



# SHICC PUBLIC HEALTH BULLETIN #16

**Thursday, 17 March 2022 16:00 Hours**

This bulletin has been authorised by the Deputy Incident Controller – Public Health,  
Dr Revle Bangor-Jones

## COVID-19 case and vaccination numbers

- **Summary:** as of **Thursday, 17 March**, in Western Australia (WA), there have been:
  - **69,465** confirmed cases of COVID-19 notified
  - **38,238** people recovered from COVID-19
  - **2,780,227** COVID-19 PCR tests conducted
- **WA:** [Daily snapshot](#) and [Vaccination dashboard](#)
- **National:** [Current National Status & Australia's vaccine roll-out](#)
- **Worldwide:** [WHO Situation Reports](#) and [WHO Dashboard](#)

## Living with COVID

### Chief Health Officer advice

The latest advice from the Chief Health Officer is available [here](#).

- [Transitioning to Very High Caseload Settings](#) — 8 March 2022

### COVID-19 case resources

Resources are available for people who return a positive COVID-19 test result. HealthyWA contains information about [looking after yourself](#), a 'what to do' [checklist](#), [quarantine and isolation](#) information, COVID-19 positive [children](#) advice, and a [symptom diary](#). The testing and isolation [protocols](#), among other resources, are available on [WA.gov.au](#).

COVID-19 cases and their family / caregivers are encouraged to refer to the resources on [HealthyWA](#) and [WA.gov.au](#) regularly to access the most up to date information.

### State-run clinic testing guide

A [guide](#) to getting a COVID-19 test for different cohorts of people (e.g. close contacts, school close contacts or symptomatic people) is available on HealthyWA. This allows staff and the community to easily identify whether a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) or a rapid antigen test (RAT) will be offered at a State-run [testing clinic](#), and when testing is not required.

### Face mask exceptions

People who are unable to fulfil the requirement to wear a face covering (mask) under the [Directions](#) **must** have a supporting medical certificate issued by a medical practitioner currently registered by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA). This is referred to as an 'approved medical certificate' in the Directions.

The medical certificate does not need to state the condition that makes mask wearing unsuitable. Use the AHPRA [website](#) to search for a medical practitioner. Refer to [WA.gov.au](#) for mask wearing requirements and [HealthyWA](#) for mask advice.

## Mask use guidance

Updated [guidance](#) on the use of face masks in the community, and healthcare and high-risk, client-facing workplaces has been provided by the Department of Health.

Face mask advice, including advice on mask wearing for children, is available on [HealthyWA](#).

## Workplace RAT use

The *Guidance for the use of RATs in workplaces* [recommends](#) that workplaces **do not** use RATs for widespread screening of asymptomatic staff.

RATs are most effective when they are used to test people with symptoms of COVID-19.

The guidance provides further advice for higher risk workplaces and asymptomatic critical worker close contacts.

## Resources for the immunocompromised

Printable patient [information sheets](#) for the immunocompromised have been developed by South Metropolitan Health Services to provide advice on how to stay safe, including during social gatherings.

## COVID-19 ICU capacity

A 24-bed intensive care unit (ICU) at Royal Perth Hospital [opened](#) this week to increase the State's ICU capacity. The redevelopment is optimised for COVID-19 conditions, including frequent air changes throughout the unit, separate rooms fitted with switch glass windows and a ventilation system that enables the safe accommodation of both COVID and non-COVID patients. The facility includes 24 single rooms, including one positive pressure room, four negative pressure rooms and two rooms equipped to accommodate bariatric patients.

## Very high caseload setting

Western Australia moved to a very high caseload setting from Thursday 12.01am, 10 March 2022 to ensure continuity of operations for critical industries as COVID-19 cases approach the peak.

### Schools and very high caseload setting

In a very high caseload setting, students in school, or early childhood education and care settings, who are asymptomatic but have been identified as a close contact (but not a household close contact), can continue attending school or childcare and benefit from face-to-face learning.

Refer to the [announcement](#) and [WA.gov.au](#) for further information.

## Advice for parents/guardians of close contacts

Parents and carers are no longer required to automatically quarantine with a child who is identified as a close contact of a COVID-19 case. Depending on the child's needs, one parent or carer may still need to stay home to care for them while the child is quarantining.

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

## Community

### TGA advice for RAT purchasing

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) released [advice](#) urging the public to only use COVID-19 RATs that are approved for use in Australia to avoid poor test performance. Consumers should refer to the [TGA website](#) before RAT purchase / use and refer to the *Obtaining approved COVID-19 rapid antigen tests* [factsheet](#) for advice.

## Public library ServiceWA grants

WA public libraries can apply for ServiceWA app assistance grants to help the community understand and use the app. ServiceWA is a convenient, secure and important tool in WA's COVID-19 response and all Western Australian's are encouraged to use it. The grant [guidelines](#) are available at the State Library of Western Australia website.

## Resources for industry and business

A 'COVID-19 in the workplace: Information for employers and employees' hub is now available on the Department of Health [website](#). Resources include tailored advice for certain sectors (including congregate living, industrial, mining and offshore, secure facilities and **education and early learning**) and a checklist to identify close contacts in the workplace. This advice accompanies existing guidance, including the [TTIQ](#) (*Test, Trace, Isolate and Quarantine*) Plan.

Businesses are encouraged to refer to the [Department of Health](#) and [HealthyWA](#) websites regularly for the most up to date advice.

## WA free RAT program

Every household in WA can register online to receive **15 (10 in addition to the original 5)** free COVID-19 rapid antigen tests (RAT) and have them delivered to their home address. [Register online](#). People who cannot register online or who need assistance can phone 13 COVID (13 26843). **Free RATs will be provided** at some train stations, major events, universities and shopping centres. Households in remote communities in the [Kimberley](#) will be distributed 20 RATs.

## COVID-19 vaccination program

### Getting vaccinated after testing positive for COVID-19

People who have tested positive for COVID-19 can be vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine. The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) recommends people have their next dose of the vaccine once they have fully recovered from the acute illness.

People can choose to defer the dose by up to 4 months after COVID-19 infection and should seek advice from their health care provider about what is best for them.

Learn more about vaccination after testing positive for COVID-19 at the Australian Government Department of Health [website](#).

### In-home vaccinations available

Every effort is being made to vaccinate as many Western Australians as possible to protect against COVID-19, including the delivery of in-home vaccination to people who need assistance or who may not easily be able to get to a clinic, pharmacy or GP location.

Teams of vaccinators are going into residential areas to deliver vaccines to people, based on feedback from the community, local health service providers and requests registered through callers to 13 COVID (13 268 43).

Learn more on the Roll up for WA 'Vaccine information for people with a disability or require additional support' [webpage](#), fill out the 'Further Assistance Required' [online form](#) or call 13 COVID (13 268 43).

The vaccination team can provide the COVID-19 vaccine to anyone at the household aged 5 years and older if they are eligible for a first, second or booster dose.

People do not need to have a Medicare card or photo identification to receive the vaccine.

## Enhanced access and sensory clinics at Kwinana and Carramar

The vaccination clinics at [Kwinana](#) and [Carramar](#) have been set up to support people with disabilities, mental health conditions, those who require a low sensory environment or who may need other additional support to receive their vaccination. These enhanced access and sensory clinics provide quiet, large and separate consultation rooms, accessible parking directly in front of the clinic, a range of distraction and sensory options, hoists to support people with mobility issues and trained staff to support people with a disability, mental health condition or who require additional support. Therapy dogs are also available on certain days of the week. Bookings are strongly recommended and further information is available at the Roll up for WA [website](#).

## ATAGI advice on AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine booster

Recommendations for the use of AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine as a booster dose have been [updated](#) by ATAGI. AstraZeneca is **no longer** recommended for use as the booster dose for people who received a primary vaccination course of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine, although it can be used for this purpose if these individuals decline receiving an mRNA vaccine as a booster dose. AstraZeneca is now only recommended when there are medical contraindications to the mRNA vaccines.

## Novavax available for eligible Western Australians

ATAGI [has approved](#) the Novavax vaccine as a booster for individuals aged 18 years and over, where an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (either Moderna or Pfizer) is not suitable.

Selected State-run clinics [provide](#) the Novavax vaccine. Bookings through [VaccinateWA](#) are preferred for Novavax (first and second doses) and offered on the following days and locations: Kwinana (Monday), Mirrabooka (Wednesday) and Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre (Sunday). To receive a booster dose, please book by calling 13 COVID (13 26843) or walk in to any one of the above clinics. Novavax is available in the Goldfields-Esperance region at all State-run clinics and selected clinics in the Kimberley and Pilbara regions.

## Commonwealth vaccination hub next week

The Australian Government pop-up vaccination hub for individuals working in disability, aged care, childcare, food, freight and pharmaceutical distribution industries will operate at the location detailed below. People with disability, their families and carers are also eligible to attend. The hub has wheelchair access, walk-in appointments, dedicated time slots for people with disabilities and in-car vaccination availability.

Address	Hours	Bookings
Dianella Plaza 366 Grand Promenade, Dianella	Monday, 21 March to Friday, 25 March – 9am to 5pm  Saturday, 26 March – 9am to 4.30pm  Sunday, 27 March – 11am to 4.30pm  Disability drop-in sessions are available from 11am to 12pm	<a href="mailto:bookings.support@vitalityworks.com.au">bookings.support@vitalityworks.com.au</a>  Ph: 1300 662 328

## COVID-19 vaccination clinic locations

Find the nearest metropolitan or regional COVID-19 vaccination location by visiting the [Roll up for WA](#) website.

The Comirnaty (Pfizer), Spikevax (Moderna), Vaxzevria (AstraZeneca) and Nuvaxovid (Novavax) COVID-19 vaccines are being administered at participating GPs and pharmacies for eligible populations. Participating GPs and pharmacies can be found by using the COVID-19 [Vaccine Clinic Finder](#).

## Vaccine information and resources

Please visit the sources below for more information and resources related to vaccines:

- HealthyWA – [COVID-19 vaccine](#) (for WA community), including [FAQs](#)
- WA Health – [COVID-19 vaccination program](#) (for WA health providers)
- **Australian Government** – [Children’s COVID-19 vaccination program](#) **community kit**
- Australian Government – [COVID-19 vaccines hub](#)
- [Roll up for WA](#) and [Roll up for WA posters](#)
- Keeping Culture Safe and Strong Aboriginal - COVID-19 [vaccination resources](#)
- Australian Government – **COVID-19 vaccination** [Easy Read](#) resources

## Directions updates

COVID-19 State of Emergency [Declarations](#) and community [advice](#) webpages summarise the latest COVID-19 Directions in place in WA. Further information can be found on WA Government [website](#).

### New Directions

- [COVID Transition \(Testing and Isolation\) Directions \(No 5\)](#)
- [COVID Transition \(Face Covering\) Directions \(No 4\)](#)
- [Prohibition on the Use of Nebuliser Machines Directions \(No 4\)](#)
- [COVID Transition \(Level 2 Public Health and Social Measures\) Directions \(No 2\)](#)

## Updated factsheets

- [WA COVID-19 Healthcare Worker Furloughing Guidelines Version 2.1](#)
- [Designated Zoning Posters for Residential Care Facilities \(new\)](#)
- [RAT FAQs Version 5](#)
- [COVID-19 TTIQ Workplace Checklist — Schools and Early Childhood Education Settings Version 1.2 \(new\)](#)
- [COVID-19 Guidelines for Management of Diabetes and Hyperglycaemia \(new\)](#)
- [COVID-19 Guideline for Outpatient Services Version 3.4](#)
- [Management of COVID-19 Outbreaks on International Commercial Vessels in Western Australia \(new\)](#)
- [Clinician Alert #82 \(new\)](#)
- [What to do when you test positive for COVID-19 Version 3](#)
- [COVID Transition: Information for the Maritime Industry \(new\)](#)
- [Infection Prevention and Control Information for Rottnest Island Ferry Operators \(new\)](#)
- [Doffing Coveralls in the Context of COVID-19 \(new\)](#)
- [Aboriginal Sector Communication Update #35](#)

## Testing

### General population [testing criteria](#)

The *Testing Criteria for SARS-CoV-2 in Western Australia #36* is available on the Department of Health [website](#).

Any person may be tested if they have any one of the following clinical criteria: fever ( $\geq 37.5^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) **OR** history of fever (e.g. night sweats, chills), without a known source **OR** acute respiratory symptoms (e.g. shortness of breath, cough, sore throat, runny nose) **OR** acute loss of smell or taste **OR** a positive or inconclusive rapid antigen test result.

## Testing locations

Testing locations are listed on [HealthyWA](#).

## Reporting

Notify suspected COVID-19 cases by completing the notification form [online](#) or by printing the notification form (standard notifiable infectious diseases process should be followed).

COVID-19 positive rapid antigen test (RAT) results must be registered on the [HealthyWA website](#) or by phoning 13 COVID (13 268 43).

## Series of National Guidelines (SoNG)

The [latest](#) iteration was released on 2 March 2022.

## Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC)

The AHPPC recently [released](#) the following statements:

- [Mandating booster vaccination for disability support workers](#) — 16 February 2022
- [Mandating booster vaccinations in residential aged care workers](#) — 15 February 2022

## Business and industry

### Resources for more information

- [WA Department of Health](#) and [HealthyWA](#)
- [WA Department of Health Media releases](#)
- [Australian Department of Health](#)
- [Advice for the public \(WHO\)](#)
- [Advice in other languages](#) and [Translated Resources](#)
- [Advice and resources for Aboriginal people](#)
- [Covid Clinic walkthrough](#) – in multiple languages
- [Contact registers](#) information
- [SafeWA user guide](#)
- [ServiceWA user guide](#)
- [Mandatory vaccination](#) Directions and supporting documents
- [Mandatory vaccination general and industry-specific](#) [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Proof of vaccination](#) [Directions](#), [information](#) and [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [COVID-19 in the workplace](#) – Information for employers and employees
- [Posters, signage and resources](#) for businesses

## 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: 13 268 43 (13 COVID)
- COVID-19 Travel Restrictions Exemption Application: Visit the [G2G PASS](#) website
- COVID-19 WA Police Line: 131 444 to report breaches of self-quarantine, business activities, border controls and other State of Emergency Directions

**Next advice** The Bulletin is issued weekly. Next issue: **23 March 2022**.

**Last updated 17 March 2022**

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

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