

## MEASURES TO PREVENT COVID-19 FROM ENTERING THE EAST ARNHEM REGION

### Travel Restrictions

Measures introduced by Land Councils, the Northern Territory and Commonwealth Governments to prevent COVID-19 from entering East Arnhem appear to be working. There are no known cases in the East Arnhem region.

The reason these measures have been effective to date is due in large part to the efforts of local residents, businesses and [essential workers](#) coming to the East Arnhem region to abide by travel restrictions and [quarantine requirements](#) and staying where they are wherever possible. Thank you for your collective efforts to keep everyone in the region safe!

Whilst Yolngu residents of remote communities and approved essential workers (with Land Council permits) are able to travel between communities, homelands and Nhulunbuy, all residents are strongly urged to stay in their community and within the East Arnhem designated biosecurity area.

### Compliance

Another reason that measures to prevent COVID-19 entering East Arnhem have been successful to date is that NT Police officers have been actively supporting compliance with both travel restrictions and quarantine requirements.

Over the past week, additional police officers have been deployed across the East Arnhem region (including to Milingimbi, Galiwin'ku and Nhulunbuy) to assist in these efforts, ensure that all remote stations throughout the region are staffed full time, and to allow local officers to take some time out to be with their families and get some rest.

As we mentioned prior to Easter, a small number of Australian Defence Force (ADF) members have also been deployed to Nhulunbuy. These ADF members are working closely with local police in the COVID-19 response, in particular working to monitor the compliance with the biosecurity area on the roads, the Gove Port and coastlines and entry via the roads.

If you have any concerns that someone is not complying with quarantine and isolation requirements, please call NT Police on 131 444.

## ACTIONS BEING TAKEN NOW SO WE CAN CONTAIN THE SPREAD OF COVID-19 IF IT DOES ARRIVE

### Point-of-care testing

Following an announcement from the Australian Government, in the coming weeks, point-of-care testing will be rolled out at health services across the region to help detect COVID-19.

Point-of-care testing will allow medical professionals to rapidly test and deliver results, without the need to send tests away for analysis, which can take a number of days. This news means that cases of COVID-19 can be quickly detected to allow contact tracing to occur so that we can contain the virus from spreading.

## Restrictions to support physical distancing practices

### Physical distancing requirements

Territorians have been doing a great job of following physical distancing requirements. [Officials have today spoken about the preparation and planning that they have been able to do](#) as a result of the commitment of Territorians to these rules.

For the safety all people throughout East Arnhem, Northern Territory Police are currently enforcing a limit on [gatherings](#) to 10 people and making sure compliance with the other Chief Health Officer directions.

Sporting and other outdoor activities are limited to 2 people (except where the people usually live together in the same household). In all cases, physical distancing is required. Everyone must follow this advice.

Talk to your local Police if you are not sure about what is allowed.

### Weddings and funerals

In addition to requirements for general gatherings, the Chief Health Officer has provided specific directions regarding weddings and funerals:

- Weddings must not have more than 5 people present (**including** the celebrant)
- Funerals must not more than 10 people present (**excluding** those who are necessary for the conduct of the funeral).

It is now possible to apply to the Chief Health Officer for an exemption to organise or attend a wedding with more than 5 people present, or a funeral with more than 10 people present. For consideration of an exemption relating to the limited numbers permitted at weddings and funerals email [chiefhealthofficer.doh@nt.gov.au](mailto:chiefhealthofficer.doh@nt.gov.au).

While there is currently no official information available about what should be included in an application for an exemption, we expect it will be necessary to demonstrate that effective physical distancing and other safety measures will be in place.

The Department of the Chief Minister's office in Nhulunbuy is seeking more information about how to make an application and the information required and will hopefully provide an update soon. In the meantime you can contact DCM's office on 08 8987 0536 if you would like to talk about an application.

### ANZAC Day Celebrations

There are special arrangements for ANZAC Day this year on 25 April this year, including [broadcasting of the Australian War Memorial Services](#).

Nationally, RSL Branches are asking Australians to [unite in recognising all Armed Services personnel by standing on their driveways on ANZAC Day for the dawn services and lighting up the dawn](#) with a candle or the light on their phones. You can find out more about this initiative on social media platforms #lightupthedawn

On the Gove Peninsula, the Gove RSL, GoveFM (106.9) and Nhulunbuy Corporation are staging virtual ANZAC Day services at dawn (5.45am) and at 10am. Find out more on the Rio Tinto Gove Operations Facebook, Gove FM Facebook or on the Gove Notice Board.

## **Support for businesses – public and environmental health**

From Monday 20 April, a Public and Environmental Health Officer will be working in Nhulunbuy to support East Arnhem businesses and communities to adapt their practices in line with directions from the Chief Health Officer and be better prepared.

## **Local pandemic planning**

Significant work has been undertaken in the last couple of months to ensure that communities right across East Arnhem can respond quickly to prevent the spread of COVID-19 if it enters the region.

We've included some of the results of this work – such as the establishment of a Pandemic Clinic and the Nhulunbuy Quarantine Facility – in our recent updates. However, you might be interested to know about some of the groups involved in preparing our region.

Local Emergency Management Committees (LEMCs) across the region ensure that key NT Government, Commonwealth, Regional Council (Shire) and community organisations are all involved in local level planning. These groups are led by NT Police alongside health organisations, Top End Health Services (Gove District Hospital), Miwatj Health and Laynhapuy and Marthakal Health services. LEMCs have been established in:

- Galiwin'ku and Marthakal homelands
- Gapuwiyak and the Miyarrka homelands
- Groote Eylandt – including Alyangula, Angurugu, Umbakumba and Milyakburra and satellite communities.
- Milingimbi and homelands
- Nhulunbuy (including Yirrkala, Birritjimi and Gunyangara) and Laynhapuy and Djalkiripuyngu homelands
- Ramingining and homelands

Across the region, LEMCs are supported by a Regional Emergency Committee and Territory Emergency Operations Centre which provide incident (COVID-19) control, medical group, welfare support, transport and logistics, critical goods supply and public information. These functional groups also link in with equivalent groups Territory-wide to ensure that resources and lessons from other areas can be shared.

Each LEMC has developed and continues to update a Local Pandemic Plan (LPP) so that each community can respond quickly in the event that a case of COVID-19 occurs. In the coming weeks, each LEMC is planning to test its LPP to ensure that it can be actioned effectively and that any gaps in the LPPs can be identified early and fixed. Summaries of these detailed plans are being prepared to share with local communities.

## **Term 2 for Northern Territory schools**

Term 2 for Northern Territory Schools begins on Monday 20 April. On the basis of medical advice that Northern Territory schools are safe, schools across the Territory will be open on Monday.

Attendance at school is compulsory and parents are encouraged to physically send their children to school unless the school contacts them directly with alternative arrangements. Arrangements for learning from home can be made for parents who have informed the school their child will be

learning from home. Parents and carers should contact their school about their school arrangements.

Children should remain home if they aren't feeling well. It's really important to remind students to sneeze or cough into their elbows, wash their hands with soap and dry them thoroughly.

On 20 April the Department of Education released further [information for parents and carers about NTG schools for Term 2, 2020](#). A couple of highlights are included below.

## **Boarding Schools**

### **Dawurr**

The Department of Education has advised that Nhulunbuy's Dawurr Boarding Facility – along with all other residential boarding facilities operated by NTG – will remain closed for the time being.

Future decisions about when to reopen Dawurr will be made in line with health advice.

### ***How will students who are usually at boarding school keep up their learning?***

If your child has returned from a boarding school (regardless of whether it is a government or non-government school, or in the NT or interstate), you may contact the Principal at your local Territory Government school to discuss your child's continued learning.

Your child may attend the local government school to continue their learning where possible, and if staffing is available. The child's learning program will be provided by the school at which the student is enrolled, but where possible, the local school will provide:

- appropriate staff to provide supervision, as determined by the principal
- a safe learning space (either at the school or in the community)
- internet access; and
- resources such as pens, paper, and printed materials as required.

## **Parents and carers on school grounds**

Schools are trying to minimise the number of adults entering a school. If you are the parent or carer of a primary aged student you can speak with your school to confirm what arrangements are in place to minimise the number of people moving in and out of the school grounds, particularly at pick up and drop off times.

## **Outside school hours care**

The Department of Education has advised that outside school hours care (OSHC) services will continue to operate. This will include on-site OSHC or other services off site that cater for school age children, such as long day care or family day care.

We are seeking advice about the status of these services in the East Arnhem region. Please check with the Nhulunbuy OSHC, Arnhem Early Learning Centre and other local services for further details in the meantime.

## **Advice on wellbeing support for children**

If you are concerned about your child's wellbeing, please contact their school to discuss the most appropriate support.

As at 21 April 2020

You can also seek support from:

- Kids Helpline – 1800 551 800 – [kidshelpline.com.au](http://kidshelpline.com.au)
- Headspace – 1800 650 890 – [eheadspace.org.au](http://eheadspace.org.au)
- Parent Helpline – 1300 30 1300
- Beyond Blue – 1300 224 636
- Lifeline – 13 11 14

## **BUSINESS UPDATES**

DEAL is leading regional business-related updates on COVID-19. If you wish to be notified when new information is available, [subscribe to DEAL's mailing list](#), follow DEAL on [social media](#) or email [ea@developingeastarnhem.com.au](mailto:ea@developingeastarnhem.com.au).

Being well prepared for post COVID-19 restrictions is important so that the East Arnhem region is well positioned to get the economy moving again once restrictions are eased. Work has started on this plan. The Regional Economic Development Committee (made up of key business leaders and organisations) will be engaged in this important work. However, it is important to note that there are no changes to restrictions and no fixed dates for when these might be announced so this is pre-planning work only.

Businesses are strongly encouraged to take advantage of all of the various Commonwealth, Territory and DEAL business, industry and community support available. A good summary is available at [here](#).

## **PUBLIC INFORMATION UPDATES**

These public information updates include details relevant to the East Arnhem region. The official source of information for Northern Territory Government news and requirements related to the COVID-19 pandemic is <https://coronavirus.nt.gov.au/> and we encourage you to visit that site regularly. If you have questions about how Northern Territory Government requirements apply in the East Arnhem region, please email [EastArnhem.Covid19@nt.gov.au](mailto:EastArnhem.Covid19@nt.gov.au) and we will do our best to include relevant details in our next public information update.

## **MORE INFORMATION**

Further public information will be distributed later this week. If you would like to be added to the distribution list for future emails, please send a request to [EastArnhem.Covid19@nt.gov.au](mailto:EastArnhem.Covid19@nt.gov.au).

**PLEASE NOTE:** While this information is current at the time of posting, the most up to date information and advice about the Northern Territory's response to COVID-19 is available at <https://coronavirus.nt.gov.au/>. If you require specific advice about your circumstances, please call the Remote Travel Hotline on 1800 518 189.