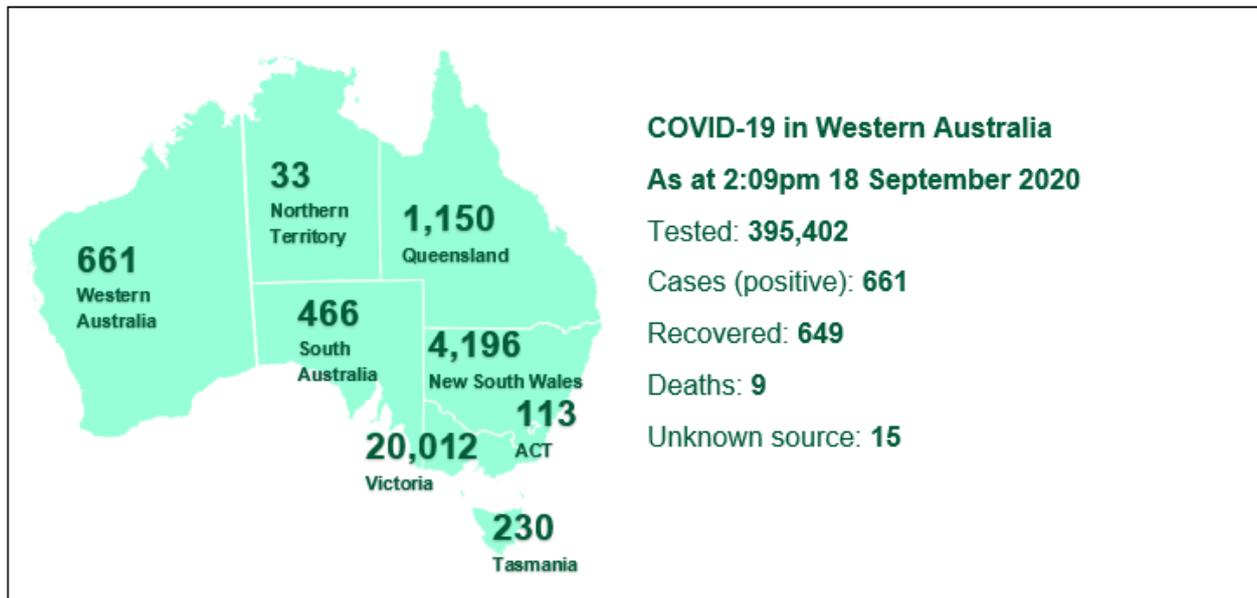




# UNION UPDATE #25

This information is current as at Friday, 18 September 2020



## Staff testing - 1800 955 765

A dedicated WA Health Staff Call Centre has been established to provide support for **all WA Health** employees to manage screening and testing for COVID-19.

The COVID-19 testing criteria was updated on 21 June 2020 for healthcare workers with patient contact. Specifically, to consider testing people with acute loss of smell or taste if they also meet one of the following criteria;

- Close contact of a confirmed or probable case.
- Healthcare, aged, or residential care workers with direct patient contact.
- Persons who have returned from outside WA or have lived/ travelled through an area with elevated risk of community transmission.
- Hospitalised patients where there is no alternative cause of symptoms

Per previous guidance, if you are experiencing a fever (over 37.5<sup>0</sup>), a history of a fever in the last few days OR an acute respiratory infection (e.g. shortness of breath, cough, sore throat), or have had exposure to COVID-19 please call 1800 955 765 between 8am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday.

There are also expanded options for COVID-19 testing, and patients with a GP referral may now be tested at 11 private pathology collection centres across the Metropolitan area, in addition to the COVID Clinics operating at seven hospital sites across metropolitan Perth and at Bunbury Health Campus and Broome Hospital, as well as emergency departments in regional and metropolitan WA.

Four new private COVID-19 collection centres have also opened, with new South-West sites established in Busselton and South Bunbury and two new metropolitan sites for Myaree and Osborne Park.

The third regional COVID clinic in Western Australia will open at Kununurra District Hospital to further protect Kimberley communities from COVID-19. The clinic will be open from 8am-4.30pm, seven days a week under the guidance of clinicians and support staff following strict infection prevention controls. It adds another layer of safety for Western Australians.

The clinic has been established to help provide regular testing of transport, freight and logistics personnel entering WA and exempt travellers needing to be tested. The clinic will also support the DETECT Borders program.

New weekly testing of WA border and hotel quarantine workers who do not have symptoms of COVID-19 will run from now until the end of November to swiftly detect and prevent or limit community transmission. The DETECT Borders program offers free, voluntary testing for volunteer frontline workers at COVID clinics in the metro and regional areas. Some will be facilitated in the workplace to maximise participation. For more information see the [DETECT Borders fact sheet](#).

Faster turn-around times in regional areas are now available for urgent cases, with the introduction of regional on-site testing analysers for COVID-19, with results available within an hour. The analysers provide testing capability to regional areas of most need, further adding to the State's testing capacity. Test results will be provided in a fraction of the time, without having to transport samples to Perth.

Any staff member who is concerned about their health, including chronic conditions or any potential risk relating to their age should seek advice from their general practitioner or health care advisor.

**Staying at home if you are feeling unwell is just as important as the job you do at work. If you have been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19, you must isolate yourself in your home. You can spread the virus even if you don't have symptoms.**

## Personal Protective Equipment

In Western Australia, we continue to review and modify our COVID-19 guidelines and policies. Patient safety and the protection of our staff remain our highest priorities during this pandemic.

Our personal protective equipment (PPE) policy has been informed by the National policy, the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) advice, and local WA expert advice led by the [COVID-19 Pandemic Infection Prevention & Control \(IP&C\) Advisory Committee](#), comprising of senior clinicians from across Western Australia.

In response to concern about the number of positive cases in healthcare workers in Victoria, the COVID-19 IP&C Advisory Committee has revised its advice for staff working in Western Australian health care facilities.

In the setting of no or limited community transmission of COVID-19 in Western Australia (WA), PPE use in accordance with standard precautions is recommended for the care of all patients.

Standard, contact and droplet precautions are required as a minimum standard for all patients who are confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19. Standard, contact and droplet precautions are required as a minimum standard for all patients who are confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19.

WA is fortunate in having no community transmission. Our PPE stock remains in a very strong position after considerable increased purchasing of substantial amounts of PPE over the past three

months, now with a real-time tracking system implemented to enable the WA health system to report on stock levels on a daily basis.

The mandatory policy for Identification and Use of Personal Protective Equipment in the Clinical Setting During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic Mandatory Policy was updated on 24 August, 2020 and is available here: [The Identification and Use of Personal Protective Equipment in the Clinical Setting During the Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Pandemic Mandatory Policy](#)

Additional advice around PPE is available via the below links:

- PPE for workers in community settings: [Advice for use of personal protective equipment for workers in community settings.](#)
- PPE for professional first responders: [Advice for use of personal protective equipment for professional first responder.](#)

Further advice on PPE Pathways has also been included on the WA Health website.

For the latest Weekly Key COVID-19 Supplies Snapshot, visit:

[https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/A\\_E/Coronavirus/Advice-on-how-to-access-Personal-Protective-Equipment](https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Coronavirus/Advice-on-how-to-access-Personal-Protective-Equipment)

## Updated COVID-19 mental health clinical guidelines

The Department of Health has published an update to the clinical guidelines for the Management of acute behavioural disturbance in COVID-19. The updated guidelines are available on the Department of Health website under Clinical guidelines > Mental health or via this [link](#)

These guidelines address the safe care and management of consumers presenting with psychological distress or acute behavioural disturbance in the context of limiting potential COVID-19 transmission.

**Section 6.1** of the guidelines now reflects the latest policy on the use of airborne precautions for patients who are confirmed, probable or suspected cases of COVID-19, and on the use of PPE (including fit-checking) in a mental health setting. This update is in line with the [latest mandatory policy on the identification and use of PPE in the clinical setting](#), issued on 24 August 2020.

COVID-19 information for health professionals and clinical guidelines are regularly updated and are available on the [Department of Health WA website](#)

## Manage My Care now live at Perth Children's Hospital

The WA Health system's first patient-facing app and web portal, Manage My Care, is now live at Perth Children's Hospital (PCH).

PCH joins seven other metro hospitals including Royal Perth Hospital, Fiona Stanley Hospital, Sir Charles Gardiner Hospital, Bentley Health Service, Osborne Park Hospital, Rockingham General Hospital and Fremantle Hospital.

Manage My Care gives patients and their carers 24/7 visibility of their outpatient referrals and appointments. For users with appointments at Outpatient Direct supported clinics, they can also request to discharge or reschedule their appointments. You can view a full list of Outpatient Direct Supported Clinics [here](#).

If you care for a patient or you are a patient, download the free Manage My Care app from the App Store, Google Play or by visiting [HealthyWA](#).

## WA Recovery College to enhance wellbeing

A State-wide Recovery College for mental health and wellbeing has officially opened. It will deliver courses and education from people who have experienced a recovery journey before.

The college is part of a WA Government commitment to provide more community-based services and support early intervention and recovery.

The Metropolitan, Wheatbelt, South-West and Goldfields regions will be operational as part of phase one, and the Pilbara/Kimberley regions will open as part of phase 2 in 2022.

The college is looking for educators to co-design and deliver courses. To apply visit <http://www.warecoverycollege.org.au>

## Lighting up orange this World Patient Safety Day

The COVID-19 pandemic brought on a number of big challenges for health workers.

The pandemic has also seen healthcare professionals working in stressful environments, which in turn exacerbates risks to the physical and mental health and safety of health workers, making them more prone to errors which might lead to patient harm.

Health Worker Safety: A priority for Patient Safety has, therefore, been selected by the World Health Organization as the theme for World Patient Safety Day 2020. This theme focuses on the interrelationship between health worker safety and patient safety, and is clearly articulated in the slogan Safe health workers, safe patients.

In acknowledgement of the importance of healthcare worker safety, public places across Perth such as Council House, Matagarup Bridge, Yagan Square, Optus Stadium, and Elizabeth Quay will be illuminated from sunset tonight as a gesture of respect and gratitude to all the health workers who are committed to patient and workplace safety.

For more information about World Patient Safety Day, visit the [World Health Organization](#) website.

## COVID-19 public information campaign

‘Protect yourself’ messaging continues to be a foremost priority of our COVID-19 response here in WA. Social distancing, good personal hygiene and staying at home if you’re unwell remain our best defence against a virus that continues to wreak havoc in other states this week.

The [COVID-19 public information campaign](#) is currently active on TV, in the press, on radio and on social media. Messages are focused on the following topics:

- Maintaining physical distancing wherever possible.
- Practising good personal hygiene.
- Staying at home if unwell.
- Downloading the COVIDSafe app.

## Travel to WA

Strict border controls are in place to limit the spread of COVID-19. You cannot enter WA unless you are an exempt traveller. If you meet criteria outlined in the [Quarantine \(Closing the Border\) Directions](#), you may apply for an exemption via G2G PASS.

Quarantine at a quarantine hotel will be at your own expense, except in cases of extreme hardship. For more information, visit [paying for hotel quarantine in WA Frequently Asked Questions](#).

Travellers who have been in Victoria or New South Wales in the previous 14 days will not be allowed into WA, unless they fall into one of the following categories:

- certain senior Government Officials.
- certain active military personnel.
- a member of the Commonwealth Parliament and any members of their staff travelling with them.
- a person carrying out functions under a law of the Commonwealth.
- the Premier of WA and any members of the Premier's staff.
- a person coming to WA at the request of the Chief Health Officer or the Director General of Health.
- any person (other than an airline or maritime crew member) responsible for transport or freight and logistics services into or out of WA.
- In addition, persons falling into the above categories are required to comply with certain hygiene requirements during the 14 days after the date they entered WA.

If you have been in Victoria or New South Wales in the previous 14 days and do not fall into the above categories, you will not be permitted to enter WA unless you have written approval from the State Emergency Coordinator (or a person authorised by the State Emergency Coordinator) and comply with any terms and conditions imposed on entry to WA. This may include quarantine requirements.

For more information about travellers who have been in Victoria or New South Wales, please see our [frequently asked questions for people arriving from Victoria and NSW](#).

For more information on travel to WA, visit this page: <https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/department-of-the-premier-and-cabinet/covid-19-coronavirus-travel-wa#update>

## Phase 4 of the WA COVID-19 roadmap extended

Based on the latest health advice, Phase 4 of the WA COVID-19 roadmap has been extended until Friday, 23 October 2020. This was not unexpected news as Victoria continues to grapple with a second coronavirus wave.

A new tentative start date for Phase 5 will now be Saturday, 24 October 2020. A final decision on whether Phase 5 can proceed on this date, or if it can be brought forward, will be decided in October.

Phase 5 would see remaining restrictions removed, except WA's hard border and access to remote Aboriginal communities.

The cautious approach has been taken because while case numbers seem to be slowing, it is not expected that the outbreak will be fully under control in Victoria for at least two months.

More information on the roadmap to ease COVID-19 restrictions can be found here: <https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/department-of-the-premier-and-cabinet/covid-19-coronavirus-wa-roadmap>

See the [COVID-19 WA roadmap](#) in English and other languages. More information on the roadmap to ease COVID-19 restrictions can be found [here](#).

## Health Announcements

Stay up to date with the latest news from the Department of Health and Minister for Health by visiting: <https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/News>

## Alcohol and other drug support service – (08) 6553 0520

The Mental Health Commission has launched The Drug and Alcohol Clinical Advisory Service – a specialist telephone consultancy services that provides clinical advice on all issues relating to patient management of alcohol and other drug (AOD) use.

The services is provided by experienced addiction medicine specialists and can be reached by calling (08) 6553 0520, from 8am – 8pm weekdays, with after-hours calls returned the next business day.

More information is available at [www.mhc.gov.au/DACAS](http://www.mhc.gov.au/DACAS)

## COVID-19 staff wellbeing framework

The COVID-19 staff wellbeing framework has been developed and sets out guidance for action that individual health workers, managers and executive staff can take to support staff mental health and wellbeing. The information can be accessed via the Department of Health internal intranet.

The framework outlines actions that can be adopted to support staff mental health and wellbeing across the various phases of the pandemic. It builds on existing resilience and capacity of the WA Health workforce to deliver exceptional care in high-stress and challenging environments.

The framework includes connections with other professional supports, drawing on evidence-based information. It has been guided by best practice of the United Kingdom's National Health Service and World Health Organization. This, enhanced with local expertise and knowledge of the Western Australian systems of care, has led to the development of a practical resource for all healthcare workers, irrespective of their role.

This framework can be used to complement existing Health Service Provider (HSP) staff mental health and wellbeing programs and materials.

## Health Staff Wellness Helpline

WA health system staff now have access to a dedicated confidential psychological support helpline to help manage the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their mental wellbeing.

[The WA Health Staff Wellness Helpline](#) complements occupational health and wellbeing programs, information and resources provided to staff through hospitals and health services and can be accessed via the dedicated WA Health Staff COVID-19 call centre on 1800 955 765.

The helpline is available from 8am – 4.30pm, Monday to Friday and will typically provide single sessions to staff who request psychological support, with a further session or referral to other care or support as needed.

Everyone will have a unique response to the current COVID-19 pandemic and it is important that you seek help if you need support and someone to talk to. Support provided through the helpline is provided in confidence. More support options available can be found in the section “Support, advice and more information”.

## Support, advice and more information

- You can access the latest COVID19 statistics for Western Australia by visiting the Department of Health website: [https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/A\\_E/Coronavirus/COVID19-statistics](https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Coronavirus/COVID19-statistics)
- National Coronavirus Health Information Line on **1800 020 080** 24 hours a day, seven days a week (24-7). **If a non-English speaker needs translation support, call 131 450**
- **Are you on WhatsApp?** Message ‘hi’ to +61 400 253 787. The Australian Government’s automated chat will respond via a series of prompts, covering key queries and information.
- The **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)** provides employees with independent and confidential, short-term counselling services. Employees of the Child and Adolescent Health Service, Department of Health Divisions, East Metropolitan Health Service, Health Support Services, North Metropolitan Health Service, Pathwest, South Metropolitan Health Service or the WA Country Health Service, may access counselling support from either of the following two designated contractors:
  - **Converge International**  
Tel: 1300 687 327 or 1300 687 633 or visit: [www.convergeinternational.com.au](http://www.convergeinternational.com.au)
  - **Lifeworks**  
Tel: 1300 361 008 or visit: [www.lifeworks.com](http://www.lifeworks.com)

## Look after your mental health

Many people feel distressed by the constant news and overwhelming amount of information.

A dedicated WA Health Staff phone line is being set up to provide support for **all WA Health** employees to call directly if they would like to talk about their health and wellbeing. This number will be shared when it is available.

You can also visit [www.headtohealth.gov.au](http://www.headtohealth.gov.au) and click on COVID-19 for many free online and phone-based mental health resources that might be helpful. Talk to your line manager – or union delegate.

## Questions?

We understand that you may have other questions. The Department of Health continues to work with the unions over the coming days to ensure that our next update covers some of the key things that are important to you; so please contact your union representative.

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

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