**This is our WA COVID-19 update for Monday 16th March 2020.**
Today's update includes information about 10 new cases, the declaration of a State Emergency, enforcement of self-isolation and updated hygiene advice.

Our regular public updates include up-to-date information, current advice and tips on how to better protect yourself.

It is important people are well informed on the virus, so as new information or advice becomes available we will share it.

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**- Current cases -**
With over 450 additional tests completed since yesterday's update, there have been 10 additional cases of COVID-19 detected in Western Australia.

Nine of these cases involve people who have recently returned from overseas, while the movements of the tenth are still being confirmed. Countries from which the cases had traveled were the UK, USA, Hawaii, Canada and Germany (via Doha). All new cases are located in the Perth metropolitan area.

One of these new cases is in isolation at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital in a serious but stable condition.

We’ve now completed almost 5,900 tests in Western Australia and uncovered 28 cases, the remaining tests all returning negative results.

25 of the cases relate to people travelling outside the State, while two cases contracted the virus from family members who have recently been overseas. We are awaiting confirmation of the movements of one of the most recent cases.

One patient, who was in a stable condition in hospital with COVID-19, has been discharged and has now fully recovered.

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**- National Response -**
As of today, anyone arriving in Australia from overseas will to be forced to self-isolate for 14 days.

International cruise ships will also be banned from docking in Australia for at least 30 days.

Non-essential, organised gatherings of 500 or more people are banned. This applies to both indoor and outdoor events.

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**- State Emergency Declaration -**
A State of Emergency and a Public Health Emergency has been declared for Western Australia.

These declarations provide the State Government, the WA Police Force and the Chief Health Officer with the powers and flexibility they need to enforce quarantine and self-isolation measures, as was agreed at the National Cabinet meeting between the Prime Minister, State Premiers and Chief Ministers.

We will be using powers under the Public Health Act and Emergency Management Act to enforce the new rules regarding self-isolation of travellers, cruise ships and organised gatherings.

Penalties of up to $50,000 will apply.

As of 9pm last night, anyone entering or returning to Australia from overseas are required to self-isolate for 14 days after arrival.

They are required to go straight to their home or accommodation and remain there for the full 14 day period, with the exception of seeking medical assistance if necessary.

Western Australians who are aware of someone breaching a requirement to self-isolate - please contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or WA Police on 131 444.

These are precautionary steps in the best interests of our community.

The decision does not mean schools, universities, public transport or airports will need to close.

Our State pandemic plan outlines options that can be exercised - should we need to go down that path.

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**- Testing and COVID clinics -**
Due to a national shortage and high-demand for testing, we've adjusted the requirements to be tested for COVID-19 at this time - which will bring Western Australia in line with other Australian jurisdictions.

This is due to a global shortage of the chemical reagent required for laboratory testing and follows deliberations at the Council of Australian Governments meeting.

This new testing criteria will ensure testing of high-risk patients can occur at the height of the expected pandemic.

Effective immediately, COVID-19 testing in WA will only be available to individuals who:

1. Have fever (temperature of 37.5 deg or above) or respiratory illness AND

2. Can provide evidence of recent overseas travel (for example, airline ticket or passport stamp) OR have had close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case.

All COVID-19 testing in the metropolitan area will be performed only at the three COVID clinics, which are operational between the hours of 8am-8pm, 7 days a week.

They are based at Royal Perth Hospital (Ground Floor, Ainslie House, 48 Murray Street), Fiona Stanley Hospital (Allied Health 2, Gymnasiums, East End, Bedbrook Row) and Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital (C Block, Hospital Avenue).

In regional areas, people should go to a public hospital, health service or remote health clinic.

Patients at COVID clinics are required to bring proof of recent travel or identify the confirmed case they have been in contact with.

The criteria for testing will be updated according to changes in the disease pattern in WA.

Patients will be screened and where appropriate tested, provided with appropriate information and referred for further medical treatment if necessary. If people do not meet the criteria they will not be tested.

Those individuals who are tested and well enough, will be asked to self-isolate while they await test results.

Anyone who is confirmed to have coronavirus, who does not require hospitalisation will be asked to stay in home isolation as instructed by the public health team.

It is also extremely important that people who are unwell and are concerned they have COVID-19 should immediately self-isolate and then seek further medical advice.

More locations for COVID clinics across the metropolitan area and in regional WA will be considered if there is a need to meet future or increased demand.

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We are preparing and taking every precaution to protect Western Australia from COVID-19.

The Western Australian health system and our hospitals are very well prepared to manage infectious disease situations and have well established systems and processes in place.

The WA Government’s Pandemic Plan has been updated to respond to COVID-19, and it is now publically available. You can see the plan for yourself at <https://www.wa.gov.au/covid19> under WA Government Response.

The State Government is taking this very seriously – and we need to be prepared for a pandemic. Every action we take and decision we make is to protect Western Australians.

We have already taken action with a suite of measures to prepare the State for the possibility of a pandemic.

Western Australians should be going about their business as usual. It is important that we remain calm and use common sense.

The best thing we can do to protect ourselves is quality personal hygiene and avoiding unnecessary personal contact.

That includes covering coughs and sneezes, washing hands often with soap or sanitiser, staying home from work or school if unwell, avoiding shaking hands or hugging, and maintaining distance from others in public.

Please also continue to follow the advice of authorities and doctors - anyone who is instructed to self-isolate must take the request seriously, stay home and not put others at risk. This means you don’t leave your property, you don’t go to work or school, you don’t go on outings and you don’t have visitors - only leave the house to seek medical attention.

People simply need to be aware, observe good health and make sure they have accurate information, from credible sources.

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Official information regarding COVID-19 in Western Australia - [www.wa.gov.au/covid19](http://www.wa.gov.au/covid19)

WA Department of Health information – [www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/coronavirus](http://www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/coronavirus)

Coronavirus information hotline – 1800 020 080

Smartraveller – information regarding travel advice for Australians - [www.smartraveller.gov.au](http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/)