



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  
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WEST PERTH WA 6005

Dear Premier

## **CONTROLLED BORDER - AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

On 27 June 2021, the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) moved from the 'very low' risk category to the 'low' risk category, based on potential for importation of COVID-19 cases from the outbreaks in New South Wales (NSW). I wrote to you on 09 July 2021, to recommend that, despite not recording any local cases, the ACT remain in the 'low' risk category, rather than move to the 'very low' risk category. At that time, NSW was experiencing a significant and ongoing outbreak of COVID-19. The NSW Government had increased restrictions across Greater Sydney, extending closer to the ACT and restrictions were also active for regional NSW, including those areas surrounding the ACT. Non-essential interstate travel was not permitted between the ACT and NSW; however, travel for working and commuting purposes was permitted. Despite these restrictions, the ACT border remained very porous, with over 50 road, rail and air routes from NSW into the ACT, and entry was very difficult to control. On this basis, I was very concerned about the potential for the importation of COVID-19 cases from NSW to the ACT.

I can now advise that the ACT recorded a new case of COVID-19 on 12 August 2021. A man in his 20's from Canberra's north tested positive to the virus, had been infectious in the community since Sunday 8 August 2021 and has visited a large number of venues. The source of the infection is currently unknown, though extensive contact tracing and genomic testing is being undertaken. Because of this contact tracing, nine close contacts were identified and tested, and three further cases have been detected. Positive sewerage samples were also reported from the northern suburbs, southern suburbs and the Civic central area.

I am confident that the ACT Government are taking all steps necessary to control and abate this risk; the ACT entered a seven-day lockdown period from 17:00 hrs (AEST) on 12 August 2021 and testing and contact tracing are ongoing. As there is an increasing number of cases from an unknown original source, it must be assumed at this stage that this outbreak is probably linked to the more transmissible Delta

(B.1.617.2) variant currently prevalent in greater Sydney and NSW regional areas and that further cases are likely to be detected in the ACT. Nearly 20 exposure sites have been identified, including high risk sites such as bars, nightclubs and gyms. On these grounds, I recommend that:

- From 00:01 hrs on Saturday 14 August 2021, ACT should move from the 'low' risk category to the 'medium' risk category. This will mean that travellers from ACT are not permitted entry unless an exemption is granted. All exempt travellers arriving from ACT will be required to be tested for COVID-19 within 48 hours of arrival and on day 12 of quarantine, or at any point when symptoms develop, and to self-quarantine in suitable accommodation for 14 days from the date they were last in ACT. As per my advice of 07 April 2021, a person, who has been in a restricted location in the 14 days before they enter WA, should be required to self-quarantine for a 14-day period from the day they left the restricted location, which includes time they have spent in a very low risk jurisdiction as long as they have spent the most recent period before coming to WA in a very low risk jurisdiction.

I will continue to monitor the situation in the ACT and am happy to re-consider the above advice should there be significant changes in the public health situation.

Yours sincerely



Dr Andrew Robertson  
**CHIEF HEALTH OFFICER**

13 August 2021