

1. Background

One case of confirmed respiratory diphtheria was notified on 9 April 2026 in an Aboriginal teenage female who resides in remote South Australia. On 16 April 2026, a second case of respiratory diphtheria was notified in an Aboriginal teenage male who also resides in remote South Australia.

As of 5 May 2026, there have been increased diphtheria cases reported to the [NNDSS dashboard](#) in the Northern Territory (n = 103) and Western Australia (n = 55) in 2026. Cases primarily have been reported from regional and remote areas and most cases identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

2. EPIDEMIOLOGY SUMMARY

Outbreak case definition: Any person notified with Australian-acquired confirmed diphtheria in South Australia since 9 April 2026.

Confirmed and probable case definitions as per [CDNA national surveillance case definition](#).

There have been 4 cases of diphtheria that meet the outbreak case definition. Outbreak cases have been notified between 09/04/2026 and 28/04/2026. There is 1 male and 3 females included in the outbreak with a median age of 16 years (range: 7 years - 40 years). Of the outbreak cases, 3 have respiratory disease and 1 has cutaneous disease.

All cases identify as Aboriginal and reside in the far north of South Australia. The cases were vaccinated to age and one case was a known contact of a confirmed case. No cases have been hospitalised or required diphtheria antitoxin.

One isolate has undergone Whole Genome Sequencing (WGS) and the South Australian isolate is clustered with isolates from the Northern Territory, Western Australia and Queensland.

Figure 1: Epidemic curve of diphtheria outbreak cases, by notification date, SA, 9/04/2026 to 4/05/2026

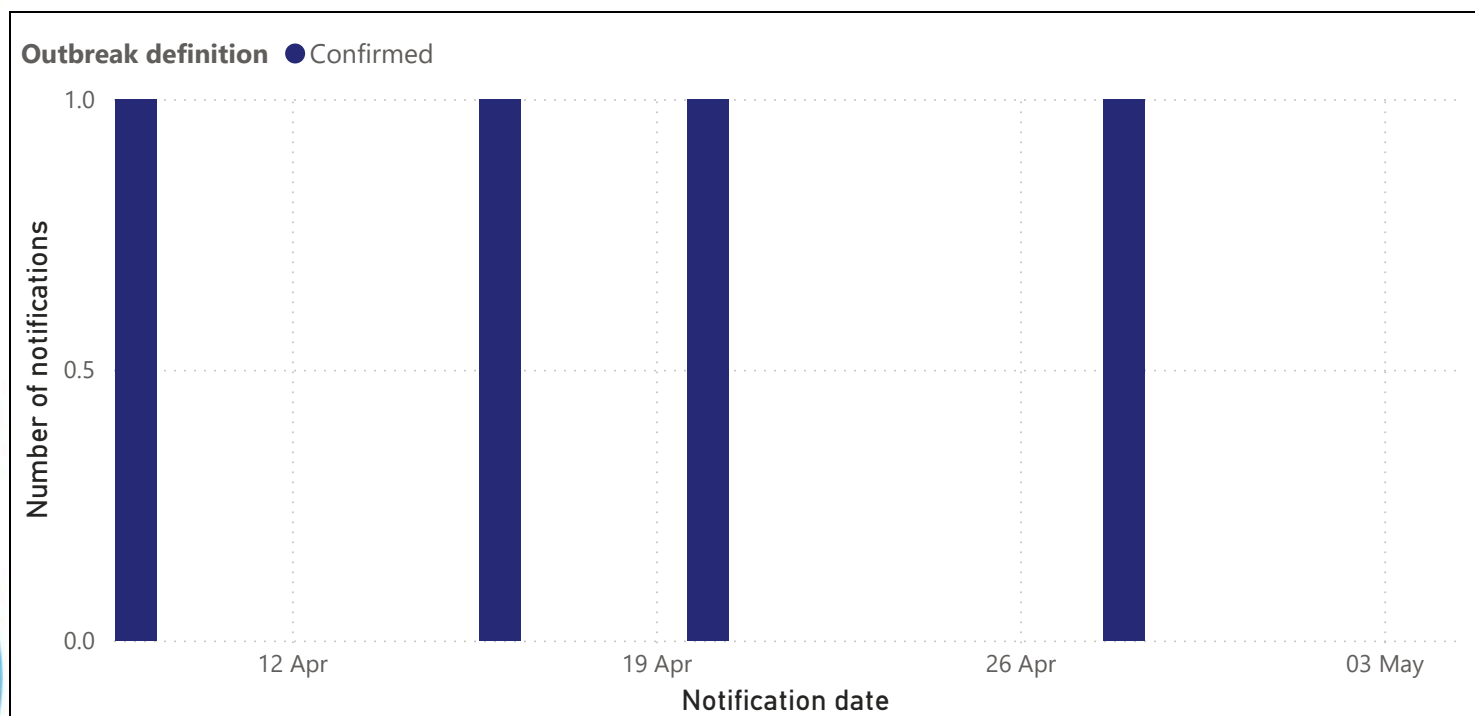


Table 1: Diphtheria outbreak cases, by demographic, South Australia, 9/04/2026 to 4/05/2026 (n = 4)

<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Sex</th> <th>Confirmed</th> <th>Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Female</td> <td>3</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Male</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Sex	Confirmed	Total	Female	3	3	Male	1	1	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Type</th> <th>Confirmed</th> <th>Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Cutaneous</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Respiratory</td> <td>3</td> <td>3</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Type	Confirmed	Total	Cutaneous	1	1	Respiratory	3	3															
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*Based on Accessibility and Remoteness Index of Australia 2016

EFNLHN - Eyre and Far North Local Health Network

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