



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 South Australia.

On 27 November 2021, I recommended that South Australia (SA) should move from the 'very low risk' category to the 'low risk' category under the WA Government's controlled border arrangements. This move was made following SA Health reporting several cases of COVID-19 in interstate visitors. The cases had occurred after the opening of SA's borders on 23 November 2021 to vaccinated interstate and international travellers, with variable need to quarantine and/or test, depending on the level of community transmission and population vaccination status of the jurisdiction in which the visitor has been. In parallel, the announcement by the World Health Organisation on 26 November 2021 of a new and possibly more transmissible Variant of Concern, the B.1.1.529 (Omicron) variant, which was rapidly spreading in southern Africa, and increasing in Europe and the Middle East, highlighted the increasing risk of maintaining a fully open border with SA.

As a consequence of SA's changed border policy, and in addition to already imported cases from Victoria and NSW, SA has now reported 18 further cases of COVID-19 in the community over the last 2 days. This includes a large outbreak of 18 cases associated with a school reunion event in Norwood on 27 November 2021. Two additional cases of COVID-19 were also reported today in interstate travellers.

From the details of this recent outbreak in SA, particularly the likely 'super-spreader' event in Norwood, further cases are expected in the coming days and the risk of transmission from SA to WA is increasing. While the 5-day rolling average is only 3.6 cases per day at present, this is only based on 2 days and will increase rapidly in coming days. There is a growing list of exposure sites on the SA Health website, which includes exposure sites in Adelaide and regional SA. Because of this incursion, SA has now instituted a new requirement for testing of all travellers from NSW on arrival to SA.

In my letter of 27 November 2021, I expressed concern that the Omicron variant may already be in Australia. There have now been 7 cases of the Omicron variant detected in travellers that had arrived in NSW and a further case in the Northern Territory. This number is expected to increase. At this stage, it is not known if any of the new SA cases are linked to this variant.

It is my advice, as Chief Health Officer, that the risk posed of travellers arriving from SA into WA has increased and SA should be moved from a 'low risk' to a 'medium risk' jurisdiction, allowing only 'approved' traveller's entry to WA and requiring travellers to self-quarantine on arrival for 14 days.

It is therefore recommended that:

- Effective from 0001 on 3 December 2021, South Australia should move from the 'Low Risk' to 'Medium Risk' category. This will mean that travellers from SA are not permitted entry unless they are fully vaccinated, and an exemption is granted.
- All exempt travellers will be required to self-quarantine for 14 days and be tested immediately (within 48 hours) and at day 12.
- As previously required, 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.
- As previously required, 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 provide further advice when it is appropriate to do so.

Yours sincerely



Dr Andy Robertson
CHIEF HEALTH OFFICER

2 December 2021