



PHEOC BULLETIN

Tuesday 26 May 2020 12:00 Hours

This bulletin has been authorised by the Deputy PHEOC Coordinator, Dr Revle Bangor-Jones

COVID-19 Case numbers

- As of **26 May 2020**, there have been **570** confirmed cases of COVID-19 notified in Western Australia (WA). **549** people have recovered.
- To date **78,308** COVID-19 tests have been conducted in WA.
- **WA:** [Daily snapshot](#)
- **National:** [Current National Status](#)
- **Worldwide:** [WHO Situation Reports](#)

Living with COVID

COVID-19 has changed the way we live, work and communicate. Even though life has become a little easier with the easing of restrictions, we should all remain vigilant to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

COVIDSafe App

The Australian Government's voluntary COVIDSafe app is an important public health initiative. It speeds up contacting people exposed to coronavirus (COVID-19). For further information and to get the app see [COVIDSafe app](#).

Latest Updates

Western Australian Future Fund Amendment

Western Australian Future Fund Amendment (Future Health Research and Innovation Fund) Bill passed State Parliament on 21 May 2020. The legislation will give WA health and medical researchers and innovators a secure and ongoing source of funding that will include an initial commitment of an extra \$37 million over the next three years. The first year's allocation, expected to be up to \$6 million, will be dedicated to COVID-19 research, including the McGowan Government's nation-leading DETECT program.

The DETECT program tests selected cohorts of asymptomatic people to learn more about COVID-19. It is currently examining education and FIFO groups. Other cohorts being investigated for potential inclusion include health care, aged care, police, retail, hospitality and meat workers.

COVID-19 Research Grant Program

Twelve WA research projects have been boosted with nearly \$3 million funding for COVID-19 related research and infrastructure. The funding for the 12 research projects will go towards treatments, studies of at-risk groups, development of less invasive tests, study of mental health impacts and tests that will more accurately inform us about immunity of COVID-19.

One of these projects is a pilot study that will assess the effectiveness of transfusing active COVID-19 cases with plasma from recovered patients (convalescent plasma).

Directions Updates

Phase 2 - Easing of restrictions – FAQs

The latest easing of restrictions by the State Government is due to the continued low number of new COVID-19 cases. The latest [FAQs](#) may help answer your questions.

Regional travel restrictions to be lifted as part of WA roadmap

Commencing Friday 29 May, the WA regional boundaries will be lifted except for the Federal Government biosecurity zones and 274 remote Aboriginal communities. The WA Police Commissioner and WA Government are working with the Federal Government to remove restrictions on access to biosecurity zones from 5 June.

COVID-19 [State of Emergency Declarations](#) and [Community Advice](#) summarises the latest COVID-19 Directions that are in place in WA.

Further information can be found on [WA Government website](#).

Testing

General population testing criteria

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** an acute respiratory infection (e.g. shortness of breath, cough, sore throat). This is especially important for anyone who lives or works in a high-risk setting, are a contact of a confirmed case, are a returned traveller, are currently in hospital or who live in or have visited an area with an increased risk of community transmission. Testing is not indicated where another clinical focus of infection or alternate explanation of the patient's illness is evident.

Testing locations

Testing can be performed at COVID clinics, hospitals, Commonwealth-endorsed GP respiratory clinics, and private pathology COVID collection centres approved by the Chief Health Officer, as listed on [Healthy WA](#). Tests can also be performed by domiciliary specimen collectors. GPs can collect swabs in residential care facilities. Regional testing can also occur in health centres and remote health clinics operated by WACHS, Silver Chain, Aboriginal Medical Services or the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS).

Reporting

Notify suspected COVID-19 cases by completing the notification form either [ONLINE](#) or by printing out the notification form. Notifying by phone is not necessary. All laboratories report both positive and negative results to the WA Department of Health, as per the [COVID Testing Reporting Directions](#).

Point of Care (POC) serology testing

COVID-19 Point of Care (POC) serology testing (including as assay or device) as an acute illness diagnostic tool for COVID-19, is [prohibited under the WA Public Health Act 2016 \(external site\)](#).

COVID-19 Testing Directions

The purpose of these [directions](#) is to prohibit a person from requesting or conducting testing for COVID-19 except in accordance with these directions, as unauthorised testing wastes resources required to prevent, control or abate the serious public health risk presented by COVID-19.

Testing of asymptomatic patients

Testing asymptomatic patients is permitted in several settings, approval for each of these scenarios can be found [here](#):

- Pre-operative setting for aerodigestive procedures only
- Before proceeding with organ donation or organ transplantation
- For people receiving medical treatment from Indian Ocean Territories
- Targeted government approved screening programs
- Returned travelers prior to release from mandatory quarantine.

Asymptomatic testing should not be performed for return to work purposes or fit for work purposes, unless requested or approved by Public Health.

Series of National Guidelines (SoNG)

The main endorsed changes in the latest iteration released on 22 May include:

- **Updated testing criteria: fever now defined as a temperature of $\geq 37.5^{\circ}\text{C}$.**
- **Testing asymptomatic persons who are quarantined due to international (i.e. 'returned travelers') or interstate travel, with results to be received prior to the end of the quarantine period.**
- **Case identification through serology testing: if a case is identified through serology, clinical and public health judgement should be used in determining case management and whether a case requires isolation.**

Resources for more information

- **Series of National Guidelines, [SoNG](#) was last updated on 22 May 2020**
- Latest [Australian Health Protection Principal Committee \(AHPPC\) News](#)
- [WA Department of Health](#)
- [HealthyWA](#)
- [Australian Government Health Department](#)
- [Advice for the public \(WHO\)](#)

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.

Next advice - The PHEOC Bulletin is issued weekly. The next issue will be **Wednesday 3 June 2020**.

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

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