



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

Your Ref:  
Our Ref:  
Contact:

The Honourable Mark McGowan MLA  
Premier of Western Australia  
13 Floor, Dumas House  
2 Havelock Street  
WEST PERTH WA 6005

Dear Premier

### **EASING OF BORDER CONTROLS – NORTHERN TERRITORY**

On 26 June 2021, the Northern Territory (NT) Health reported an infectious community COVID-19 case employed at the Newmont-owned Granites gold mine in the Tanami Desert, around 540 kilometres north-west of Alice Springs. The worker had been infected with the Delta variant at the Airport Novotel Langley quarantine hotel in Brisbane before travelling to the mine site. He was potentially infectious at the mine site from June 18 to June 24 and approximately 800 workers left the mine during that period and travelled to several jurisdictions, including Western Australia. WA has had no subsequent infected case from this cluster. On 27 June 2021, I recommended that the NT be moved from the Very Low Risk category to the Low Risk category, following the detection of further cases in the NT community linked to this worker.

NT Health has been managing all identified close and casual contacts in the NT and has required all close contacts to immediately be tested and undertake 14 days quarantine. They have also undertaken extensive testing of contacts and within the community. Two close contacts, who had been in Darwin, tested positive for COVID-19 with the last community case been reported on 27 June 2021. The first case travelled by plane from the mine site to Darwin on Friday 25 June and subsequently tested positive for COVID-19 and was placed in quarantine. Two of the case's household contacts subsequently also tested positive, though they had been in quarantine at Howard Springs during their infectious period. As this man had been active in the community prior to diagnosis, the local government areas of the City of Darwin, the City of Palmerston, and Litchfield entered a 48-hour period of lockdown at 13:00 hrs on 27 June 2021. This was subsequently extended for a further 72 hours, until 1pm on Friday 2 July 2021, to allow contact tracers to contain and isolate the spread of the virus by identifying all exposure sites and possible contacts.

Alice Springs subsequently entered a 72-hour lockdown period effective from 13:00 hrs on 30 June 2021. This occurred in response to the detection of COVID-19 in a mine worker in South Australia (SA). The mine worker flew from the Tanami gold mine on 25 June 2021 to the Alice Springs Airport and remained at the airport for seven hours before flying to Adelaide. The man was quarantined and tested on arrival in SA but returned a negative test on 26 June 2021. After developing symptoms, the man was re-tested and returned a positive result on 30 June. His family also tested positive. Alice Springs Airport and its Café were listed as a COVID-19 public exposure sites. The lockdown was implemented to provide health teams with time to identify, trace and isolate any contacts. No cases have been detected in Alice Springs and wastewater tests undertaken in the area have shown no traces of COVID-19.

On 1 July 2021, the NT recorded one additional case of COVID-19 in a mine site worker and close contact of the initial case. The man arrived in Darwin on 25 June 2021 and was transferred to Howard Springs Quarantine Facility on 26 June 2021. As the man's initial test was negative, he is not thought to have been infectious when he arrived in Darwin. As such, there were no public exposure sites associated with this the man. The lockdowns of the Darwin and Alice Springs areas ended on Friday 2 July 2021 as planned, and no further cases have been identified since that time.

I can now advise that a total of 7 cases have been identified in the NT linked to the Granites gold mine in the Tanami Desert, with the last community case being diagnosed on 26 June 2021 and reported on 27 June 2021, as outlined above. Five were diagnosed at the mine site and transferred to the Howard Springs quarantine facility. As of 8 July 2021, the NT has had 11 consecutive days without a positive case in the community and has a 5-day moving average of 0.0 cases and a 14-day moving average of 0.6 cases. NT will reach 14 days at midnight on 10 July 2021. On this basis, I recommend that the Northern Territory move from the Low Risk category to Very Low Risk category, effective on or after 00.01 hrs on Sunday 11 July 2021.

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**

8 July 2021