

# The West Australian

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Countryman News WA News

 **EXCLUSIVE**


## Proposed 12-month pilot program reveals new use for \$200m COVID quarantine facility in Bullsbrook

**Peter Law** The West Australian

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Peter Law



 The COVID quarantine facility in Perth's north would be used for short-term accommodation for interstate and overseas workers – as well as their families under a proposed 12-month pilot program. Credit: Michael Wilson/The West Australian



The COVID quarantine facility in Perth's north would be used for short-term accommodation for interstate and overseas workers – as well as their families – under a proposed 12-month pilot program.

The Department of Training and Workforce Development is seeking feedback from industries hit by the worker shortage about the idea with the compound set to be operational from September.

A department document states the Centre for National Resilience in Bullsbrook, which cost the Commonwealth \$200 million to build, is comprised of two “villages” of about 250 beds each.

It has a mix of accommodation for singles, couples and families, with each room equipped with a TV, internet, kitchenette including microwave, oven and bar fridge, ensuite bathroom and a small balcony.

WHITE ELEPHANT

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Rebecca Le May

There’s also a central kitchen, laundry and outdoor barbecue area, as well as about 400 car bays, but no direct public transport.

Under the pilot, 250 beds would be made available to house interstate and overseas workers “and their accompanying family members” for up to 12 weeks, until they are able to secure alternative housing.

Employers would need to provide an employment contract as proof their worker has income for at least six months and be expected to help them find suitable accommodation by the end of their stay.



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An operator would handle bookings, cleaning, laundry, portering, waste removal, security and maintenance. A shuttle service to a public transport hub or direct to a work site may also be provided.





 The COVID quarantine facility in Perth's north. Credit: Michael Wilson/The West Australian

Accommodation and services at the centre would be free of charge for the workers, while employers would pay about \$100 per single room or \$200 per family room per night.

This would cover accommodation, one meal a day, weekly linen and towel change and cleaning and waste removal.

An alternative use for the facility had to be found because construction was only completed after the interstate and national borders were reopened.

**OPINION** JOE SPAGNOLO 

### Useless \$200m quarantine facility could cost us all dearly

Joe Spagnolo

Mark McGowan flagged the idea on The West Live with Ben O'Shea before his recent Europe visit. The Premier's office on Tuesday said: "The State Government is consulting industry and will make a decision in due course."

VegetablesWA acting chief executive Marnus Stockdale said any attempt to ease the worker shortage was welcome and it may be an attractive option for growers in Perth's north.

WAFarmers chief executive Trevor Whittington said the location near Perth meant it would not fix the significant lack of labour and accommodation in the regions.

"The government has a \$200m white elephant on its hands so now we have no workers where there are jobs and beds where they are not needed, its Yes Minister at its best," he said.