




100
Social gatherings increase from 20 people to 100 people



Pubs and bars may now serve alcohol without the provision of a meal



Food markets and similar community activities to re-open


Contact sports including football, rugby and soccer can recommence


Measures require continued compliance to physical distancing and personal hygiene:


 1.5m
Physical distancing adjusted to 2m² per person (indoors)


 Maintaining of hygiene practice such as washing hands, covering mouth/nose when sneezing or coughing

 Downloading the COVIDSafe app where possible

Other Compliance requirements:

 All businesses and venues to submit an IOT COVID-19 Safety Plan for approval by the Territory Controller on CI, and the Shire on the Cocos (Keeling) Islands.

 Community members support businesses and venues by providing their contact details upon entering the premises, to support contact tracing if and when required.

 Quarantine requirements to remain in place for all approved residents, essential staff and others as determined by the Territory Controller travelling into the IOT.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Does the IOT Health Service have a COVID-19 Management Plan?

The Indian Ocean Territories Health Service (IOTHS) has a COVID-19 escalation plan which is based on WA Health protocols and the IOTHS Clinical Services Capability Framework. It is updated based on regular communication with WA Health and the federal Department of Health.

It is a comprehensive plan including:

- triage, assessment and risk considerations
- testing and notification to WA Public Health Unit
- risk based treatment options where the treating doctor will determine the most appropriate option for treatment depending on client risk factors
 - Mild - Home isolation (+/- daily community health nurse visit)
 - Moderate - In patient admission to the Hospital for symptom management, isolation and monitoring
 - Severe - Medical evacuation to Perth
- community nurse protocols for home visits
- isolation in hospital procedures for staff, visitors and other admitted patients
- medical evacuation activation
- external resource activation measures through WA Public Health and the Department of Health



- risk mitigation measures such as airport screening and our PPE stocks for health service staff.
- processes for community notifications

This plan is supported by detailed clinical documentation.

The escalation plan is available on the Department's website.

Should we maintain the 14-day quarantine of all persons arriving on island – including inter-island travellers?

The restrictions and measures in place in the IOT are based on national protocols and WA guidelines. These are all carefully considered in the local context and appropriately applied for the IOT.

IOTHS Chief Medical Officer has provided advice to support the adjustment to restrictions to allow inter-island travel. The Australian Government's Deputy Chief Medical Officer has also agreed there is no concern with inter-island travel.

This advice is based on the following considerations:

- The risk is very low and manageable
- The benefits for both communities if controlled travel between them is allowed
- Nationally low numbers of active cases (less than 600 as at 20 May 2020, including very low numbers in WA (3 active cases in WA as at 20 May 2020)
- Screening processes in place for VARA flight crew
- Very low numbers of passengers from the mainland (averaging less than 10) on the bi-weekly flights.
- The strict border controls in place for IOT which commenced in March 2020 (which at this point are recommended to continue and underpin this recommendation for inter-island adjustment), which include the 14-day quarantine period for mainland arrivals.
- No confirmed COVID-19 cases on either Christmas Island or the Cocos (Keeling) Islands.

Precautionary measures recommended that inter-island passengers wear a surgical mask on the plane, be seated separately from mainland passengers and be processed separately from mainland passengers, where possible.

The restrictions and advice will be revised as needed if circumstances change (for instance, if a confirmed COVID-19 case was found in IOT).

All adjustment recommendations include social distancing, hand washing and hygiene requirements.

Should we test all persons arriving in the IOTs?

Australia's Chief Medical Officer Dr Brendan Murphy has addressed the issue of testing of returning travellers and quarantine periods. He has made it clear that people cannot test their way out of quarantine.

No amount of testing can obviate the need for quarantine, if someone is a returning traveller and a quarantine requirement is in place. A test being done would only show if someone were positive on that day – not if they may be incubating the virus. Testing does not change quarantine requirements and periods.



(May 15 press conference: <https://www.pm.gov.au/media/press-conference-australian-parliament-house-act-17>)

Testing by IOTHS is being conducted in accordance with WA Health testing protocols.

How is testing done?

The Indian Ocean Territories Health Service (IOTHS) testing process is aligned to the WA Public Health unit and the policies and directions of our assigned Infectious Disease consultant doctor and specialist. We are in frequent communication with this unit around individual cases, policy decisions, treatment and testing pathways for all notifiable diseases, including COVID-19.

When testing first commenced in Australia for COVID-19, there were a number of restrictions on testing to ensure that only those at most risk were tested. Over time, the restrictions have eased and now anyone displaying a cough or sore throat or exhibiting breathing problems or a fever are eligible for a test, at the discretion of the treating health professional. Anyone with these symptoms should contact the Health Service to arrange an appointment.

At this stage, there are no plans for community-wide testing by the WA Public Health unit.

The federal Department of Health is working on the strategy for testing and equipment provision to priority areas of need, which will include consideration of Australia's external territories.

From a community risk perspective, the 14-day isolation is the most effective means of limiting community transmission based on what we know about this particular virus, its transmission, incubation period and symptoms.

How can we relax restrictions?

Restaurants and pubs

Health advice has been provided to the Territory Controllers on all restrictions and stages.

Territory Controllers are engaging with local businesses, facilities and community groups to ensure preparedness and compliance with requirements, in line with national protocols.

This will include COVID-19 safety plans being introduced, which will include relevant sector restrictions and requirements and staff support and training. The safety plans will be based on the national approach and the WA COVID Safety Plans, tailored to the local IOT context.

Businesses and facilities will be supported to develop and implement their safety plans and protect the community and themselves. As local government has a role in public health, a part of which is regulating food safety in food service businesses, the Territory Controllers will be engaging with the Shires to support this process as it is implemented.

Social distancing

Health advice has been provided to the Territory Controllers on all restrictions and stages, in line with national protocols and WA guidelines as relevant. The IOT is aligned to national advice on social distancing, relevant to remote communities, including risk factors in various settings.



The IOT arrangements are guided by the National Cabinet three-step framework for the easing of COVID-19 restrictions.

- Under the three-step plan, jurisdictions continue to make decisions based on their individual circumstances and local conditions. Jurisdictions may ease restrictions at different paces.
- For more information, see the [Roadmap to a COVIDSafe Australia](#), as well as the [three-step framework](#).

The IOT is also being informed by the [WA roadmap](#).

Social distancing (1.5m space being maintained between people), hygiene measures and regular handwashing are requirements for all stages. The advice is documented in regular community bulletins from the Administrator and Territory Controllers.

Where can I get information and education about COVID-19?

There have been regular communications through a wide range of channels to the IOT communities about protective health measures and social distancing practices.

Communications have included the use of infographics to support health messaging.

There is also signage in the hospital, health clinics and other community locations.

This is all supported by the Australian Government's national COVID-19 public information campaign on hygiene and social distancing practices for the community (which includes print, TV, online, digital)

Feedback to health staff is that the community has a good understanding of the measures they need to take. The health service is happy to provide further information sessions to interested groups as requested. Translation can be arranged if required.

Can we re-open the IOTs to visitors

The remote location of the IOT and its limited health facilities, makes our communities more vulnerable to the virus. The hard border closure and 14-day quarantine period for arrivals are frontline protection measures. Adjustment of internal restrictions depends on maintenance of these measures.