



# Aboriginal sector communication update

**Tuesday 9 June 2020 14:00 hours**

This regular statewide communication update is to keep health professionals abreast of the state-wide resources that have been developed by the Department of Health for the Aboriginal community and health professionals for COVID-19.

## COVID-19 case numbers

- As of **9 June 2020**, there are **599** confirmed cases of Coronavirus (COVID-19) in Western Australia (WA). **560** people have recovered.
- To date **122,387** 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

- **59 cases (0.8%)** of all **7,075** Australian positive cases notified in the National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System (NNDSS) were Aboriginal people (an increase of **4** cases from the previous update).
- **10%** of Aboriginal positive cases were admitted into hospitals, compared to **13%** (**920** persons) of all positive cases.
- Of the total 59 Aboriginal positive cases, 64% (38 persons) were from major cities, 24% (14 persons) were from inner regional areas, and 12% (7 persons) were from outer regional areas.
- To date there have been no Aboriginal positive cases and no COVID-19 deaths reported in the remote and very remote areas.
- **37%** (**22** persons) of Aboriginal positive cases acquired their infection overseas, **51%** (**30** persons) were infected domestically and **12%** (**7** cases) are still under investigation.
- The median age of Aboriginal positive cases remained at 34 years compared to 47 years for all Australia positive cases.
- The completeness of Aboriginal identification fields in the NNDSS remained at 95%.

## Latest updates

### Travel restrictions to WA regions and remote Aboriginal communities

Travel is now permitted throughout all regions within WA, except for entry into remote Aboriginal communities.

From Friday, 5 June, the Kimberley, Shire of Ngaanytjarraku and parts of the East Pilbara have reopened to tourists and travelers. However, access to remote communities remains restricted.

Further information can be obtained by visiting - <https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/department-of-the-premier-and-cabinet/covid-19-coronavirus-remote-aboriginal-communities-restrictions-entering>

## **Journey of Health and Wellbeing Video**

On National Sorry Day Tuesday 26 May 2020, the Department of Health released the *Journey of Health and Wellbeing*. The 10-minute animation shows how events of the past play out in the present and offers a framework of hope and equity.

The video can be accessed on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cDYGjkjUdg&feature=youtu.be>

This video was produced by the Aboriginal Health Policy Directorate at the Department of Health, based on the original concept of Tim Muirhead and Danny Ford.

## **Addressing social stigma and COVID-19**

The COVID-19 disease is causing a great deal of confusion, anxiety and stress in our community. The outbreak has provoked social stigma and discriminatory behaviours against people who have become unwell with COVID-19, as well as their caregivers, family, friends and communities.

Stigmatising people can be harmful and can result in people not accessing health care or mental health support that they need. We need to support each other through this difficult period. Stigma and discrimination hurt everyone. [WA Health website](#) has a resource for addressing social stigma that can be used and localised to suit the needs of your local community.

Please contact Kelly Cameron ([Kelly.Cameron@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:Kelly.Cameron@health.wa.gov.au)) for further information.

## **COVID Care Assistance Team**

Public Health Operations (PHOps) services a cohort of Western Australians with complex needs requiring additional support while in isolation in the community. The COVID Care Assistance Team (C-CAT) for special populations was established to assess and provide culturally appropriate community support for COVID-19 positive cases and close contacts.

Please email [COVIDCAT@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:COVIDCAT@health.wa.gov.au) for further information.

## **National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group on COVID-19**

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group on COVID-19 (the taskforce) was convened in March 2020, to develop and deliver a National Management Plan to protect communities and save lives; and to advise on health issues related to COVID-19. The taskforce is co-chaired by the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) and the Australian Government Department of Health.

For more information on the role and work of the Advisory Group visit:

<https://www.health.gov.au/committees-and-groups/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-advisory-group-on-covid-19>

## **Aboriginal COVID-19 resources**

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

The aim of providing culturally-appropriate communications is to also 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”
- Reinforce and encourage people to ‘stay vigilant’ and ‘don’t get complacent’
- Use positive strength-based messaging and language
- Ensure consistent, accurate and timely communication 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 localise Department of Health resources to meet community needs. Please reference the Department of Health WA and contact Kelly Cameron ([Kelly.cameron@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:Kelly.cameron@health.wa.gov.au)) for further information.**

#### *Updated resources*

- [Guide for Funeral and Sorry Business \(Phase 3 of the COVID-19 Roadmap\)](#)

#### *New resources*

- [Guide for Aboriginal Health Staff – Staying mentally healthy and strong](#)
- [Poster – Visit Your Doctor](#)

#### *In development*

- Staying well when travelling
- Travelling essentials

#### *Collaboration*

- Education Department - returning to school and keeping family safe at home

## Resources for more information

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

- **Aboriginal sector communication updates**
  - [Communication update #1](#)
- **Aboriginal health professionals**
  - Aboriginal ethical position statement
  - Video - Beating the bugs, colds and viruses
  - [Guide for Aboriginal health staff \(new resource\)](#)
  - [Guide for Funeral and Sorry Business \(updated\)](#)
  - 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 professionals \(new resource from NATSIHWA\)](#)
- **Remote and rural planning**
  - [Remote Aboriginal communities – restrictions on entering \(WA Government\)](#)
  - Checklist for remote clinics in Aboriginal communities (WACHS)
  - Health guidance for remote Aboriginal communities of Western Australia (DoH)
  - Keeping communities safe from Coronavirus: remote area travel restrictions (Australian Govt)

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

- **Fact sheets**
  - Information flyer for Aboriginal people – what you need to know
- **Posters**
  - Good hygiene
  - Social distancing
  - Symptoms and what to do if unwell
  - Stay strong when you are sick
  - **Visit your doctor (new resource)**
- **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
  - **Animation Video - Mary G telehealth and regular checkups**
- **Other Resources Available**
  - Aboriginal Health Council of WA (AHCWA)
  - Resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and remote communities (Australian Government)

## 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 June 2020**

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

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