



# Aboriginal Sector Communication Update #34

**Wednesday, 12 January 2022 16:00 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 informed of available COVID-19 public health messages and resources, developed for the Aboriginal community and health professionals.

## COVID-19 Case numbers

As of **12 January** 2022, there were **1,260** confirmed cases, **121** historical cases and **103** active case of Coronavirus (COVID-19) in Western Australia (WA). **1,148** people have recovered from COVID-19 in WA. There have been **9** deaths from COVID-19 in WA.

To date **2,145,877** 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](#)

## COVID at our border

### Promoting testing and vaccination in border communities

The increasing number of COVID-19 cases in the Northern Territory (NT), and South Australia **continues** to be a concern for WA communities living close to the border.

It is important that anyone living near the border gets tested for COVID-19 if they have any symptoms, no matter how mild.

Doctors and healthcare workers should encourage anyone presenting with symptoms to get tested.

With the virus **recently detected in Perth and being detected** so close to our borders, there is no time to delay in getting vaccinated. Vaccination is the best way to protect against COVID-19 and should be promoted at every opportunity. Second doses and booster shots should also be strongly encouraged. Everyone (especially our border communities) should get vaccinated as soon as they can to protect themselves, their family and their whole community.

**The Department of Health has released a series of 30 second translated audio messages, encouraging people living in communities near our borders to get tested if they are sick and to get vaccinated as soon as they can. Please share amongst your networks:**

- [Corona is at the WA border – Kriol \(MP3 371KB\)](#)
- [Corona is at the WA border – Martu \(MP3 329KB\)](#)
- [Corona is at the WA border – Ngaanytjarra \(338KB\)](#)
- [Corona is at the WA Border – Plain English \(MP3 256KB\)](#)

A poster, "[COVID is at our border](#)", has also been developed for use in border communities, promoting the importance of getting tested if you are sick and getting vaccinated as soon as you can.

## Expanded East Kimberley COVID-19 wastewater surveillance

WA Health is continuing its COVID-19 wastewater surveillance program in Kununurra and Halls Creek in the East Kimberley and has expanded water sampling to additional communities including Mulan, Billiuna, Ringer's Soak, Balgo and Warmun. Wastewater surveillance has also been extended to the Ngaanyatjarra Lands in the Goldfields.

All results so far have been negative.

Refer to the Department of Health's [COVID-19 wastewater testing](#) webpage for additional information, including test results.

## National COVID-19 Aboriginal epidemiological profile

Below is a summary of the epidemiological profile of COVID-19 among Aboriginal Australians, produced by the Department of Health's Aboriginal Health Policy Directorate. **Please note, this data is current as at 5 December 2021 and so does not reflect today's situation, which has been significantly affected by the introduction of the Omicron variant into Australia.** The data is preliminary and is subject to change.

### January 2020 to December 2021:

- Since the start of the pandemic to 5 December 2021, around 4.1% (8,955) of the 217,725 positive cases notified in the Australian National Notifiable Disease Surveillance System (NNDSS) were identified as Aboriginal people.
- COVID-19 cases among Aboriginal Australians (relating to the outbreaks in NSW, ACT, Vic and NT) have grown almost 59 times since June 2021, increasing from 153 confirmed cases to 8,955 cases in November 2021.
- About 77% of all positive cases among Aboriginal Australians reported in NNDSS were from NSW, 19% from Vic, 3% from ACT, and about 1% were from other jurisdictions (Tas, QLD, SA, NT and WA).
- About 99% of confirmed cases among Aboriginal people acquired the virus locally, while fewer than 1% acquired the infection overseas. Of the total 8,860 locally acquired cases, around 58% were in major cities, 37% were in regional areas and 5% were in remote areas.
- The highest proportion of cases among Aboriginal people was in the 18 to 29 years age group (about 22%) followed by the 5 to 11 years age group (19%), the 30 to 39 years age group (14%) and the 0 to 4 years age group (12%).
- Almost one third (31.3%) of reported COVID-19 cases among Aboriginal people in NNDSS were children aged 0 to 11 years, while the proportion of confirmed cases among Aboriginal people aged 50 years and older was about 9.3%
- Most confirmed COVID-19 cases (57%) among Aboriginal people were not vaccinated, about 31% were not eligible for vaccination (i.e. children 0 to 11 years), only 5% have been fully vaccinated (2 doses) and 7% partially (one dose) vaccinated against COVID-19.
- About 12% of Aboriginal positive cases required hospital care (including ICU admissions) with a 0.2% mortality rate (20 deaths).
- The completeness of Aboriginal status identification fields in the NNDSS was approximately 81%.

### Vaccination rates among Aboriginal people

The Commonwealth government provides weekly reports, listing the percentage of people aged 15 and over, who have self-identified as Indigenous, and who have been vaccinated against COVID-19. This information is provided by statistical area 4 (SA4) and is further broken down by geographic regions and by number of doses.

These reports can be found [here](#).

## Latest updates and new resources

### ServiceWA app launches

The ServiceWA app is a mobile application provided by the WA Government to help connect with WA State Government services. Initially, the ServiceWA app aims to assist the community during the COVID-19 transition and aims to expand to include other services into the future. It is designed for Australian residents or citizens who live in WA or are regularly visiting WA.

The ServiceWA app allows you to activate and access the following WA Government services in one place:

- **SafeWA** –for individuals checking in at WA businesses, venues and events.
- Import **COVID-19 digital certificate** – for secure presentation of your proof of vaccination or exemption on demand.
- **G2G Pass** – to access your travel passes when you travel into WA.

For more information please visit the [ServiceWA app page](#).

### Mark McGowan vaccination videos – translated in Aboriginal language

The WA Government has released a series of translated videos of the Premier, Hon. Mark McGowan, encouraging Aboriginal people to get vaccinated against COVID-19 as soon as they can. These videos are available below. Please share amongst your networks.

- [Indigenous Vaccination Mark McGowan](#)
- [Indigenous Vaccination Mark McGowan - Ngaanyatjarra translation](#)
- [Indigenous Vaccination Mark McGowan - Martu translation](#)
- [Indigenous Vaccination Mark McGowan - Walmajarri translation](#)

### Public health advice for Western Australians

Everyone is encouraged to check the [exposure sites](#) page regularly for updates.

Anyone who has visited a listed exposure site at the specified time and date must follow the health advice published online, unless directly advised otherwise by the Department of Health.

Western Australians are encouraged to stay vigilant and get tested immediately if they develop COVID-19 symptoms, and continue to check-in at businesses and venues using [SafeWA, manual mandatory contact registers](#) or the new [ServiceWA](#) app.

### Stay COVID safe resources for remote Aboriginal communities

A series of posters have been developed for use in remote Aboriginal communities, encouraging community members to get vaccinated and stay COVID safe.

These posters are available on the [HealthyWA website](#) under the heading “Remote Aboriginal Communities”.

## COVID-19 vaccination program

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

**Everyone aged 5 years and older is 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. 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

Please check the community vaccination clinic list [online](#) for further information and opening times. To avoid extended queues, people are encouraged to make a booking at [VaccinateWA](#) or 13COVID, as people with bookings will be prioritised.

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.

## Boosters recommended from 4 months

The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) [recommends](#) a COVID-19 booster vaccination for anyone aged 18 and older who completed their primary course of COVID-19 vaccination 4 or more months ago, given the likelihood of ongoing transmission of both Omicron and Delta variants. The receipt of a booster dose is particularly important for people with increased exposure risk (e.g. occupational risk or outbreak areas) or who have risk factors for severe disease. A third (primary) dose of COVID-19 vaccine is also recommended for anyone with immunocompromising conditions, a minimum of two months after their second dose.

Immunocompromised individuals who have received 3 primary doses of a COVID-19 vaccine are also recommended to have a booster dose in line with the timing for the general population, (4 or more months after their primary course). People who are severely immunocompromised are encouraged to speak to their GP or treating specialist about a booster dose.

## 5 to 11-year-old children can roll up

Children aged 5 to 11 years are now eligible to roll up for a COVID-19 vaccine.

The paediatric Pfizer vaccine will be administered in two doses, with the recommended interval between first and second dose being eight weeks.

Bookings are required. Parents can book their child in for a vaccination at a State-run clinic through [VaccinateWA](#). Children can also get their vaccination at participating GPs and pharmacies across metropolitan Perth and regional WA. Parents are encouraged to call their GP clinic to make an appointment. For further information or to book an appointment visit the [RollupforWA](#) or [Vaccine Clinic Finder](#) websites.

## 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 possible
- get your second dose of COVID vaccine as soon as you are due
- get your booster dose 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

The Department of Health has developed a suite of statewide Aboriginal tailored resources. 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](#)
- [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](#)
- [Dr Raji – The importance of getting vaccinated](#)
- [Rowena’s story COVID-19 vaccination](#)
- [Indigenous Vaccination Mark McGowan – Ngaanyatjarra translation – video](#)
- [Indigenous Vaccination Mark McGowan – Martu translation – video](#)
- [Indigenous Vaccination Mark McGowan – Walmajarri translation – video](#)
- [Corona is at the WA border – Kriol \(30 sec audio\)](#)
- [Corona is at the WA border – Martu \(30 sec audio\)](#)
- [Corona is at the WA border – Ngaanytjarra \(30 sec audio\)](#)
- [Corona is at the WA Border – Plain English \(30 sec audio\)](#)

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](mailto: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](#).

## 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**
  - [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.
  - [Getting the COVID-19 test at the testing station or hospital](#)
- **Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council (AHMRC) COVID-19 Testing**

The AHMRC 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 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-quarantine, business closures, border controls and other State of Emergency Directions.

Last updated **12 January 2022**

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

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