

Contact: Health Emergency Coordination Centre
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File: D21/92811
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Subject: Reconnecting Tasmania and our transition to living in a COVID-19 vaccinated community

On 15 December, the Tasmanian Government's Reconnecting Tasmania plan will allow our borders to reopen safely to travellers, while ensuring we have measures in place to be COVID safe.

Tasmania's health system is well prepared for an outbreak of COVID-19 and we are ready to act quickly to limit the spread of the virus.

A significant amount of work has occurred over the past 12 months to ensure our hospitals are ready. This has included increasing our public bed capacity by 152 new beds by the end of this year and hiring an additional 840 FTE staff since July 2020.

In addition, we now have two operational Community Case Management Facilities in Tasmania, the Fountainside in Hobart with 50 beds, and the Coach House in Launceston with 25 beds. A third Community Case Management Facility in the North West will be operational in the coming weeks. Further details on our hospital preparedness are available here:

<https://www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/transition-plan/transition-plan-resources>

In Tasmania, our high rates of vaccination will mean that people who test positive for COVID-19 are most likely to only experience mild symptoms and recover. This means people can be safely treated in their home without requiring hospitalisation. The Department of Health, along with key stakeholders, is finalising the COVID@home program, which will provide the appropriate care within the home and keep people safe when they are COVID positive.

The program will be available to people who have tested positive to COVID-19 and are suitable for care in the home environment. The program will be available state-wide, including in regional and rural areas of Tasmania. I look forward to sharing further details about this program as we finalise these arrangements. For more information about the program, click here: <https://www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/families-community/covidathome-program>

I recognise that many health and medical organisations have questions about what they should be doing to ensure they are prepared, and what they should expect as we begin this transition from 15 December.

Being prepared for cases or an outbreak of COVID-19 will help you to respond well and quickly and minimise disruption to normal services and activities. I encourage all organisations to review their COVID-19 Safety Plans and Outbreak Management Plans in advance of the borders reopening.

The <https://www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/> website is being regularly updated with information and guidance from Public Health, including information for organisations and business at www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/businessresponse.

If you have any general queries, please contact the Department of Health Emergency Coordination Centre at covid19@health.tas.gov.au and for any questions related to COVID@home, please contact covidathome@health.tas.gov.au

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kathrine Morgan-Wicks', written in a cursive style.

Kathrine Morgan-Wicks
State Health Commander

28 November 2021