



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

Aboriginal Sector Communication Update #7

Thursday 10 September 2020 14:00 Hours

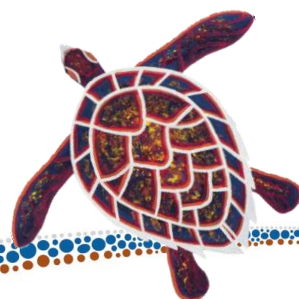
This regular statewide communication update is to keep health professionals abreast of the state-wide public health messages and resources that have been developed by Public Health Emergency Operations Centre (PHEOC) for the Aboriginal community and health professionals for COVID-19.

COVID-19 case numbers

- As of **10 September** 2020, there are **659** confirmed cases, **33** historical cases and **4** active cases of Coronavirus (COVID-19) in Western Australia (WA). **646** people have recovered from COVID-19 in WA. There have been **9** deaths from COVID-19 in WA.
- To date **371,204** COVID-19 tests have been conducted in WA.
- **WA:** [Daily snapshot](#)
- **National:** [Current National Status](#)
- **Worldwide:** [WHO Situation Reports](#)

National COVID-19 Aboriginal epidemiological profile

- **0.6% (132 cases)** of all COVID-19 positive (confirmed) cases (**23,564**) notified in the Australian *National Notifiable Disease Surveillance System* (NNDSS) were recorded as Aboriginal people – an increase of **25** cases from the previous update (**2 August**).
- Of the total **132** Aboriginal COVID-19 positive cases, **76% (101 persons)** acquired their infection locally, while **23% (30 persons)** acquired their infections overseas, and **one** case had an unknown source of infection.
- Of the total **101** Aboriginal persons who acquired their infections locally, **74% (75 persons)** acquired the infection in a major city, **8% (8 persons)** acquired the infection in an inner regional area, **16% (16 persons)** acquired the infection in an outer regional area, and **3% (3 persons)** acquired the infection in a remote area.
- Of the **30** Aboriginal people who acquired the infection overseas, **43% (13 persons)** were linked to cruise ships.
- **No deaths** have been recorded among Aboriginal positive cases.
- The median age of Aboriginal positive cases is **34** years; the highest proportion of cases was in the **20 - 29** age groups.
- The completeness of Aboriginal identification fields in the NNDSS was about **88%**.



Latest updates

The latest Communique from the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group on COVID-19

This [Communique](#) provides an update on the work of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group on COVID-19 (the Taskforce) and current key areas of focus.

The Taskforce was convened in March 2020 to co-design the [Management Plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Populations on COVID-19](#) (the Management Plan) to protect communities.

The Taskforce is co-chaired by the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) and the Australian Government Department of Health. Taskforce members include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health sector representatives and state and territory governments. With the assistance of NACCHO, the Taskforce has provided essential national expertise and a coordination role throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Phase 4 radio messages available in traditional languages

The Department of Premier and Cabinet has produced a [collection of resources](#), contacts and information for remote communities about COVID-19 coronavirus and how to stay safe. This collection includes audio messages available in Plain English, Kriol, Martu and Ngaanyatjarra that provide information on:

- Phase 4 update
- Tougher border controls
- Phase 4 COVID-19 rules
- Travel restrictions update
- Help for funerals
- Fast COVID-19 test
- Flu shots

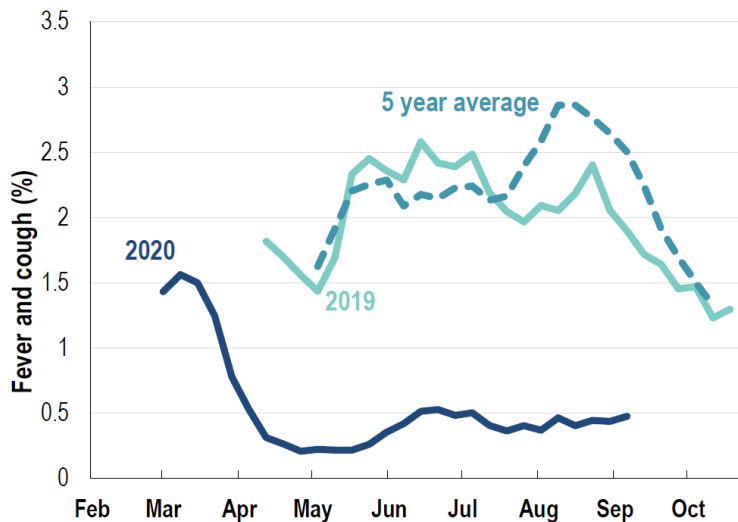
Surge training in the regions

The Public Health Emergency Operations Centre (PHEOC) is currently undertaking training in the regions for all doctors, nurses, allied health, aged care, prison health, health promotion and local government staff who may be involved in the COVID-19 response. The training includes education about transmission and clinical features of COVID-19, and its public health management in Australia, along with an introduction to contact tracing. This training forms a critical part of our COVID-19 response preparedness in WA.

Flu-like illness is historically low (as of week ending 6 September 2020)

Influenza-like illness activity:

Fever and cough: 0.5% this week (flu-like illness activity is historically low)



*5 year average is calculated using 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 data
† Data are age standardised in this chart

Reference:

[Flu Tracking: Tracking COVID-19 Weekly Interim Report: Australia: Week ending 06 September 2020. NSW Government](#)

Aboriginal COVID-19 resources

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:

- continue to physical distance where possible
- continue to 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 self-isolate 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 the [COVIDSafe app](#)
- look after your mental health and social emotional wellbeing during this time.

Statewide Aboriginal resources

A suite of statewide Aboriginal tailored resources has been developed by the Department of Health WA for the community and health professionals, to promote awareness and provide up-to-date COVID-19 information that is culturally safe.

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
- Ensure 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.

Refer to the Department of Health COVID-9 website for up-to-date information

Health services are welcome to tailor and localise Department of Health 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.

New resources for the Aboriginal Sector

Published

- [Where to get tested for COVID-19 in Regional and Remote WA](#)
This new COVID-19 resource lists all Public Health Emergency Departments where testing for COVID-19 is available. There is a link to a list of GP Respiratory Clinics. The resource acknowledges that most Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations also provide testing for their clients. Target audiences include Western Australian Aboriginal communities, Regional and Remote Western Australian residents, and anyone travelling throughout Western Australia’s regions.

All resources for the Aboriginal Sector

[WA Department of Health – Aboriginal Sector](#)

- **Aboriginal sector communication updates**
 - Communication update #1
 - Communication update #2
 - Communication update #3
 - Communication update #4
 - Communication update #5
 - Communication update #6
 - **Communication update #7**
- **Aboriginal health professionals**
 - Aboriginal ethical position statement
 - Video - Beating the bugs, colds and viruses
 - Guide for Aboriginal health staff
 - Guide for Funeral and Sorry Business
 - How to identify Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander clients
 - Information for Aboriginal people (HealthyWA)
- **External stakeholder resources**
 - Resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and remote communities
 - COVID-19 resource toolkit for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health professional (NATSIHWA)
- **Remote and rural planning**
 - COVID-19 resource toolkit for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health professional (NATSIHWA)
 - Remote Aboriginal communities – restrictions on entering (WA Government)
 - Remote Aboriginal communities – safety and support measures (WA Government)
 - Checklist for remote clinics in Aboriginal communities (WACHS)
 - Health guidance for remote Aboriginal communities of Western Australia (DoH)

[HealthyWA - Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) for Aboriginal People](#)

- **Fact sheets**
 - Information flyer for Aboriginal people – what you need to know
 - Information for a confirmed case
 - Information for a close contact of a confirmed case
 - Information for low risk contacts of a confirmed case
 - Information for your quarantine stay
 - Self-isolation information after testing for COVID-19
 - **Where to get tested for COVID-19 in Regional and Remote WA**
- **Posters**
 - Poster – Essential tips for travellers
 - Poster – Personal hygiene
 - Poster – Physical distancing
 - Poster – Stay strong when you are sick
 - Poster – Staying well on my travels
 - Poster – Symptoms and what to do if unwell
 - Poster – Visit your doctor

- **Video/radio messages**
 - TV commercial – Good hygiene with Mary G
 - TV commercial – Social distancing with Mary G
 - Video - Beating the bugs, colds and viruses
 - Radio – Protect yourself and other with good hygiene
 - Video - Mary G telehealth and regular checkups
 - Radio – Physical distancing – let’s work together to protect our mob
 - Radio – Stay at home if you are sick
- **Other resources available**
 - Aboriginal Health Council of WA (AHCWA)
 - Resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and remote communities (Australian Government)
 - **Phase 4 Update available in Plain English, Kriol, Martu and Ngaanytjarra**
- **GPs and other support phone lists**
 - Goldfields
 - Great Southern
 - Kimberley
 - Midwest
 - Perth
 - Pilbara
 - South West
 - Wheatbelt

Other resources of interest to Aboriginal health sector

Mental health and social emotional wellbeing resources

Mental health and social emotional wellbeing is an emerging issue of concern due to the direct impacts of COVID-19. To stay strong during this time it is important to find COVID-safe ways to connect to Country, family, culture and community to maintain good mental health and social emotional wellbeing.

A range of useful resources have been developed by Aboriginal Community Controlled and Government sectors that promote good mental health and social emotional wellbeing. The following resources are tailored to Aboriginal audiences:

- **Government of WA, Department of Health**
 - [A Guide for Aboriginal Health Staff: Staying Mentally Strong and Healthy](#)
- **Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia (AHCWA)**
 - [Looking after your mind during the restrictions](#)
 - Feeling angry or frustrated *soon to be published
 - Feeling fearful or uncertain *soon to be published
 - Feeling sadness of grief *soon to be published
 - Feeling sad or depressed *soon to be published
- **Strong Spirit Strong Mind Aboriginal Programs, Mental Health Commission**
 - [Look out for others](#)
 - [Tips to cope during isolation](#)
 - [Keep a strong inner spirit](#)
 - [Don't be shame to ask for help](#)
 - [Signs and symptoms of mental health issues](#)
 - [COVID-19 Poster](#)
- **Australia Government, Department of Health**
 - [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) – Radio – Good mental health](#)

- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) – Radio – Mental health support](#)
- [Head to Health](#)

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.
- **Kids Helpline** (1800 55 1800)
- **Beyond Blue** (1300 22 46 36)
- **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](tel:1800313223) (Note: **NOT** for GP referred testing or private pathology clinic tests)
- **COVID-19 WA Public Information Line:** [132 6843 \(13 COVID\)](tel:1326843)
- **COVID-19 Travel Restrictions Exemption Application:** Visit the [G2G PASS](#) website or complete the [exemption application form](#)
 - **COVID-19 WA Police Line:** [131 444](tel:131444) to report breaches of: self-isolation, business closures, border controls and other State of Emergency Directions.

Last updated **9 September 2020**

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

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