

Public health advice for high-risk settings regarding interstate and international COVID-19 outbreaks (new information in red)

Key Points

Public health updates:

- There is ongoing community transmission in Greater Sydney. [New exposure locations](#) have also been identified in Northern Territory, Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia.
- **A new Public Health Direction will come into effect on at 11:59 on 27 June 2021 requiring the wearing of fitted face coverings (masks) in certain public premises and situations, including residential aged care facilities.**
- **It is recommended that high-risk facilities implement mask-wearing requirements for staff and visitors in high risk settings as soon as possible.**
- A new COVID-19 Areas of Concern Notice came effect at 6pm on 26 June 2021 that requires anyone who has been in the Greater Sydney region, including Blue Mountains, Central Coast, and Wollongong local government areas (LGA) on or after 12:01am on 21 June 2021 to Stay At Home. **Shellharbour LGA has now been included in the Stay-at-Home requirement.**
- **Three local government areas in the Northern Territory (City of Darwin, City of Palmerston, and Litchfield) have been added to the geographical areas of risk**
- The current geographical areas of risk in Australia include:
 - Greater Metropolitan Melbourne
 - All Greater Sydney LGAs, including Blue Mountains, Central Coast, Shellharbour and Wollongong (see full list below)
 - **Northern Territory LGAs of City of Darwin, City of Palmerston and Litchfield (from 18 June)**

Advice on entry to high-risk settings:

- **Staff and visitors to high-risk settings should wear a mask while indoors within a high-risk setting.**
- Staff and visitors who have been in a geographical area of risk should not attend a high-risk setting for 14 days after leaving the affected area.
- Staff and visitors who are under a stay-at-home requirement under a Public Health Direction must not attend a high-risk setting unless it is for an approved essential purpose.
- Staff and visitors who have been to a [casual contact exposure location](#) (or equivalent) should not visit or work at a high-risk setting for 14 days after being in this location, even if they have received a negative test result.
- Staff and visitors who are in quarantine must not enter a high-risk setting.

What is the situation?

- There is COVID-19 community transmission in Greater Sydney. ACT residents are advised not to travel to Greater Sydney and surrounding regions at this time.

- A new Public Health Direction will come into effect at 11:59pm on 27 June 2021 that requires fitted face coverings (that is, a face mask) to be worn in certain public settings, including residential aged care facilities (residents are not required to wear masks).
- It is strongly recommended that high-risk settings require mask wearing for staff and visitors.
- A new COVID-19 Areas of Concern Notice came into effect at 6pm on 26 June 2021 that requires anyone who has been in the Greater Sydney region, including Blue Mountains, Central Coast and Wollongong local government areas on or after 21 June 2021 to Stay At Home. This requirement will continue until Friday 9 July 2021. Shellharbour LGA is now included in the Stay-at-Home requirement.
- Further information about the Stay-At-Home requirement, including a full list of the affected LGAs, and the list of essential reasons for leaving home can be found at: <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/updates/covid-19-areas-of-concern>.
- Greater Metropolitan Melbourne remains a geographical area of risk.
- The advice in this Chief Health Officer alert will be reviewed regularly.

Advice on entry to high-risk settings

- Staff and visitors to high-risk settings should wear a mask while indoors within a high-risk setting.
- Masks may be removed in the following circumstances (while maintaining 1.5m distance wherever possible):
 - While eating and drinking
 - While communicating with another person who is deaf or hard of hearing
 - If wearing a mask creates a risk to health and safety, or security
 - Where clear enunciation or visibility of your mouth is essential
 - Where the removal of a face mask is necessary for the provision of a good or service
- Mask-wearing is not required for:
 - Anyone aged 12 years or younger
 - Anyone with a physical or mental health illness or condition, or disability, that makes wearing a face mask unsuitable, for example, a skin condition, an intellectual disability, autism or trauma.
- Staff and visitors who have been in a geographical area of risk should not attend a high-risk setting for 14 days after leaving the affected area.
- Staff and visitors who are under a stay-at-home requirement under a Public Health Direction must not attend a high-risk setting unless it is for an approved essential purpose. Further information about the stay-at-home requirement can be found here.
- Staff and visitors who have been to a casual contact exposure location (or equivalent) should not visit or work at a high-risk setting for 14 days after being in this location, even if they have received a negative test result.
- Staff and visitors who are in quarantine must not enter a high-risk setting.
- If someone is excluded from visiting or working in a high-risk setting, they can only visit or work under the following conditions:

- If they are in quarantine under a Public Health Direction, they can only attend if they have an approved exemption from ACT Health. They will need to apply for an exemption from ACT Health by emailing COVID.Exemptions@act.gov.au. Exemptions will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.
- If they have been in a geographical area of risk, they can only visit for compassionate reasons or attend work if they are deemed essential. This should be considered by the facility, following a risk assessment.

What are the current geographical areas of risk?

Current **geographical areas of risk** are:

- **All overseas countries (excluding New Zealand)**
- **Northern Territory LGAs (from 18 June):**
 - City of Darwin
 - City of Palmerston
 - Litchfield
- **All Greater Sydney LGAs**
 - Bayside
 - Blacktown
 - Blue Mountains
 - Burwood
 - Camden
 - Campbelltown
 - Canada Bay
 - Canterbury-Bankstown
 - Central Coast
 - City of Sydney
 - Cumberland
 - Fairfield
 - Georges River
 - Hawkesbury
 - Hornsby
 - Hunters Hill
 - Inner West
 - Ku-ring-gai
 - Lane Cove
 - Liverpool
 - Mosman
 - North Sydney
 - Northern Beaches
 - Parramatta
 - Penrith
 - Randwick
 - Ryde
 - Shellharbour
 - Strathfield
 - Sutherland Shire
 - The Hills
 - Waverley
 - Willoughby
 - Wollondilly
 - Wollongong
 - Woollahra
- **Greater Metropolitan Melbourne, including the following LGAs:**
 - Banyule
 - Bayside
 - Boroondara
 - Brimbank
 - Cardinia
 - Casey
 - Darebin
 - Frankston
 - Glen Eira
 - Greater Dandenong
 - Hobsons Bay
 - Hume
 - Kingston
 - Knox
 - Manningham
 - Maribyrnong
 - Maroondah
 - Melbourne
 - Melton
 - Monash

- Moonee Valley
- Moreland
- Morning Peninsula
- Nillumbik
- Port Phillip
- Stonnington
- Whitehorse
- Whittlesea
- Wyndham
- Yarra
- Yarra Ranges

What are high-risk settings?

- A high-risk setting is defined as a setting where there are a large number of people who are vulnerable to severe disease from COVID-19 (e.g. due to age or chronic medical conditions), and/or where there is a higher risk of COVID-19 transmission due to close proximity and difficulties maintaining physical distancing.
- These high-risk settings are:
 - Hospitals
 - Residential aged care facilities
 - Correctional and detention facilities
 - Residential accommodation facilities that support people who require frequent, close personal care and who are vulnerable to severe disease

Advice for staff providing home-based aged care, disability and other support services

- **Home-based care providers and their clients should wear masks during home visits, unless they have a condition that makes mask-wearing unsuitable.**
- Staff who have been in a geographical area of risk should not provide home-based aged care, disability and other support services for 14 days since leaving these areas.
- Staff who are under a stay-at-home requirement under a Public Health Direction should not provide home-based aged care, disability or other support services unless it is for an approved essential purpose. Further information about the stay-at-home requirement can be found [here](#).
- Staff who have been to a casual contact exposure location (or equivalent) should not provide home-based aged care, disability and other support services for 14 days since being at this location.
- Staff who are in quarantine must not provide home-based aged care, disability or other support services.
- If the service deems it is essential for the staff member to continue in their role:
 - If they are in quarantine under a Public Health Direction, they will need to apply for an exemption from ACT Health by emailing COVID.Exemptions@act.gov.au.
 - If they have been in a geographical area of risk, they can only work if they are deemed essential.

- If they are subject to a stay-at-home requirement, but have not been in a geographical area of risk and are not required to quarantine, they can work for an approved essential purpose.
- If they are under a stay-at-home requirement or have been in a geographical area of risk, the staff member's manager should undertake a risk assessment to determine whether it is appropriate for the staff member to return to work. Considerations include the staff member's risk of exposure to COVID-19, duration of close physical contact with clients and client vulnerability to COVID-19. The risk assessment should be done in consultation with ACT Health. Staff who are permitted to continue providing services must wear a mask.

Advice for general practitioners and other community health practitioners

- Anyone who is in quarantine under a Public Health Direction (see above) must not work in a community health setting, unless ACT Health grants them an exemption to do so.
- GPs and other community health practitioners who have been in a geographical area of risk (see above) or are subject to a stay-at-home requirement, but who are not in quarantine under a Public Health Direction, should be particularly vigilant for symptoms of COVID-19. If symptoms develop, they should immediately self-isolate and arrange to get tested for COVID-19.

ACT Public Health Directions mandating quarantine

- Anyone who enters the ACT and has been in an overseas country in the past 14 days must quarantine until 14 days after arriving in Australia. People who have only been in New Zealand in the past 14 days are exempt from the quarantine requirement, provided they do not have any symptoms of COVID-19 and can meet the requirements of the Commonwealth government's Australian Travel Declaration.
- Anyone who is deemed a close contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case must quarantine until 14 days after their last contact with the case.
 - Some people who have attended a public location at the same time as a confirmed COVID-19 case may be designated as close contacts by health authorities. Refer to the [close contact or casual contact exposure locations](#) on the ACT websites for more information.

For more information

- Visit the Chief Health Officer alerts page: <https://www.health.act.gov.au/health-professionals/chief-health-officer-alerts>
- Visit the ACT COVID-19 webpage: <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/>
- Contact ACT Health on (02) 5124 6500.

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27 June 2021

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