

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

Key Points

Public health updates:

- **Anyone who leaves the following NSW LGAs on or after 11:59pm on Thursday 5 August 2021 and enters the ACT is required to quarantine: Coffs Harbour City Council, Shoalhaven City Council, Wingecarribee Shire Council, Dubbo Regional Council, Mid-Western Regional Council, Armidale Regional Council, Newcastle City Council, Lake Macquarie City Council, Maitland City Council, Port Stephens Council, Cessnock City Council, Dungog, Singleton Council and Muswellbrook Shire Council). More information can be found [here](#).**
- **These NSW LGAs (above) have also been added as geographical areas of risk.**
- **Anyone who leaves Victoria on or after 11:59pm on Thursday 5 August 2021 and enters the ACT is required to stay at home. More information can be found [here](#).**
- **South Australia has been removed as a geographical area of risk.**
- **[New exposure locations](#) have been identified in Queensland, New South Wales, and Victoria.**
- **Anyone who has left Greater Sydney (including Blue Mountains, Central Coast, Wollongong and Shellharbour LGAs) in the past 14 days and enters the ACT is still required to quarantine for 14 days. More information can be found [here](#).**
- **The current geographical areas of risk in Australia include:**
 - NSW LGAs (see full list below)
 - State of Victoria
 - LGAs in South East Queensland (see full list below)
- **Staff and visitors to high-risk settings should wear a mask while indoors within a high-risk setting.**

What is the situation?

- **A new cluster of COVID-19 cases has been identified in the Hunter New England Region with positive wastewater detections in many other regional areas of NSW.**
- **Information on requirements for people entering the ACT from interstate can be found [here](#).**
- Please note that the geographical area of risk (see full list below) may go further back in time and continue for longer than the stay-at-home requirement or a quarantine requirement. A geographical area of risk is generally kept in place for 14 days after the last episode of community exposure.
- Further information about the Quarantine or Stay-At-Home, including the list of essential reasons for leaving home can be found at: <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/travel/entering-the-act>
- While masks are no longer mandatory in the ACT community, it is still strongly recommended that high-risk settings require staff and visitors wear a mask while indoors within the facility.

- Staff are recommended to wear a surgical mask.
- For visitors, while wearing a surgical mask is preferable, in the context of no community transmission in the ACT, wearing a cloth mask with at least 3 layers is appropriate if they do not have access to a surgical mask.
- Further information and advice on face masks is available [here](#).
- The advice in this Chief Health Officer alert will be reviewed regularly.

Advice on entry to high-risk settings

- 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.
- It is strongly recommended that staff and visitors to high-risk settings wear a mask while indoors within the facility.
- 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 and under
 - 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.

What are the current geographical areas of risk?



Current **geographical areas of risk** are:

- **All overseas countries (excluding New Zealand)**
- **State of Victoria**
- **Queensland LGAs:**
 - City of Brisbane
 - City of Gold Coast
 - City of Ipswich
 - Lockyer Valley Regional Council
 - Logan City
 - Moreton Bay Region
 - Noosa Shire Council
 - Redland City
 - Scenic Rim Regional Council
 - Somerset Regional Council
 - Sunshine Coast Regional Council
- **NSW LGAs**
 - Armidale Regional Council
 - Bayside
 - Blacktown
 - Blue Mountains
 - Burwood
 - Camden
 - Campbelltown
 - Canada Bay
 - Canterbury-Bankstown
 - Central Coast
 - Cessnock City Council
 - City of Sydney
 - Coffs Harbour City Council
 - Cumberland
 - Dubbo Regional Council
 - Dungog Shire Council
 - Fairfield
 - Georges River
 - Hawkesbury
 - Hornsby
 - Hunters Hill
 - Inner West
 - Ku-ring-gai
 - Lake Macquarie City Council
 - Lane Cove
 - Liverpool
 - Maitland City Council
 - Mid-Western Regional Council
 - Mosman
 - Muswellbrook Shire Council
 - Newcastle City Council
 - North Sydney
 - Northern Beaches
 - Parramatta
 - Penrith
 - Port Stephens Council
 - Randwick
 - Ryde
 - Shellharbour
 - Shoalhaven City Council
 - Singleton Council
 - Strathfield
 - Sutherland Shire
 - The Hills
 - Waverley
 - Willoughby
 - Wingecarribee Shire Council
 - Wollondilly
 - Wollongong
 - Woollahra

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 should wear a surgical mask during home visits.
- Clients should consider wearing a mask during home visits if they are able to. A surgical mask is preferable, however in the context of no community transmission in the ACT, a cloth mask with at least 3 layers is appropriate if a surgical mask is not accessible.
- 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.
- Anyone who has been in a COVID-19 affected area is required to quarantine.

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.

Dr Miranda Harris
For Dr. Vanessa Johnston
5 August 2021

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