** person) acquired infection in the remote area.
- Of the **35** Aboriginal people who acquired the infection overseas, **40% (14)** cases) were linked to, or associated with cruise ships.
- The majority (**129 cases or 84%**) of Aboriginal positive cases recorded major cities of Australia as their usual place of residence, and only about **8 (5%)** positive cases recorded outer regional and remote areas as their usual place of residence.
- The **first Australian** confirmed COVID-19 case was reported on **25 January 2020**. The

first Aboriginal COVID-19 positive case was notified on 12 March 2020.

- The first wave peak of COVID-19 among Aboriginal Australians was during the last fortnight of March 2020 when the total number of new positive cases reached 19. The second wave peak was in July 2020 with the total of 30 new COVID-19 positive cases notified in the NNDSS. The timelines of the two waves were consistent with trends in the non-Aboriginal population.
- Aboriginal people had a lower COVID-19 notification rate per 100,000 population than non-Aboriginal people, with the overall age-standardised rate ratio of 0.2. The highest notification rate amongst Aboriginal people was in the 70 to 79 years age group (36 per 100,000 population), while the lowest notification rate was amongst children aged 0 to 9 years group (7 per 100,000 population).
- 10% (16 cases) of Aboriginal cases required hospital admission, while 90% (137 cases) required isolation. No death was recorded among Aboriginal positive cases.
- The median age of Aboriginal positive cases is 32 years, compared to 36 years for non-Aboriginal people.

Latest updates

Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Service launch COVID-19 vaccine campaign

The Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Service launched a new COVID-19 vaccine campaign on Friday 7 August with a series of videos that are featuring on various social media platforms and television stations (GWN, WIN, NTV, 7Mate and 7Two). The videos are available to share through your social media networks. If you haven't already seen the videos you can view them [here](#).

New Zealand to 'low risk'

Based on the latest public health advice, New Zealand transitioned from a 'very low risk' jurisdiction to a 'low risk' jurisdiction at 12:00pm (midday), Wednesday 18 August under WA's controlled border arrangements.

Refer to the [announcement](#) for further information.

New South Wales to 'high risk'

Based on the latest public health advice, New South Wales (NSW) became a 'high risk' jurisdiction from 12.01am Tuesday, 17 August 2021.

Refer to the [announcement](#) and Controlled Border [FAQs](#) for full details.

Northern Territory

As of 16 August 2021, all persons arriving from NT are required to get tested immediately (within 48 hours) and isolate until they have received a negative result.

Anyone who has been at the listed NT [exposure sites](#) on the dates and time specified are required to self-quarantine for 14 days and be tested immediately (within 48 hours) and at day 11. Continue to monitor the listed exposure sites in case additional locations are added.

Recent arrivals who did **not** visit the NT exposure locations and arrived between 12-16 August should get tested if COVID-19 related symptoms develop.

Refer to the [announcement](#) for further information.

Australian Capital Territory to 'medium risk'

As of 14 August 2021, Australian Capital Territory (ACT) transitioned to a 'medium risk' territory under the WA's [controlled border](#) arrangements.

Refer to the [announcement](#) for additional information.

South Australia to 'low risk'

South Australia (SA) transitioned from a 'medium risk' jurisdiction to a 'low risk' jurisdiction under the WA's [controlled border](#) arrangements.

Refer to the [announcement](#) for additional information.

Updated Controlled Border classifications

Based on the latest health advice, the 'high risk' category has been upgraded and a new 'extreme risk' category has been added to WA's [controlled border](#) arrangements.

Since 14 November 2020 when the controlled interstate border was introduced, only the 'very low risk', 'low risk' and 'medium risk' categories have applied, but with growing concerns about transmission of the Delta variant in Australia, the Chief Health Officer has recommended a new, strengthened risk matrix.

Refer to the [announcement](#) for the requirements under each category.

Jurisdiction risk rating

New South Wales is considered 'high risk'. Victoria, Queensland and ACT are considered 'medium risk'. South Australia and New Zealand are considered 'low risk'. Northern Territory and Tasmania are considered 'very low risk'. For more information on WA's border arrangement, see the WA Government's controlled interstate border [webpage](#).

COVID-19 vaccination program

Vaccination is the best way to protect our community from COVID-19.

All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people **aged 12 and over** are now eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccination.

People can book in to receive the COVID-19 vaccine that is appropriate for them at their local Aboriginal Medical Service (AMS) OR at a state-run COVID-19 vaccination community clinic or at a regional public hospital-based vaccination clinic. Alternatively, participating AMS or GP clinics can be found by using the Vaccine Eligibility Checker [here](#).

Pregnant women are now recommended to have the Pfizer vaccine. The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RANZCOG) and ATAGI advise no significant safety concerns have been identified through global surveillance data. Read the full statement from the Australian Government Department of Health [here](#) and the updated COVID-19 vaccination – shared decision making guide for women who are pregnant, breastfeeding or planning pregnancy [here](#).

Vaccination requirement for residential aged care facility workers

The Chief Health Officer approved [Directions](#) to ensure that any person working at a Residential Aged Care Facility (RACF) must have received at least one dose of an approved COVID-19 vaccination.

This advice aligns Western Australia with the [Commonwealth position](#) agreed by the National Cabinet and is based on advice from the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC).

This requirement applies to any person working at the facility including facility workers, administrative staff, ancillary staff, all visiting health care workers (including doctors, allied health and ambulance staff), students and volunteers. These workers must receive this first vaccine on or before 12.01am on 17 September 2021. Exemptions apply.

Refer to the [announcement](#) or the [FAQ document](#) for further information.

TGA grant provisional approval for Moderna vaccine

On the 9 August 2021 the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) [announced](#) provisional approval to Moderna Australia Pty Ltd for its COVID-19 vaccine — Spikevax (elasomeran). The Moderna COVID-19 vaccine is provisionally approved for individuals 18 years and older and will be distributed to and administered by primary care providers only.

TGA change in vaccination guidelines for children 12-15 years

Since the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) approved the Pfizer vaccine for people aged 12 to 15-years-old recently, the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) has recommended that certain groups of children should be prioritised for vaccination with Pfizer.

This includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 12 to 15, children with specific medical conditions, and all children aged 12 to 15 years in remote communities.

The rollout officially begins on August 9, but GPs can start administering vaccines to eligible children before then.

Consent will be needed from a legal guardian for children to be vaccinated.

See the TGA [announcement](#) for further information.

Community clinics

Existing [Community clinics](#) in WA are located in Claremont (Showgrounds), Joondalup, Kwinana, Redcliffe, Bunbury, Busselton, Manjimup and Perth CBD (Perth Convention and Exhibition centre). A new clinic in Midland will commence operating from 6 September.

The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine is now being rolled out to, and administered by, General Practitioners (GPs) in WA. Approved pharmacies can also now administer the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine for eligible populations. Participating GPs and pharmacies can be found by using the [COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility Checker](#).

Alternatively, you can contact your local Aboriginal Medical Service or General Practice to find out if they are offering COVID vaccinations.

Anyone having difficulties booking on VaccinateWA can call 13 COVID (1326843) for assistance.

The WA COVID-19 Vaccine Myths and FAQ factsheet has now been updated and can be found [here](#).

Flu vaccination

All Western Australian's are encouraged to get vaccinated against influenza to protect themselves and their community from the highly contagious virus.

The flu shot does **not** protect you against COVID-19 and the COVID-19 vaccine does **not** protect against the flu. People need to get both vaccinations, but it is recommended to wait at least 7 days between receiving your COVID-19 vaccine and the flu shot.

Our mob aged 6 months and older can receive the flu shot for free at your local GP or Aboriginal Medical Service. Resources promoting the flu shot are available [here](#).

Read about getting your flu shot [here](#). See the Health Minister's media statement [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:

- get a COVID vaccine as soon as it is your turn
- physical distance where possible
- 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

COVID-19 resources for Aboriginal people

Statewide Aboriginal resources

A suite of statewide Aboriginal tailored resources has been developed by the Department of Health WA. 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
- ensuring 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.

To access previous Aboriginal Communication Updates and other information specific to people working in the Aboriginal Sector, please visit [WA Department of Health – Aboriginal Sector](#).

To access general resources for your community (including factsheets, posters and video/radio messages) relating to COVID-19 and vaccination, please visit [HealthyWA - Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) for Aboriginal People](#). GP and other support phone lists are also provided on this site.

Health services are welcome to tailor WA 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.

COVID-19 Vaccination resources

- The WA COVID-19 Vaccine Myths and FAQ factsheet has now been updated and can be found [here](#).
- [Dr Dan McAullay: COVID-19 and flu vaccination](#)
- [Dr Dan McAullay: COVID-19 vaccination](#)
- [Dr Sandra Eades: COVID-19 vaccination – young people can protect their families and elders](#)
- [Dr Sandra Eades: COVID-19 vaccination – vaccination protects vulnerable people](#)
- [Dr Sandra Eades: COVID-19 vaccination – vaccination myths](#)
- [Dr Sandra Eades: COVID-19 vaccination – how it strengthens your immune system](#)
- [Dr Sandra Eades: COVID-19 vaccination – common side effects](#)
- Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Service (KAMS) Pfizer vaccination [animated video](#)

- [KAMS - Get vaccinated against COVID-19 – 60 sec video](#)
- [KAMS - Get vaccinated against COVID-19 - 30 sec video](#)
- [KAMS - Get vaccinated against COVID-19 - 15 sec video](#)

Further resources can be sourced on the WA Government [website](#) including a variety of new posters that promote Roll up for WA for you to use. The posters include stories from people who have received the COVID-19 vaccine and information about how to book an appointment, what to expect at the community vaccination clinic and where to find more information.

Check the stakeholder [kit](#) regularly for updates. If you would like to receive a Roll up for WA poster pack please send an email to COVID19Vaccines@dpc.wa.gov.au with:

- the best mailing address to contact you
- which posters you'd like, or to tell us a bit about your community so we can make a selection
- where you plan to put up the posters

National Aboriginal resources

The Australian Government has produced a collection of materials created for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander vaccine providers to download and print to utilise in their health clinics and practices. These materials include posters, social media resources, handouts and web banners. These are all available on their [website](#).

A collection of general COVID-19 resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and remote communities is also available [here](#).

New vaccination resources include:

- Updated guidance on TGA advertising restrictions. This includes [social media](#), [posters](#) and [web content](#).
- A [video animation](#) in plain English that could be sent to patients' emails or used in clinic waiting rooms explaining what to expect on vaccination day, side effects and the need for two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine.
- A suite of [talking points](#) designed for healthcare workers, to help them have conversations with patients about COVID-19 vaccines.
- Updated [social resources](#) with suggested captions to use across social media.

Getting a COVID-19 test

- **WA Department of Health COVID-19 Resources for Aboriginal people**
The WA Health Department has developed a suite of culturally-appropriate resources to support the Aboriginal community and health services in being COVID-19 safe and informed. They are found [here](#).
 - [COVID Clinics location in WA](#)
 - [Where to get tested for COVID-19 in regional and Remote WA](#)
 - [Self-isolation information after getting tested for Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- **Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council**
QAIHC have been developing [culturally appropriate resources](#) to keep ACCHOs and their community informed and protected against COVID-19.
 - [How are you tested for COVID-19?](#)
- **Getting the COVID-19 test: Story books**
The Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency has developed two easy-to-understand story books to help children understand what a COVID-19 test is and what will happen during the process.

- [Getting the COVID-19 test at the testing station or hospital](#)
- **AHMRC's COVID-19 Testing Resources.**
The Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of New South Wales has provided various resources on their website <https://www.ahmrc.org.au/coronavirus/> to support their member services across NSW during a COVID-19 outbreak and to minimise the impact on Aboriginal communities. Below are some resources on COVID-19 testing.
 - [Getting ready for a COVID-19 test](#)
 - [Do what's best. Get a COVID-19 test](#)
- **#swab4mob**
The Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of New South Wales has initiated the #swab4mob campaign to encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to get tested and protect their families and communities by getting a COVID-19 test if they feel unwell. You can find a link to the video below.
 - [#swab4mob campaign](#)
 - [Symptom poster #swab4mob](#)

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 **18 August 2021**

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

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