

1. Background

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

As of 19 May 2026, there have been increased diphtheria cases reported to the [NNDSS dashboard](#) in the Northern Territory (n = 133) and Western Australia (n = 79) 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.

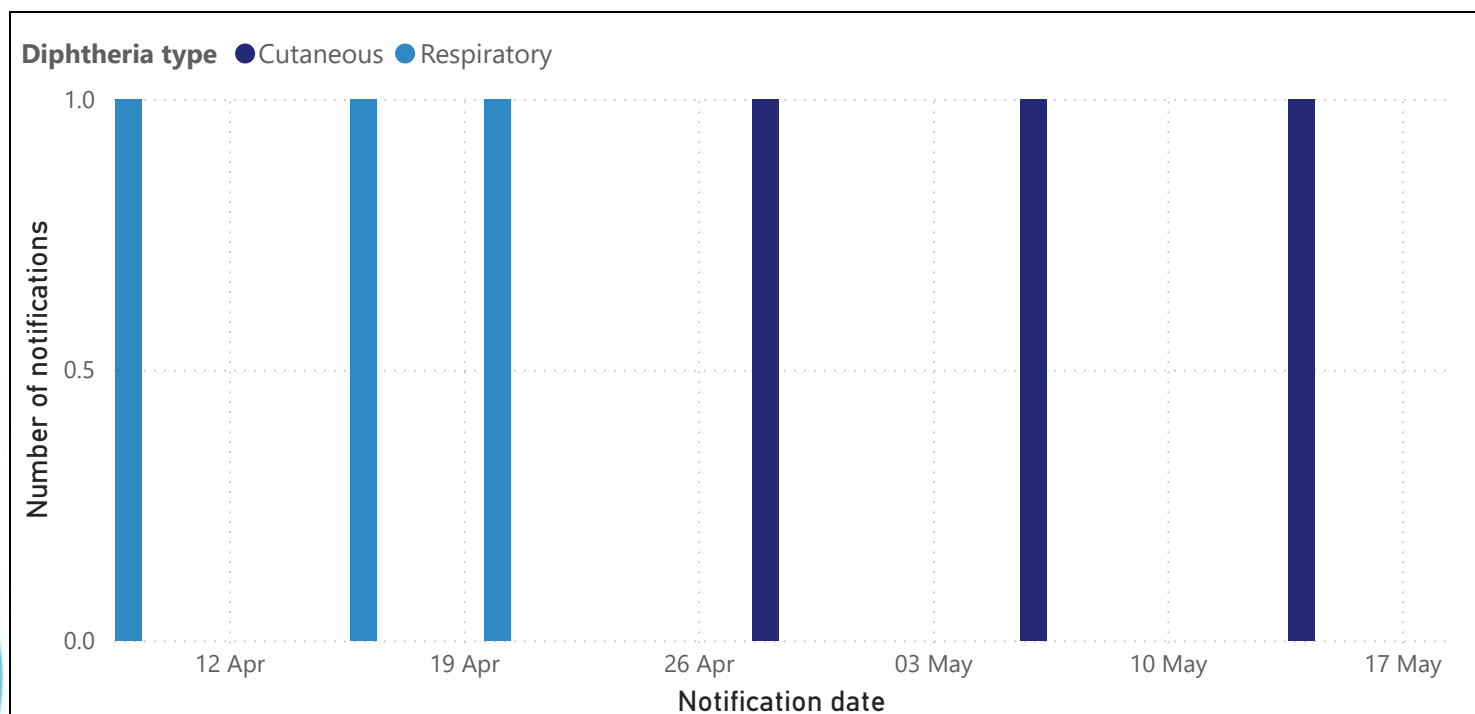
Confirmed and probable case definitions as per [CDNA national surveillance case definition](#).

There have been 6 cases of diphtheria that meet the outbreak case definition. Outbreak cases have been notified between 09/04/2026 and 14/05/2026. There is 1 male and 5 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 3 has cutaneous disease.

All cases identify as Aboriginal and reside in the far north west 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 diphtheria type and notification date, SA, 9/04/2026 to 18/05/2026



Diphtheria in South Australia

Epidemiological Report

Data as of 18/05/2026

Issued at: 19/05/2026



Table 1: Diphtheria outbreak cases, by demographic, South Australia, 9/04/2026 to 18/05/2026 (n = 6)

| <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Sex</th> <th>Confirmed</th> <th>Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Female</td> <td>5</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Male</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Sex | Confirmed | Total | Female | 5 | 5 | 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>3</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Respiratory</td> <td>3</td> <td>3</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Type | Confirmed | Total | Cutaneous | 3 | 3 | Respiratory | 3 | 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|----------------------|-----------|-------|--------------|---|---|--|-----------|-----------|--|------|-----------|---------|-----------|---|--|---------------|-----------|-------|-----|---|-------|---------|---|-----|----|---|--|--------------------|-----------|-------|-----------------|---|---|
| Sex | Confirmed | Total | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Female | 5 | 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Type | Confirmed | Total | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cutaneous | 3 | 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Respiratory | 3 | 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Age group (years)</th> <th>Confirmed</th> <th>Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>00-04</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>05-09</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10-14</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>15-19</td> <td>3</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>20-34</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>35-49</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>50-64</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>65+</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Age group (years) | Confirmed | Total | 00-04 | | | 05-09 | 2 | 2 | 10-14 | | | 15-19 | 3 | 3 | 20-34 | | | 35-49 | 1 | 1 | 50-64 | | | 65+ | | | <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Vaccination status</th> <th>Confirmed</th> <th>Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Age-appropriate</td> <td>6</td> <td>6</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Vaccination status | Confirmed | Total | Age-appropriate | 6 | 6 |
| Age group (years) | Confirmed | Total | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 00-04 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 05-09 | 2 | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10-14 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15-19 | 3 | 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 20-34 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 35-49 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 50-64 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 65+ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Vaccination status | Confirmed | Total | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Age-appropriate | 6 | 6 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Aboriginal status</th> <th>Confirmed</th> <th>Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>6</td> <td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not stated</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Unknown</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Aboriginal status | Confirmed | Total | Yes | 6 | 6 | No | | | Not stated | | | Unknown | | | <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Known contact</th> <th>Confirmed</th> <th>Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Unknown</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>4</td> <td>4</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Known contact | Confirmed | Total | Yes | 1 | 1 | Unknown | 1 | 1 | No | 4 | 4 | | | | | | |
| Aboriginal status | Confirmed | Total | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Yes | 6 | 6 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| No | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Not stated | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Unknown | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Known contact | Confirmed | Total | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Yes | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Unknown | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| No | 4 | 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Remoteness areas*</th> <th>Confirmed</th> <th>Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Major Cities</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Regional</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Remote</td> <td>6</td> <td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Unknown</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Remoteness areas* | Confirmed | Total | Major Cities | | | Regional | | | Remote | 6 | 6 | Unknown | | | <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Hospitalised</th> <th>Confirmed</th> <th>Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>6</td> <td>6</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Hospitalised | Confirmed | Total | No | 6 | 6 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Remoteness areas* | Confirmed | Total | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Major Cities | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Regional | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Remote | 6 | 6 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Unknown | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Hospitalised | Confirmed | Total | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| No | 6 | 6 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Local Health Network</th> <th>Confirmed</th> <th>Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>EFNLHN</td> <td>6</td> <td>6</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Local Health Network | Confirmed | Total | EFNLHN | 6 | 6 | <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Antitoxin</th> <th>Confirmed</th> <th>Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>6</td> <td>6</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Antitoxin | Confirmed | Total | No | 6 | 6 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Local Health Network | Confirmed | Total | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| EFNLHN | 6 | 6 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Antitoxin | Confirmed | Total | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| No | 6 | 6 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

*Based on Accessibility and Remoteness Index of Australia 2016. Regional includes inner and outer regional areas and remote includes remote and very remote areas.

EFNLHN - Eyre and Far North Local Health Network

Hospitalised = hospitalisation for the notifiable condition