



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

Your Ref:
Our Ref:
Contact:

Mr Chris Dawson
Commissioner of Police
State Emergency Coordinator
Western Australia Police Force

Dear Commissioner Dawson

EASING OF CONTROLLED BORDER CONTROLS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA – VICTORIA

On 7 February 2021, I provided you with advice on the border arrangements with Victoria. At that time, I had been advised that a 26-year-old male hotel quarantine worker at the Grand Hyatt Hotel has tested positive for the B.1.1.7 variant strain of COVID-19. 1318 primary close contacts were identified and instructed to present for testing and to self-isolate for 14 days. In response to this case, the Victorian State Government introduced new state-wide restrictions, which limited the number of people gathering in a household, introduced a requirement for masks to be worn in indoor spaces and extended restrictions on attending workplaces. I recommended that Victorian travellers should remain in the Low Risk category, which continued to require them to home quarantine for 14 days on arrival and present for day 11 testing. I also advised that I would review my advice in 72 hours when further information became available.

I can now advise that more than 80 per cent of the close contacts of the Grand Hyatt Hotel case have tested negative. This number includes 21 social and household primary close contacts and 661 workplace contacts. There have been no community cases related to this individual 8 days after the initial diagnosis.

On 7 February 2021, a hotel quarantine authorised officer at the Holiday Inn at Melbourne Airport tested positive to COVID-19. Whole genome sequencing indicated that it was the B.1.1.7 variant and is an identical sequence to a family of 3 who were staying at the Holiday Inn. On 9 February 2021, two further cases were identified – a traveller on the same floor as the family and a food and beverage worker. On 10 February, two further cases were identified – another traveller on the same floor and a second food and beverage worker. The Victorian Chief Health Officer has now advised that all Holiday Inn cases are linked to the same floor of the hotel, which is no longer being used, and to the use of a nebuliser by an infected traveller on 03 and 04

February, which has aerosolised the virus and enabled it to be carried out into the corridor where workers and other residents were exposed. The Holiday Inn's entire workforce has since been stood down, tested and required to self-isolate for fourteen days. Returning travellers have been evacuated from the hotel with some required to quarantine for up to an additional 14 days.

Household, family and close contacts of the known COVID-19 cases have been identified and are being tested and required to self-isolate for 14 days. All persons who have had known contact with the diagnosed persons, and all persons who visited the list of locations the confirmed cases visited, have been required to present for testing. Testing capacity near exposure sites in Melbourne's north west has been enhanced and extensive public testing is being undertaken. Wastewater surveillance has also been boosted with daily testing being undertaken at 25 surveillance sites in metropolitan Melbourne since Friday. There have been no reported associated community cases at this stage. All other jurisdictions are requiring either quarantine and/or testing for people coming from the affected areas.

I am confident that the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services are taking all the steps necessary to control and abate this outbreak; however, given the 5 cases involved, there remains a significant risk that further cases may be detected related to the Holiday Inn over the next 5-7 days and may present up to 14 days after infection. Further contact tracing and testing over the next week will be critical in providing greater reassurance that there is no further community spread. Given that this situation is still evolving, it is recommended that the proposed changes for Victoria under the 'Controlled Border for Western Australia Directions', to move Victorian travellers from the Low Risk category to the Very Low Risk category, be further postponed at this stage, be reviewed again in 7 days and advice be provided when further information is available.

Given continuing changes in the epidemiology in other States and the situation in Western Australia, I am happy to re-consider the above advice should there be significant changes in the public health situation.

Yours sincerely



Dr Andy Robertson
CHIEF HEALTH OFFICER

10 February 2021