



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

Your Ref:
Our Ref:
Contact:

The Honourable Mark McGowan MLA
Premier of Western Australia
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COVID-19 WA ROADMAP – CONSIDERATIONS AROUND MOVING FROM PHASE 4A

Dear Premier

On 15 October 2020, the Chief Health Officer recommended that the State move to Phase 4A from 24 October 2020 for a further 2 months while the broader Australian control measures continued to be undertaken to reach the national goal of no community spread. This was the fifth recommended extension of Phase 4 from the original proposed date of 18 July 2020. Given the lower risk involved, Phase 4A allowed seated and ticketed entertainment venues, including theatres, cinemas, concert halls and similar settings, to have up to 60% capacity within the venue. This 60% capacity change was extended to places of worship after the Chief Health Officer recommended their inclusion on 29 October 2020.

It is recognised, however, that the current Phase 4A restrictions, while largely effective, have created implementation difficulties in some sectors, particularly those sectors that are lower risk because they are outdoors or involve indoor seating with limited numbers and mixing.

When Phase 5 was originally proposed, Australia was just coming out of its first wave. The second wave in Victoria and other outbreaks in New South Wales (NSW), Queensland and SA highlighted how quickly the disease can spread in a vulnerable population, even when restrictions are in place.

Current situation

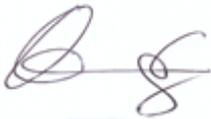
At this point, all States and Territories, apart from NSW, have been effective in reaching and maintaining the goal of no community spread. The re-introduction of COVID-19 back into the WA community from international travellers, maritime workers, or travellers from NSW could lead to substantial outbreaks that may require either delay in easing of restrictions further, or re-introduction of physical distancing and mass gathering measures. Current modelling continues to show that WA, even in

Phase 4, remains the most susceptible to a major outbreak of all the States and Territories, only just surpassed by the Northern Territory, due to the increased numbers of people moving around in our society and the mixing between non-family groups. Phase 5, which would remove the final restrictions on physical distancing and would significantly increase the numbers and mixing at high risk venues, including at nightclubs, music venues and events, is anticipated to raise that susceptibility to the highest level in Australia.

Recommendations

In summary, for the reasons outlined above, I recommend that the State remain at the current Phase 4A. I am happy to re-consider the above advice in one month when there will be better understanding of the current outbreak in NSW.

Yours sincerely



Dr Paul Armstrong
ACTING CHIEF HEALTH OFFICER

24 December 2020