



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Health**

Aboriginal Sector Communication Update #31

Thursday 25 November 2021 14:00 Hours

COVID-19 is a continually changing situation. Please keep up to date with the most current information and public health advice at the [WA government website](#) and [HealthyWA](#).

This update is intended to keep health professionals abreast of the state-wide public health messages and resources for COVID-19 that have been developed by Public Health for the Aboriginal community and health professionals.

COVID-19 Case numbers

As of **25 November 2021**, there are **1,122** confirmed cases, **111** historical cases and **8** active case of Coronavirus (COVID-19) in Western Australia (WA). **1,105** people have recovered from COVID-19 in WA. There have been **9** deaths from COVID-19 in WA.

To date **1,936,148** 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

Below is a summary of the epidemiological profile of COVID-19 amongst Aboriginal Australians, produced by the Department of Health's Aboriginal Health Policy Directorate. Data is current as at **7 November 2021**. The data is preliminary and is subject to change.

1 January 2020 to 7 November 2021:

- Since the beginning of the pandemic to **7 November 2021**, around **4.2%** (**7,602**) of the **180,418** positive cases notified in the Australian National Notifiable Disease Surveillance System (NNDSS) were identified as Aboriginal people (a continued increasing trend since the last update).
- COVID-19 cases among Aboriginal Australians (relating to the outbreaks in NSW and Vic) have grown by almost 50 times since the outbreaks in Greater Sydney NSW in June 2021, increasing from around **153** confirmed cases to **7,602** cases in November 2021.
- Around **80%** of all positive cases amongst Aboriginal Australians reported in NNDSS were from NSW, **15%** from Vic, **3%** from ACT, and about **2%** were from other jurisdictions.
- The highest proportion of cases amongst Aboriginal people was in the **18 to 29** years age group (around **24%**) followed by the **5 to 11** years age group (**17%**) and the **30 to 39** years age group (**15%**).
- It is estimated that less than **5%** of all confirmed cases amongst Aboriginal Australians had been fully vaccinated against COVID-19.
- Around **12%** of Aboriginal positive cases required hospital care (inclusion of ICU)

admissions), with a **0.2%** mortality rate (**16** deaths). The **90 and over** years age group had the highest hospitalisation rate (**50%**), followed by the **70-79** years age group (**38%**), the **80-89** age group (**36%**), the **60-69** age group (**29%**) and the **50-59** age group (**16%**). The **70-79** years age groups had the highest ICU admission rate (**11%**), ahead of the **60-69** age group (**6%**), and the **50-59** age group (**4%**). The **80-89** age group had the highest mortality rate at around **27%**.

- The completeness of Aboriginal status identification fields in the NNDSS was around **81%**.

NT outbreak of COVID-19 among Aboriginal people

- **Cluster 1:** the first NT community or locally acquired case identified as an unvaccinated non-Aboriginal **man in his 20s** was tested for COVID-19 on **3/11/2021** and returned a positive result on **4/11/21**. He is a NT resident and lives between Humpty Doo and Katherine where he works at the RAAF Tindal Base. The man visited various locations in Darwin and Katherine during his infectious period **31/10/-3/11/2021**. It was later established that the man contracted the virus from a partially **vaccinated 21-year-old woman** who flew into Darwin from Cairns on **29/10/2021**.
- **Cluster 2:** A fully vaccinated Aboriginal **man aged in his 40s** who lives in Katherine (with seven other household members) but travelled in and out of Robinson River remote community, tested positive for COVID-19 on **15/11/2021**. An unvaccinated close contact **woman in her 30s** who lives in Robinson River and travelled to Katherine also tested positive on the same date. It is believed the two positive cases were infectious in the two communities for several days. Genomic sequencing has confirmed the **linkage between these two clusters**.
- As at **24 November 2021**, a total of **51** COVID-19 positive cases associated with the current outbreak in the NT have been reported by NT Health. Around **92% (47)** of the cases have been identified as Aboriginal people, of these **47** Aboriginal positive cases:
 - **91%** (43 cases) required isolation/quarantine at an official quarantine facility
 - **9%** (4 cases) required hospital care.

Vaccination rates among Aboriginal people

As at **23 November 2021**:

- In Western Australia, around **54%** of Aboriginal people aged **16 years and over** have been partially vaccinated (i.e. vaccinated with at least one dose), and **37%** are fully vaccinated (2 doses) against COVID-19. **Forty nine percent** and **33%** of Aboriginal Western Australians aged **12 years and over** are partially and fully vaccinated, respectively.
- Across Australia, around **72%** of Aboriginal people aged **16 years and over** have been partially vaccinated, while **60%** are fully vaccinated (2 doses) against COVID-19.
- ACT has the highest percentage of Aboriginal people aged 16 years and over who have been partially and fully vaccinated against COVID-19 at the rates of **90%** and **85%**, respectively. ACT is followed by Vic (**87%** and **80%**), NSW (**85%** and **80%**), Tas (**78%** and **70%**), NT (**77%** and **57%**), SA (**65%** and **50%**) and QLD (**64%** and **48%**).

Latest updates and new resources

Roll up for WA – Keeping culture safe and strong: vaccination focus

A new vaccination focus, 'Keeping Culture Safe and Strong', is underway to provide more opportunities for Aboriginal people to get vaccinated.

The five-week effort is helping to increase vaccination rates for Aboriginal people across the state. A range of in-reach programs are taking place, based on bringing COVID-19 vaccines directly to communities to make them easier to access. This includes house-to-house visits and vaccinations for hospital inpatients and outpatients.

[The program has a strong community-led focus](#) with local leaders involved such as health staff, the local police, council and shires, and Aboriginal-led organisations.

Resources including posters, videos, infographics and social tiles are available on the Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia [website](#).

To follow all the Roll up for WA news and stories, [subscribe to their newsletter](#).

Helping communities get vaccinated

A COVID-19 Vaccine Community Funding Program has been announced, aimed at facilitating and encouraging vaccination uptake amongst priority cohorts.

These groups include Aboriginal people, people with disabilities, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people who are homeless and sleeping rough, people with a mental health illness, and those who are at greater risk of COVID-19.

Funding of up to \$5,000 is available for various projects including local education programs, venue hire, training and transport. Funds can also be used for events promoting participation in the COVID-19 vaccination program. [More information on how you can help is available on WA.gov.au](#).

Having a yarn about the vaccine

A new animated video shines a light on the importance of Aboriginal communities getting vaccinated against COVID-19, especially when pregnant.

Two women in the video tackle myths about COVID-19 vaccines, discussing the importance of protecting communities and culture, and where others can get more information.

The [video is available](#) for you to watch and embed into your own websites. Please share this video with your stakeholders!

New resources available from the Commonwealth

New social media tiles and posters have been produced showing how fast COVID-19 can spread and how an outbreak can affect a community. Please share these messages through your networks:

[COVID-19 vaccination – Poster – COVID-19 spreads like wildfire in communities](#)

[COVID-19 vaccination – Poster – COVID-19 infects young and healthy people as well](#)

[COVID-19 vaccination – Poster – How fast can COVID-19 spread in unvaccinated people?](#)

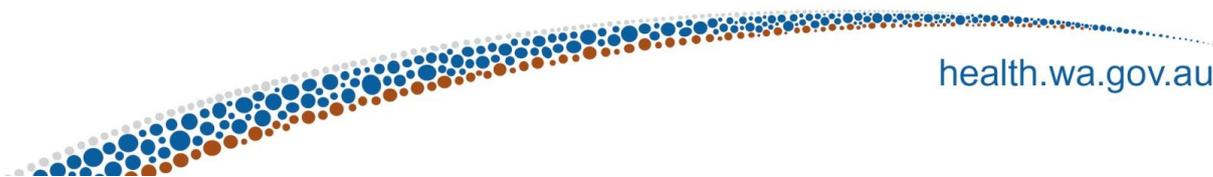
[COVID-19 vaccination – How a COVID-19 outbreak can affect communities – Social media content](#)

More resources are available at <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/covid-19-vaccination-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples-getting-vaccinated>

New videos promoting vaccination in young Aboriginal men and women.

The Aboriginal Health Policy Directorate has developed two videos promoting vaccination in Aboriginal people. They have just been released and are currently available to share on Facebook. They are also airing on TV. Please share the videos far and wide through your social media networks

[Protect yourself, your family and our community-COVID vaccination-Video 1-Young men – “But we don’t have COVID here”](#)



[Protect yourself, your family and our community-COVID vaccination-Video 2- "The virus doesn't care how old you are"](#)

Encouraging the 2nd dose

The Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia (AHCWA) has been working hard promoting the importance to Aboriginal people of getting the 2nd dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. They have designed a graphic to help staff discuss with the residents of a remote community, the benefits of the COVID vaccine, particularly to those who people couldn't see the value of the second dose. The feedback from the staff using the graphic has been very positive.

The graphic is available for others to access here: <https://nacchocommunique.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/INFOGRAPHIC-AHCWA-infographic-importance-of-second-covid-vax.pdf>

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 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](#).

All State-run community vaccination clinics are now open for people to attend without an appointment. Some regional clinics also offer the opportunity to be vaccinated without appointments. Please check the community vaccination clinic list [online](#) for further information and opening times.

Pregnant and breastfeeding women, and those planning to become pregnant are now recommended to have the Pfizer vaccine. 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](#).

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

Community clinics

There will be numerous regional pop-up clinics available for walk-ins in the coming weeks. Visit the [COVID-19 vaccine](#) webpage for a list of these clinics and their opening times and follow the [WA Government Facebook page](#) to keep up to date with new vaccination events near you

New Clinic in Wanneroo: Wanneroo Library, 3 Rocca Way, Wanneroo. Opening times are 10am to 3pm on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday.

Existing [Community vaccination clinics](#) in WA include Armadale, Mirrabooka, Carramar, Mandurah, Canning Vale, Midland, Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre, Claremont Showgrounds, Joondalup, Kwinana, Ellenbrook, and Bunbury.

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

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.

Pop-up clinics

There will be numerous regional pop-up clinics available for walk-ins in the coming weeks. Visit the [COVID-19 vaccine](#) webpage for a list of these clinics and their opening times and follow the WA Government Facebook page to keep up to date with new vaccination events near you.

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 your COVID vaccine as soon as soon as possible
- **get your second dose of COVID vaccine as soon as you are due**
- 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 quarantine 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 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 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
- Roll up for WA – nostalgic moments - [TV commercial](#)
- [Protect yourself, your family and our community- vaccination-Young men](#) – 30 sec video
- [Protect yourself, your family and our community-COVID vaccination-“The virus doesn’t care how old you are”](#) – 30 sec video
- [Importance of second dose](#) – infographic
- [COVID-19 vaccination – Poster – COVID-19 spreads like wildfire in communities](#)
- [COVID-19 vaccination – Poster – COVID-19 infects young and healthy people as well](#)
- [COVID-19 vaccination – Poster – How fast can COVID-19 spread in unvaccinated people?](#)
- [COVID-19 vaccination – How a COVID-19 outbreak can affect communities – Social media content](#)
- [Protect our communities and culture – animated video 1 min 30sec](#)

Further resources can be sourced on the [WA Government website](#). Check the [stakeholder kit](#) regularly for updates. If you would like to receive a Roll up for WA poster pack, please send your request to COVID19Vaccines@dpc.wa.gov.au.

The Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia (AHCWA) has a substantial collection of vaccination focused resources available on their [website](#).

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](#).

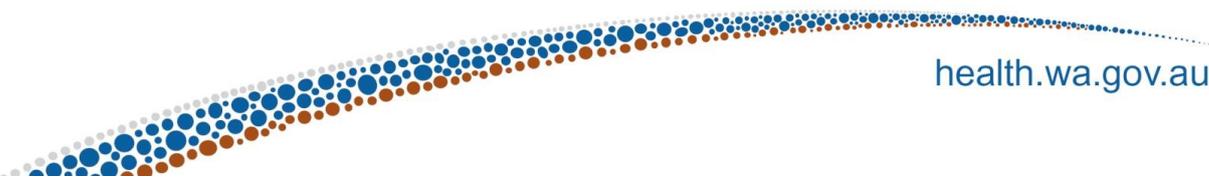
A collection of general COVID-19 resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and remote communities is also available [here](#).

New vaccination resources include:

- 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](#)



- **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** (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 **26 November 2021**

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

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