



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

# Aboriginal Sector Communication Update #28

**Wednesday 6 October 2021 14:00 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 **6 October 2021**, there are **1110** confirmed cases, **104** historical cases and **15** active cases of Coronavirus (COVID-19) in Western Australia (WA). **1086** people have recovered from COVID-19 in WA. There have been **9** deaths from COVID-19 in WA.

To date **1,788,405** 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

Australia's COVID-19 epidemiology profile has been significantly impacted by the current outbreaks in New South Wales and Victoria. Concerningly, the number of confirmed cases amongst Aboriginal people has risen considerably in the last 8 weeks, increasing from just under **200 cases** in early **August 2021** to just under **4000 cases** in **early October 2021**.

As at **03 October 2021**, across Australia, around **35%** of Aboriginal people have been partially vaccinated (at least one dose), while **23%** are fully vaccinated against COVID-19. About **20%** of Aboriginal Western Australians had at least one dose and around **12%** had both doses. ACT has the highest percentage of Aboriginal people who have been partially and fully vaccinated with COVID-19 vaccines, **57%** and **41%**, respectively. Victoria was previously reported with the highest rate of vaccination against COVID-19, however, the rates for Victoria have been corrected and adjusted to reflect errors in the identification of Aboriginal people.

Below is the summary of the Aboriginal Health Policy Directorate (WA Dept of Health) key insights #20, current as at **12 September 2021**:

### **January 2020 to September 2021:**

- Since the beginning of the pandemic to **12 September 2021**, **2.3%** (**1,762**) of the **75,139** positive cases notified in the Australian National Notifiable Disease Surveillance System (NNDSS) were identified as Aboriginal people. **1,615** of these cases have been notified between **1 January 2021 to 12 September 2021**, representing around **3%** of all Australian confirmed cases for 2021.

- Of the total **1,762** COVID-19 confirmed cases among Aboriginal people, around **97%** (**1,713** persons) acquired their infection locally in their states/territories, **2%** (**37** persons) acquired their infection internationally, **0.1%** (**2 person**) acquired their infection interstate acquired, and around **1%** (**10** cases) are being investigated.
- Of the **1,713** Aboriginal people who acquired their infections within their own state/territory, **61%** (**1,038** persons) acquired their infection in a major Australian city and **39%** (**675** persons) acquired their infection in a regional or remote area.
- The first wave peak of COVID-19 amongst Aboriginal Australians was during **March 2020** when the total number of new positive cases reached **19**. The second wave peak was in **July 2020** with a total of **30** new COVID-19 confirmed cases notified in the NNDSS. As of **September 2021**, the third wave peak had reached a total of **810** new confirmed cases. The timelines of the three waves were consistent with trends in the non-Aboriginal population.
- Around **18%** (**317** cases) of confirmed cases amongst Aboriginal people required hospital admission, while **82%** (**1,442** cases) required quarantine/isolation. **Three** deaths have been recorded amongst Aboriginal positive cases.
- The crude fatality rate (CFR) for Aboriginal people is around **0.2%** and **1.4%** for all Australian cases.
- The overall median age of Aboriginal positive cases is estimated at around **24** years, compared to **29** years for non-Aboriginal people.
- The completeness of Aboriginal status identification fields in the NNDSS was around **75%**.
- Of the total **1,615** COVID-19 positive cases reported in **2021** amongst Aboriginal people around **98%** (**1,584** cases) were from NSW and **2%** (**31** Cases) were from other Jurisdictions (Vic, ACT and QLD). There have been **no confirmed cases** reported in Western Australia.
- The highest notification rate amongst Aboriginal people in 2021 was in the **10 to 29** years age group and the median age of all Aboriginal positive cases is **19 years old** (range **0 to 69** years). The gender ratio of all 2021 Aboriginal positive cases is around **52%** (**840** cases) for females and **48%** (**775** cases) for males.
- It is estimated that less than **2%** of COVID-19 confirmed cases amongst Aboriginal people have been **partially or fully vaccinated** against COVID-19.

## Latest updates

### Roll up for WA – New TV commercial

A new 'nostalgic' television commercial forms part of the next phase of the Roll up for WA campaign and is aimed at helping get as many Western Australians vaccinated as possible.

The advertisement stars Sheree, an 18-year-old Aboriginal nursing student, whose roots stretch between the Niyaparli and Banjima people originating from Port Hedland. Sheree is eager to educate people about COVID-19 vaccines, a key motivator behind her wanting to appear in the advertisement.

The campaign's next phase coincides with the recent announcement that all Western Australians aged 12 years and over can now receive a COVID-19 vaccine at a state-run clinic, participating GPs, participating pharmacies or Aboriginal Medical Services.

You can watch the commercial on the [Roll up for WA](#) website.

### Controlled border arrangements - jurisdiction risk rating

New South Wales and Victoria are considered 'extreme risk'. ACT is 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](#).

## 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 and breastfeeding women, and those planning to become pregnant 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

In the coming weeks, regional pop-up clinics will be available for walk-ins in the following locations: Kalgoorlie, Norseman, Albany, Broome, Derby, Kununurra, Wyndham, Halls Creek, Geraldton, Newman and Port Hedland. Visit the [COVID-19 vaccine](#) webpage for a list of these clinics and their opening times

Existing [Community clinics](#) in WA include Midland, Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre, Claremont Showgrounds, Joondalup, Kwinana, 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.

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

### Port Hedland – pop-up walk-in clinic

A new pop-up, walk-in COVID-19 vaccination clinic is open in Port Hedland for local community members this week to encourage further vaccinations in the Pilbara. No appointment is necessary.

The clinic is located at the Gratwick Hall at the Civic Centre in Port Hedland and is open from 8:00am to 8:00pm every day this week until Sunday 10 October. For more information, visit [Roll up for WA](#) (external link).

### Newman – mass vaccination walk-in clinic

A mass vaccination clinic will be held in Newman, at the Newman TAFE (26 Kalgan Drive), from Monday 11 October to Sunday 17 October.

The clinic will be open from 10am to 8pm daily and anyone aged 12 and over can come along to receive the COVID-19 Pfizer vaccine.

Walk-ins are welcome, or you can register and book an appointment online [www.rollup.wa.gov.au](http://www.rollup.wa.gov.au).

## **Kalgoorlie-Boulder vaccination clinics**

A NEW walk-in Pfizer COVID-19 vaccination clinic is opening every Tuesday and Wednesday at the Kalgoorlie Health Campus. Walk-ins are welcome, or you can register and book an appointment online [www.rollup.wa.gov.au](http://www.rollup.wa.gov.au).

A mass vaccination clinic will also be held at the Mines Rovers Football Club (Digger Dawes Oval, Lionel St Boulder) on Friday 8 October from 8:30am. No appointment is necessary.

## **FIFO and local resource sector worker vaccination**

Fly-in fly-out (FIFO) and local workers on WA mining and resources sites and people who work in remote operations or run critical infrastructure, including remote train and port control, must be vaccinated with at least the first dose of an approved COVID-19 vaccine to attend their workplace from 1 December 2021. These workers will need to be fully vaccinated by 1 January 2022. Vaccination has been mandated for these workers to address the risks posed by movement of resources sector workers, including those working in mining and oil and petroleum operations, to and from regional and remote locations in WA.

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

## **Health care workers and support workers**

Health care workers and health support workers in Tier 1 facilities were required to have their first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine by 1 October 2021 in accordance with the staged approach in the Health Worker (Restriction on Access) [Directions](#). Further information on the Directions for health care and health support workers can be viewed at the [WA Health website](#).

## **Port worker vaccination**

Certain port workers will soon be [required](#) to have received a [COVID-19 vaccine](#) before they can undertake certain roles on vessels that are exposed to COVID-19. These requirements will be introduced in a staged approach to minimise the impact on port activities. As of 12 October 2021, relevant workers are required to have received their first dose to access an exposed vessel and must be fully vaccinated by 12 November 2021.

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

## **Mandatory vaccination of 'at risk' transport, freight and logistics workers**

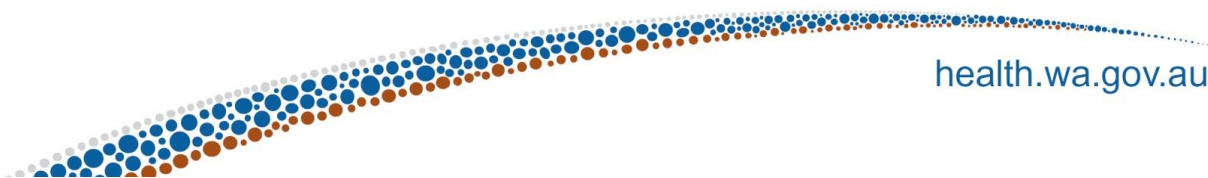
On 24 September 2021 the Premier [announced](#) changes to emergency management directions to enforce mandatory vaccination for transport, freight and logistics workers travelling from or through 'high' or 'extreme' risk jurisdictions to enter Western Australia. From 24 October, these directions will apply to freight truck drivers, pilot/support vehicle drivers, removalists, rail drivers and rail support crew, where these employees are required to travel from or through a 'high' or an 'extreme' risk jurisdiction for work.

## **Updated ATAGI statement on additional COVID-19 vaccine doses**

On 23 September 2021 the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) released a [statement](#) advising that two doses of any of the vaccines available in Australia provides strong protection against COVID-19.

Advice on the need for third doses to people who have conditions that compromise their immune system is anticipated in the next few weeks.

ATAGI anticipates that additional booster doses for other populations may be required in the future. Additional doses are currently being considered but no recommendation has yet been made for the general population.



## 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 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](mailto: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](#)

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** (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 **6 October 2021**

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

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