



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

### **CONTROLLED BORDER ARRANGEMENTS – NEW SOUTH WALES (NSW)**

On 27 October 2021, the Acting Chief Health Officer (CHO) recommended that New South Wales (NSW) be moved from the 'extreme risk' to the 'high risk' category. NSW had moved to the 'extreme risk' category on 26 August 2021, based on my advice of 20 August 2021, due to the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak in NSW. At that time, NSW had a 5-day moving average of 531 cases per day, and a 14-day moving average of 408 cases per day.

The outbreak in NSW has now significantly abated and the vaccination rates within the NSW community have risen dramatically. At the time of the advice, NSW had reported 282 new locally acquired cases and the 5-day moving average was 301.6 cases per day, and the 14-day moving average was 319.4 cases per day. The vaccination rate was 93.1% of the population aged 16 years and over for dose 1, and 85% for dose 2.

On 29 October 2021, the State Emergency Coordinator (SEC) requested further advice as to how international travellers, who were fully vaccinated and permitted to enter NSW, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) without the need to undergo any quarantine from 01 November 2021, should be managed, given Western Australia's (WA) controlled border requirements.

The Acting CHO advised the SEC that, from a public health perspective, prohibiting an international arrival from entering WA via another State or Territory, without spending at least 14 days in another State or Territory, is reasonably necessary to prevent, control or abate the risks associated with the current emergency. This was based primarily on the risk that a person entering Australia from an overseas location could be infected with SARS-CoV-2 virus, despite being fully vaccinated and having a negative PCR test within three days of departure. If they were to then transit to and enter WA, there would be an increased risk of introducing the disease. In addition, the anticipated increase in the number of recent international arrivals entering WA would put considerable strain on the state quarantine facility (SQF) program, which is already

close to capacity. If current SQF capacity is exceeded, some of the existing risk mitigation measures would need to be relaxed, which could result in an increased risk of intra-hotel transmission and subsequent incursion into the community. The Controlled Border Directions were amended on 31 October 2021 to require any indirect international arrival (an international traveller arriving in Australia at a location outside of WA) to spend 14 days in that jurisdiction before travelling to WA. These temporary arrangements have prevented large numbers of indirect international arrivals entering WA and overloading our hotel quarantine system.

With these controls in place, the advice around whether NSW should move from 'extreme risk' to 'high risk' status has been reviewed. On 02 November 2021, NSW reported 173 new locally acquired cases and the 5-day moving average was 197.8 cases per day, and the 14-day moving average was 270.7 cases per day, both of which have continued to fall over the last week. The reduction in case numbers and rise in the vaccination status indicate that, not only has NSW managed to gain some control over the outbreak, but also widespread vaccination of the population is reducing the ongoing transmission of the virus. It should be noted that this reduction in cases is not a function of reduced testing, as NSW continues to have very high testing rates, which, except for Victoria, are well above all other States and Territories.

This observed reduction of case numbers comes 21 days after the first reduction in lockdown measures and restrictions were implemented. While this is a good early indication of control of the outbreak, there may be an increase in cases as the public health social measures are relaxed further and international borders open. There is still a risk of spread and increasing case numbers, and, as such, the situation in NSW needs to be monitored very closely.

In accordance with the requirements for 'high risk' jurisdictions, travellers from NSW would not be permitted to enter Western Australia (WA) unless they have been provided with an exemption. Travellers who were permitted to enter WA would be required to self-quarantine for 14 days in suitable accommodation. Where travel was permitted, travellers would also be required to:

1. provide proof of a negative COVID-19 PCR test in the 72 hours prior to departure;
2. after 05 November 2021, provide proof of receipt of two doses of COVID-19 vaccine, where eligible;
3. use the G2G Now App on arrival in WA, unless exempted by an authorised officer; and
4. present for testing at days 2 and 12.

In addition to this, there is a 200 km limit on the distance that may be travelled to a place of self-quarantine on arrival in WA, with a requirement that the traveller/s travel directly to that place without stopping other than as required by law or for fuel, unless modified by an authorised officer. There is also a requirement for any other individual in the suitable accommodation to quarantine for 14 days from the date the traveller left a 'high risk' jurisdiction and undertake Day 12 testing and use the G2G Now App.

As I am satisfied that these requirements are proportionate to the risk of importation of a case of COVID-19 into WA and that the proposed measures should mitigate any remaining risk, I recommend, as the Chief Health Officer, that NSW be moved from the 'extreme risk' category to the 'high risk' category on or after 0001 hours on 06 November 2021.

I will continue to monitor the situation in NSW and will provide further advice should there be significant changes in the public health situation.

Yours sincerely



Dr Andy Robertson  
**CHIEF HEALTH OFFICER**

02 November 2021