



Government of **Western Australia**  
Department of **Health**

Your Ref:  
Our Ref:  
Contact:

The Honourable Mark McGowan MLA  
Premier of Western Australia  
5 Floor Dumas House  
2 Havelock Street  
WEST PERTH WA 6005

## **CONTROLLED BORDER CONTROLS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

Dear Premier

On 17 December 2020, in response to an outbreak of COVID-19 in Northern Beaches area of Sydney, NSW, the Chief Health Officer recommended that the 'Controlled Border for Western Australia Directions' be amended to move New South Wales (NSW) from the Very Low Risk to the Low Risk category and that anyone who has arrived in Western Australia (WA) from, or through, NSW on or after 11 December 2020 needed to self-quarantine in a suitable premises as soon as possible, undertake a COVID-19 PCR test within 24 hours and then remain in self-quarantine until a negative test result was confirmed. Later that day, he recommended the controlled border arrangements be amended to move NSW from the Very Low Risk category to the Low Risk category, as of 0001 hours on 18 December 2020. All NSW travellers were then required to self-quarantine in a suitable premises for 14 days on arrival and to undertake day 11 testing.

Since that time, the outbreak in NSW has continued to expand. As of 1430 today, all reported cases had been able to be linked to several venues in the Northern Beaches area, however, the number of venues where cases had been whilst infectious has expanded markedly and are now widely dispersed throughout the Greater Sydney region. No further cases have arisen from the case who travelled from the outbreak region to Queensland.

There is still no clarity on how the infection from the putative index case, an overseas United States traveller in hotel quarantine, spread to the Northern Beaches. This means that there are cases in the chain of transmission that are unaccounted for.

Infectious disease modelling suggests there is a high likelihood that the outbreak in NSW will continue to expand. Modelling also shows that, should COVID-19 cases be imported into this state, the high level of social interaction and mobility of WA citizens means that the chance of an outbreak is high.

With regards to NSW travellers who have arrived in WA after 11 December 2020, no positive cases have arisen in those who have been tested, to date.

Given the continuing escalation of the outbreak and the absence of complete understanding of the transmission chains, the risk of importation of COVID-19 to WA is now assessed as having moved from low risk to medium risk. On these grounds, and as was discussed at the teleconference meeting at 1530 this afternoon, it is recommended that changes be made to the controlled border arrangements to move NSW from the Low Risk category to the Medium Risk category, as of 0001 hours on 20 December 2020. Travellers from NSW arriving in WA, or those who had been in NSW in the preceding 14 days, will be restricted to those who have received exemptions. Exempted travellers would be required to self-quarantine in suitable premises for 14 days and to undertake testing on arrival and on day 11.

Given the fluid nature of the NSW outbreak, I am happy to re-consider the above advice should there be significant change to the situation.

Yours sincerely



Dr Paul Armstrong  
**ACTING CHIEF HEALTH OFFICER**

19 December 2020