



# Aboriginal Sector Communication Update #26

**Wednesday 1 September 2021 12:00 Hours**

**COVID-19 is a continually changing situation, please check the latest information and updates to find the most current public health advice, please go to 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 **1 September 2021**, there are **1086** confirmed cases, **101** historical cases and **18** active cases of Coronavirus (COVID-19) in Western Australia (WA). **1059** people have recovered from COVID-19 in WA. There have been **9** deaths from COVID-19 in WA.
- To date **1,660,247** 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

Since the last update, Australia's COVID-19 situation has been significantly impacted by the current outbreak in NSW. Below is the summary of Aboriginal positive cases, data as at **15<sup>th</sup> August 2021** (Please note some of the data presented here is preliminary and is subject to changes, updates and corrections):

- Since the beginning of the pandemic to **15<sup>th</sup> August 2021**, **0.74%** (**290**) of **39,091** all person Australian positive cases notified in the Australian National Notifiable Disease Surveillance System (NNDSS) were identified as Aboriginal people (an increase of **137 cases** since the last update).
- Of the total **290** Aboriginal COVID-19 positive cases, **87%** (**252** persons) acquired their infection locally in their states/territories (or intrastate-acquired), **12%** (**36** persons) acquired their infections internationally, **1%** (**2 person**) acquired their infection outside their states/territories (interstate acquired).
- Of the **252** Aboriginal people who acquired their infections intrastate, **90%** (**227** persons) acquired their infection in Australia major cities, **7%** (**18** persons) acquired the infection in the inner regional areas, **2%** (**6** persons) acquired the infection in the outer regional areas and **1%** (**1** person) acquired infection in the remote area.
- Of the **36** Aboriginal people who acquired the infection overseas, **39%** (**14** cases) were linked to, or associated with, cruise ships.
- 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.

- **12%** (**35** cases) of Aboriginal cases required hospital admission, while **88%** (**255** cases) required quarantine/isolation. No death recorded among Aboriginal positive cases.
- The overall median age of Aboriginal positive cases is estimated at around **25** years, compared to **31** years for non-Aboriginal people.
- The completeness of Aboriginal identification fields in the NNDSS was about **93%**.

### **2021 Focus:**

- Between **1<sup>st</sup> January 2021** and **15<sup>th</sup> August 2021**, there have been **145** confirmed cases recorded as Aboriginal people in the NNDSS, representing around **1%** of all Australian confirmed cases for this year.
- Of the total **145** COVID-19 positive cases reported among Aboriginal people, about **88%** (**127 cases**) were from New South Wales and **12%** (**18 Cases**) were from other jurisdictions. There have been no COVID-19 positive cases reported in Western Australia. The highest notification rate amongst Aboriginal people was in the **10 to 29** years age group and the median age of all Aboriginal positive cases was **19 years old** (range 0 to 69 years). The gender ratio of all 2021 Aboriginal positive cases was **52%** (**75 cases**) for females and **48%** (**70 cases**) for male.
- The third wave of the outbreak among Aboriginal people is currently occurring in Greater Sydney, New South Wales, where the number of new positive cases among Aboriginal people has reached **108** cases in the **first fortnight (2<sup>nd</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> of August 2021)**.
- There are currently about **127** COVID-19 positive cases among Aboriginal people which are associated with the current outbreak in NSW. All these confirmed positive cases are locally acquired and less than **2%** of them have been **partially or fully vaccinated** against COVID-19. The outbreak of COVID-19 infection among Aboriginal people in NSW indicated a triple increase in the case numbers in the last two weekly reporting periods (31<sup>st</sup> July to 14<sup>th</sup> August 2021). The cases increased from **8** to **13** then from 13 to **77**, respectively.

## **Latest updates**

### **Aboriginal Family Day – COVID-19 vaccination clinic**

All Aboriginal people are encouraged to come along this Saturday 4 September to the **Aboriginal Family Day COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic**. The clinic is being held from 9am-3pm at the Midland community vaccination clinic (Centrepont Midland Shopping Centre, 307 Great Eastern Highway).

Derbarl Yerrigan will be onsite to discuss any questions. No appointment or ID is necessary, so even if you don't have an ID or Medicare card, you can still get vaccinated. All Aboriginal people, over 12 years of age, are welcome to get vaccinated.

People who are vaccinated can get a free sausage sizzle and other giveaways. There will also be an opportunity to paint a mural with an Aboriginal artist.

Please share the details of this clinic and promote amongst your networks.

### **Mary G and Dr Jonathon Carapetis radio interview on COVID-19 vaccination**

Last week, personality Mary G and leading Australian paediatric physician, Dr Jonathan Carapetis, presented a radio show discussing frequently asked questions, concerns and myths about the COVID-19 vaccination. Topics included:

- Why have Aboriginal people been prioritised to receive the vaccine?
- Why is it still important for everyone to get the vaccine?
- How do the vaccines work? plus much more...

If you missed the interview, you can tune in and listen via [COVID-19 resources for Aboriginal people \(healthywa.wa.gov.au\)](https://www.health.wa.gov.au/COVID-19-resources-for-Aboriginal-people). Please share the interview with your colleagues and networks.

## Changes to travel arrangements with New Zealand

In line with all other Australian jurisdictions, travel from New Zealand is now classified as travel from an international location, and approved travellers are required to enter 14 days of hotel quarantine. Refer to the [announcement](#) for further information.

## New South Wales to 'extreme 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.

## Queensland to 'low risk'

Queensland transitioned from 'medium risk' to 'low risk' on 26 August. Refer to the [announcement](#) for further information.

## South Australia to 'very low risk'

South Australia transitioned from 'low risk' to 'very low risk' on 26 August. Refer to the [announcement](#) for further 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 'extreme risk'. New Zealand is classified as travel from an international location. Victoria and ACT are considered 'medium risk'. Queensland is considered 'low risk'. South Australia, 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](#).

## 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](#).

## 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](#).

## Community clinics

A **new** community vaccination clinic will open in **Midland on 6 September** and will operate 7 days a week. It will be located at the Centrepoint Shopping Centre, 307 Great Eastern Hwy Midland (a short walk from Midland train station). Please note (and share) the information in 'Latest Updates' above, regarding the **Aboriginal Family Day** being held at this clinic on **Saturday 4 September**.

Existing [Community clinics](#) in WA are located in Claremont (Showgrounds), Joondalup, Kwinana, Bunbury, and 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](#).

## 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.

## 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](mailto: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](#).
- [Mary G interview with Dr Carapetis \(part 1\)](#)
- [Mary G interview with Dr Carapetis \(part 2\)](#)

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

- **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 **1 September 2021**

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

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