

General remote travel information

Many communities have called for tighter restrictions on people visiting remote communities due to their vulnerability and we ask you to respect this.

What do the restrictions on remote travel mean for me?

Remote communities in the Northern Territory have been closed to all non-essential travel in response to concerns about the spread of COVID-19.

What is defined as essential travel?

Essential travel in this case is defined as only the functions that are necessary to keep the community operating. For example, doctors, nurses, teachers, police officers and council workers will not be affected by the ban. Deliveries to remote communities by barge, road or air are generally considered essential services for now.

Contractors who are already building essential community infrastructure such as housing will be able to continue that work, but no new building teams will be allowed. Contractors will be directed to observe safety precautions to prevent the risk of transmission and contractors should take necessary steps to minimise contact with community residents.

In most cases no new building contractor teams will be allowed to enter a remote community. Contracts will continue to go through the procurement process but no new awarded contracts will be able to start mobilisation into communities.

If you are unsure of whether you should travel to remote communities ring the remote travel hotline on 1800 518 189. If they cannot respond to your query immediately, they will follow it up and get back to you.

Who makes the decision about whether to cancel my travel?

In the first instance you should speak to your employer if you are planning to travel or return to a remote community.

Some of this will be considered case by case or community by community. We may need to take your name and number and return your call if we cannot provide you with enough information now.

What if I already have a permit for remote travel?

Land Councils say that all existing permits to Aboriginal communities for non-essential travel will be suspended and no new permits will be granted until further notice. People who provide essential services to the community, including doctors, nurses, teachers, police officers and council workers will not be affected by the ban.

What about fishing in remote areas?

Generally the test is whether you need an Aboriginal land permit, plan to stop at a remote community to support your fishing activities, or pass through a remote community to get to your fishing activities. If you have to do either of these things, you won't receive a permit.

If you have booked with a Fishing Tour Operator (fishing lodge), where you might fly into a region, you need to confirm your booking with the provider.

If you are travelling to a site, for example Shady Camp or Corroboree, without needing to go through a remote community (or requiring a Permit), you should be able to continue with your plans. This also includes fishing in Darwin Harbour, Bynoe Harbour, Cox Peninsular, Dundee, Channel Point, Shoal Bay, Leeders Creek, Adelaide River (mouth) and Daly River (as long as you're not crossing through a community or over Aboriginal land). If in doubt, check with the relevant Land Council.

(DCM/hotline staff only) For any additional information required to answer queries, contact the relevant Land Council:

- NLC: reception@nlc.org.au
- CLC: permits@clc.org.au

(we are still working on contacts from TILC and ALC.)

Does this apply to significant family events?

Any event which involves a number of people collecting together in a confined area for an extended period of time should discuss with local community leaders and councils about how this takes place.

People are being asked to consider whether funerals or weddings can be delayed.

Are the requirements likely to change?

Yes, the clinical situation is constantly changing and the National/Territory actions are likely to continue to change in response as is required.

Towns are open and not subject to permit arrangements.

Batchelor, Jabiru, Adelaide River, Pine Creek, Katherine, Mataranka, Timber Creek, Mataranka, Larrimah, Daly Waters, Borroloola, Newcastle Waters, Elliott, Tennant Creek, Ti Tree, Alice Springs, Yulara and Nhulunbuy. Please note this advice is subject to change in the future.

Are the Tiwi Islands Restricted?

A Restriction of Entry for the Tiwi Islands has been issued from 18 March 2020 and will remain in place until further notice.

At the direction of the Tiwi Land Council, the Chief Executive Officer, Mr Andrew Tipungwuti, has determined that, in response to the COVID-19 Coronavirus threat, **all existing non-essential permits to the land and seas within the Tiwi Aboriginal Land Trust region are revoked and no new non-essential permits will be granted until further notice.**

The revocation of permits applies to all areas across Bathurst and Melville Islands administered in the Tiwi Land Trust region and includes public access to homelands and the Tiwi College at Pickataramoor.

Exemptions for all areas apply to Tiwi Island families and other residents of the communities returning home; personnel delivering emergency and essential services, and to other personnel to ensure business continuity of existing service delivery who are not demonstrating any health issues.

Other exemptions will be determined by the Tiwi Land Council and the Executive Director of Township Leasing on a case by case basis.