



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

UPDATED ADVICE: RESTRICTIONS IN RESPONSE TO PERTH OUTBREAK

Dear Premier

I am writing to you to provide an update on the situation surrounding the community outbreak of COVID-19 triggered by a case that was notified on 23 December 2021, and provide additional advice regarding the level of restrictions that I feel are warranted following the expiry of the [Covid Restrictions \(Gatherings And Related Measures\) Directions](#) at 6:00am on Tuesday 28 December 2021.

On 23 December 2021, I wrote to inform you of a notification of a community case of SARS CoV-2 who had attended a number of high-risk events/venues during their infectious period. As a result, I recommended that for people in the Perth Metropolitan and Peel regions), mask wearing should be mandated in all indoor spaces except residential settings, nightclubs should close, no dancing should occur at other public venues (other than weddings), and major music events should be cancelled. In updated advice on 24 December, I recommended all hospitality venues allow seated service only.

Of the various venues this case had visited whilst infectious, one, the Mess Hall music event in Northbridge held on 19 December 2021, has been found to be a 'high transmission' event. As of 10:30am today, seven secondary cases and two tertiary cases have been reported associated with this event, making a total of ten cases (including the index case) in the outbreak. All are in quarantine or isolation.

By 8:00pm 26 December 2021, a total of 606 close contacts and 1082 casual contacts had been identified, of whom 86% and 68%, respectively, had been tested and returned a result. All secondary and tertiary positive cases had occurred in the close contact group. Of concern, 39 of the close contacts from the Mess Hall event had yet to be found and tested, along with an unknown number of other, as yet, unidentified attendees of that event. Considering the demonstrated high transmission risk of that venue, there is a reasonable likelihood that one or more unaccounted-for secondary and tertiary cases could be circulating in the community.

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

Despite the number of high-risk exposure sites, contact tracing and the public health and social measures instituted in response to the outbreak has meant there is a real possibility that this outbreak could be quashed. If this occurs, this will allow additional time to further protect the community from COVID-19 by increasing the vaccination coverage rate for second doses in those aged 12 years and over and booster doses in those 18 years and older, and commence the roll out of COVID-19 vaccinations in children aged five to 11 years from 10 January.

Given the risk that unaccounted-for infectious cases remain in the community, I recommend that the current restrictions that are due to expire on 6:00am on Tuesday 28 December 2021 be kept in place in the Perth Metropolitan and Peel regions until 6:00am, Tuesday 4 January 2022. For large outdoor gatherings that are not music events, use of masks should be strongly encouraged, but not mandated. An exception is the Perth Cup race meeting at Ascot Racecourse on 1 January 2022, where masks should be worn both indoors and outdoors, given the large number of people anticipated to attend and the comparatively higher transmission risk amongst racegoers at such events. I also recommend that the Perth Cup event should have seated service.

This outbreak is evolving, and the public health advice needs to be responsive and adaptive. I will continue to monitor the outbreak and circumstances leading to transmission events and will re-consider the above advice should there be significant changes to the public health situation.

Yours sincerely



Dr Paul Armstrong
ACTING CHIEF HEALTH OFFICER

27 December 2021