



SHICC PUBLIC HEALTH BULLETIN #15

Thursday, 10 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, 10 March**, in Western Australia (WA), there have been:
 - **34,250** confirmed cases of COVID-19 notified
 - **16,226** people recovered from COVID-19
 - **2,677,476** 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
- [Transition to Level 2 Public Health and Social Measures](#) — 28 February 2022

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.

Businesses that have registered their critical workforce will have the option of implementing new testing and isolation protocols for critical workers, if needed, to continue essential operations.

The critical worker definition is essential to maintain critical services and avoid catastrophic losses, such as loss of life, ongoing access to care and essential goods and workplace safety. These critical workers who are asymptomatic close contacts can attend work, if mutually agreed between employer and employee, and they follow strict protocols.

There is a significant risk associated with close contacts attending work as they remain highly susceptible to contracting COVID-19 due to the nature of their contact with a positive case. This risk is substantially higher in households where the case cannot isolate effectively. The Critical Worker Policy is intended as a last resort following (and not in advance of) actual acute worker shortages and resulting disruptions to essential services. The exemption is not a substitute for business continuity planning, which appropriately accounts and plans for anticipated workforce shortages in an environment where COVID-19 is prevalent in the community in high numbers, without resorting to requiring close contact critical workers to attend work. Employers are responsible for providing a safe work environment and minimising the risk of workplace COVID-19 transmission so far as is reasonably practicable. Eligible employers are therefore encouraged to only apply the Policy in extreme circumstances and after all attempts to deploy substitute staff have been exhausted.

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), will be able to continue attending school or childcare and benefit from face-to-face learning.

The school-based close contact protocols allow asymptomatic students in school or childcare to attend school, childcare, after-school care and other school-based sporting, cultural training or after-school events at the students' school, but require them to isolate at all other times until the seven days have passed.

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.

Parents and carers of children who are close contacts need to take extra precautions and limit interaction with the close contact where possible. If symptoms consistent with COVID-19 are experienced by the child or carer, they should get tested immediately.

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

SAR and hospital visitor guidelines

The *WA Health COVID-19 Framework for System Alert and Response* (SAR) provides overarching guidance for public hospitals to manage and mitigate the risks associated with COVID-19 transmission. Non-government health care organisations, including private hospitals, may find the guidance useful when determining their own strategies to mitigate risks to patients and service delivery associated with COVID-19. **Currently the State is at RED risk rating.**

The *COVID-19 Visitor Guidelines for WA Public Hospital and Health Services* have been updated. Only essential visitors, as defined by this guideline and individual Health Service Providers, are permitted to visit.

The guidelines are a minimum requirement for public hospital and community services, however non-public hospital and community-based services may wish to apply the guidance.

Refer to the SAR [document](#) and [webpage](#) and the [visitor guidelines](#) on the Department of Health website for further information.

Public health and social measures

Level 2 [PHSM](#) apply state-wide from 12:01am Thursday, 3 March 2022.

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

Border update

Based on the latest health advice, the updated Safe Transition Plan **has been** in place from Thursday, 3 March 2022. This allows for safe travel into WA from interstate and overseas, with vaccination and testing requirements on arrival.

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

Community

Resources for industry and business

A new '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 and secure facilities) 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.

COVID-19 Business Assistance Package

The WA Government announced [Level 1](#) and [Level 2](#) COVID-19 Business Assistance Packages to support businesses adversely affected by increasing cases and the necessary implementation of Public Health Social Measures. The announcements include a Small Business Rental Relief Package, an Outdoor Dining and Entertainment Support Package, the Small Business Hardship Grants Program and COVID-19 Commercial Sporting Franchises Support Program.

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

Tourism industry support

Tourism's businesses can now apply for the WA Tourism Deposit Refund Program and the WA Tourism Support Program. Applications will soon be open for the Travel Agent Support Fund.

Refer to the Tourism WA [website](#) for information.

WA free RAT program

Every household in WA can register online to receive five 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).

COVID-19 vaccination program

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 the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (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 recently [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 commenced vaccinating clients with the Novavax vaccine from 21 February 2022. 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.

ATAGI recommendations for Moderna vaccine for 6 to 11-year-old children

ATAGI has made [recommendations](#) for the use of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine in children aged 6 to 11 years.

ATAGI recommends Spikevax (Moderna) COVID-19 vaccine be used for primary vaccination in children aged 6 to 11 years, as an alternative option to the Pfizer vaccine. Pfizer remains the only vaccination available for children who are 5 years old.

There are currently no vaccines licensed for children aged 4 years and under.

ATAGI recommends vigilance to avoid potential dosing errors with the Moderna vaccine for children, given there is no paediatric-specific formulation for the Moderna vaccine. The Moderna dose for children aged 6 to 11 years is half the dose used for the primary course for people 12 years and older; and the same as the booster dose (50µg per dose; 0.25mL) for adults.

The recommended schedule for Moderna vaccination in children 6 to 11 years is 2 doses (50µg per dose; 0.25mL), provided 8 weeks apart. The interval can be shortened to 4 weeks for children at risk of moderate to severe COVID-19, in [special circumstances](#).

A third COVID-19 vaccine dose is recommended for children aged 5 and older who are [severely immunocompromised](#). An mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (either Moderna or Pfizer) is recommended for this third dose (either Pfizer for children 5 years and older or Moderna for children 6 years and older). This dose is recommended to be administered from 2 months after the second dose.

ATAGI advice on seasonal influenza vaccine and COVID-19 vaccines

ATAGI has developed advice for immunisation providers regarding the administration of [2022 seasonal influenza vaccines](#). This includes information about co-administration with COVID-19 vaccines.

ATAGI advises that all COVID-19 vaccines can be co-administered (given on the same day) with an influenza vaccine.

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)
- Small Business Development Corporation (SBDC) – workplace [information](#) about the COVID-19 vaccine (general information for businesses and employers)
- The 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 [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

- [Designation by the Chief Health Officer](#)
- [Designation of Fremantle Oval as a specified vaccination venue under paragraph 65\(b\) Proof of Vaccination Directions \(No 5\)](#)
- [COVID Transition \(Testing and Isolation\) Directions \(No 4\)](#)
- [Close Contact Modification \(Schools and Approved Education Facilities\) Directions](#)
- [Authorisation by the Chief Health Officer \(police officers\)](#)
- [Designation by the Chief Health Officer \(critical workers at D'Orsogna Limited\)](#)
- [Unofficial Consolidation of the COVID Transition \(Critical Worker\) Directions](#)
- [COVID Transition \(Critical Worker\) Amendment Directions \(No 2\)](#)
- [Unofficial Consolidation of the COVID Transition \(Level 2 Public Health and Social Measures\) Directions](#)
- [COVID Transition \(Level 2 Public Health and Social Measures\) Amendment Directions](#)
- [Authorisation by the State Emergency Coordinator \(as at 4 March\)](#)
- [Flight Crew Testing Regime Directions](#)
- [Designation by the Chief Health Officer \(Woolworths Distribution Centre\)](#)
- [Prohibition on the Use of Nebuliser Machines Directions \(No 3\)](#)
- [Visitors to Residential Aged Care Facilities \(Restrictions on Access\) Directions \(No 10\)](#)
- [COVID Transition \(Face Covering\) Directions \(No 3\)](#)

Updated factsheets

- [RAT FAQs Version 4](#)
- [Testing Criteria for SARS-CoV-2 in Western Australia #36 \(new\)](#)
- [COVID-19 TTIQ Workplace Checklist — Congregate Living Facilities \(new\)](#)
- [COVID-19 TTIQ Workplace Checklist — Industrial Facilities \(new\)](#)
- [COVID-19 TTIQ Workplace Checklist — Mining and Offshore Facilities \(new\)](#)
- [COVID-19 TTIQ Workplace Checklist — Secure Facilities \(new\)](#)
- [Identifying Close Contacts in the Workplace Checklist \(new\)](#)

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 either [online](#) or by printing out the notification form (standard notifiable infectious diseases process should be followed).

COVID-19 positive rapid antigen test (RAT) results must be registered on the Department of Health [website](#) or by phoning 13 COVID (13 26843).

Series of National Guidelines (SoNG)

The [latest](#) iteration was released on 2 March 2022. Key updates include changes to the reinfection definition, release from isolation criteria and management of contacts.

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: 132 6843 (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: **16 March 2022**.

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

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