



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**

I am writing to provide updated advice on Western Australia's (WA) controlled border arrangements with New South Wales (NSW).

On 02 November 2021, I recommended that NSW should move from the 'extreme risk' category to the 'high risk' category under the WA Government's controlled border arrangements. This move followed NSW Health's reporting of a reduction in cases of COVID-19 to a 5-day moving average of 301.6 cases per day and the 14-day moving average to 319.4 cases per day. The vaccination rate at that time was 93.1% of the population aged 16 years and over for dose 1 and 85% fully vaccinated.

Since that time, the outbreak in NSW has remained at a low, but constant level for some weeks, with the number of new cases of COVID-19 reported to be less than 500 cases per day, and 5-day and 14-day moving averages of less than 500 cases per day. However, on Thursday 09 December 2021, NSW reported 516 cases. Since then, the number of daily cases has increased dramatically, with 536 cases reported on 12 December, 804 reported on 14 December and 1,360 reported on 15 December. The 5-day moving average for NSW on 15 December 2021 is 743.6 cases per day and the 14-day moving average is 478.6. The vaccination rate for first dose is 94.8% of the population aged 16 years and over and 93.2% for both doses.

The increase in COVID case numbers in NSW is believed to be due to a spread of the new variant of concern, the B.1.1.529 or *Omicron* variant, which is believed to be more transmissible than the Delta variant, due to its rapid spread in Africa, Europe and the Middle East. Of note, there have been several 'super spreading' events associated with large gatherings in NSW that have been linked to the Omicron variant, including a nightclub in Newcastle, where at least 150 of the approximately 680 people who attended have now tested positive to COVID. On 15 December 2021, NSW reported a total of 110 cases of the Omicron variant amongst their current active cases, although the actual number is anticipated to be a lot larger, due to the lag time of the whole genomic sequencing.

The surge in COVID-19 cases in NSW is coming at a time when NSW restrictions are set to reduce even further, with density limits no longer applying, reduction of mask use, opening of premises to unvaccinated people that were previously restricted to those who were vaccinated and reduced use of their QR check-in contact tracing application.

As a consequence of NSW's increase in cases and spread of the Omicron variant, together with their further relaxation of restrictions, it is my advice, as Chief Health Officer, that the risk posed of travellers arriving from NSW into WA has increased and NSW should be moved from a 'high risk' to a 'extreme risk' jurisdiction, further restricting traveller's entry to WA and requiring travellers to quarantine on arrival for 14 days in a State Quarantine Facility.

Under the 'extreme risk' category, travellers would be required to:

1. quarantine in a State Quarantine Facility for 14 days;
2. provide proof of a negative COVID-19 Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test in the 72 hours prior to departure;
3. provide proof of receipt of two doses of COVID-19 vaccine, where eligible;
4. undertake PCR testing at days 1, 5 and 12 of quarantine; and
5. be exempt to enter WA, which is restricted to Commonwealth, State and specialist functions only.

I will continue to monitor the situation in the different jurisdictions and provide further advice when it is appropriate to do so.

Yours sincerely



Dr Andy Robertson  
**CHIEF HEALTH OFFICER**

15 December 2021