



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 – SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

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

On 25 August 2021, I recommended that SA should move from the 'low risk' category to the 'very low risk' category under the WA Government's controlled border arrangements. This move followed SA's successful control of a Delta variant cluster that had occurred in July 2021. At that time, only essential travellers and those people who are relocating to SA or fleeing domestic violence were permitted to enter SA from NSW and all travellers were required to complete 14 days self-quarantine in SA and be tested for COVID-19 on days 1, 5 and 13. Similar requirements were in place for Victoria and the ACT at that time.

On 23 November 2021, SA opened its borders to fully vaccinated interstate and international travellers, with variable requirements to quarantine and/or test, depending on the level of community transmission and population vaccination status of the jurisdiction in which the traveller has been. Under the SA risk rating, local government areas (LGAs) in Victoria, New South Wales (NSW) and Australian Capital Territory (ACT) are considered level 2 (low risk) or level 3 (moderate risk), allowing travel for vaccinated people. For those entering SA from low risk areas, a pre-departure COVID-19 test is required and daily symptom monitoring on arrival. For those from a moderate risk area, an additional test within 24 hours of arrival is required, with quarantine until the test result is known. Neither cohort of travellers are required to quarantine for 14 days. International travellers are required to home quarantine for 7 days, be tested on arrival, at day 6 and day 13, and to not visit high risk areas, such as aged care facilities and hospitals, during the second week. While this system is robust for direct international flights, international travellers coming through NSW, Victoria or ACT could and possibly have bypassed this system.

Because of their changed border policy, SA has now seen increasing incursion of infected travellers from interstate and the risk of transmission from SA to WA is

189 Royal Street East Perth Western Australia 6004  
Telephone (08) 9222 4222 TTY 133 677  
PO Box 8172 Perth Business Centre Western Australia 6849  
ABN 28 684 750 332  
[www.health.wa.gov.au](http://www.health.wa.gov.au)

increasing. On 26 November 2021, SA reported 2 new cases from interstate, with 5 current cases in quarantine. SA further reported 3 additional cases on 27 November 2021, with 8 current cases in quarantine. They have had no community cases at this stage, but an increasing number of exposure sites, both at the airport and within Adelaide.

The current vaccination rate in SA is 88.8% first dose and 80% second dose. While this vaccination rate is good, it is still at a level that will support an unacceptable degree of community transmission. With the incursion of cases occurring rapidly on changes to the border in SA, and a second dose vaccination rate of less than 90%, it is anticipated that community transmission in SA will occur, will be sustained and case numbers may rise rapidly. There is now increasing risk of incursion of COVID-19 into WA from SA, and measures need to be undertaken to prevent this from occurring prior to WA reaching its own vaccination target.

In addition, on 26 November 2021, the World Health Organisation declared the new B.1.1.529 (Omicron) variant to be a variant of concern. This variant is rapidly spreading in southern Africa, with connected cases being reported in Belgium, Israel and Hong Kong. The Omicron variant is believed to be more transmissible than the Delta variant, but further information is required around the degree of transmissibility, the likely severity of the disease produced, and the protection afforded by current vaccination regimes. Given the opening of the borders on the east coast and SA, and the minimal testing requirements currently in place, incursions of the variant may have already occurred or are expected.

On 27 November 2021, the Australian Government announced that effective immediately:

1. anyone who isn't an Australian citizen or their dependents and has been in South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Lesotho, Eswatini, The Seychelles, Malawi and Mozambique in the past 14 days can't enter Australia;
2. Australian citizens, residents and dependents can travel to Australia, but will have to go into immediate supervised quarantine on arrival as subject to the requirements of whatever state they land in;
3. international students can't enter the country if they've been in those nine countries in the past two weeks;
4. anyone who's arrived in Australia already and have been in those countries in the past 14 days has to isolate, get tested and remain in isolation for 14 days since they left that country (providing they get a negative test); and
5. Australia is suspending all flights from those nine countries effective immediately

NSW, Victoria, Australian Capital Territory and South Australia are considering their quarantine and testing requirements and are expected to impose additional requirements.

Given the increased risk of spread of COVID-19 into SA as a consequence of their current border arrangements, and the emerging threat of the potential spread of the more transmissible Omicron variant into Australia, it is my opinion, as Chief Health

Officer, that the risk posed by travellers arriving from SA into WA has increased and SA should be moved from a 'very low risk' to a 'low risk' jurisdiction.

It is therefore recommended that:

- Effective from 1500 on 27 November 2021, South Australia should move from the 'Very Low Risk' to "Low Risk' category, with travellers entering WA being required to self-quarantine for 14 days and be tested immediately (within 48 hours) and at day 12.
- Anyone who arrived in WA on or after the 23 November 2021 and has been at the SA venues at the times specified between 23 November 2021 and 1500 on 27 November 2021 should be required to self-quarantine for 14 days and be tested immediately (within 48 hours) and at day 12.
- Anyone from the SA who did not visit the venues and has arrived from 23 November 2021 until 1500 on 27 November 2021 should be advised to get tested if they develop any symptoms that may be related to COVID-19.

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

Yours sincerely



Dr Andy Robertson  
**CHIEF HEALTH OFFICER**

27 November 2021