

This COVID-19 public information update contains information about:

- Measures to prevent COVID-19 from entering the East Arnhem Region
 - Your efforts to follow travel restrictions to keep the region safe
- Actions being taken now so we can contain the spread of the virus if it does arrive
 - Coronavirus testing
 - Respectful behaviour towards Territory workers
 - Local pandemic planning
 - Don't go camping at the Dhimurru rec areas (just yet)!
- Business updates
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MEASURES TO PREVENT COVID-19 FROM ENTERING THE EAST ARNHEM REGION

Your efforts to follow travel restrictions to keep the region safe

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, and there have been no new cases in the Northern Territory in 21 days.

As a result, the Chief Minister has signalled that announcements will be made this week regarding a plan to move to a 'new normal', which could see some restrictions eased in a way that will embed physical distancing requirements and help us to respond rapidly if an outbreak of COVID-19 does occur.

The Chief Minister has also been very clear that there is currently no consideration of relaxing border controls.

As we mentioned in our last update, one of the major reasons that measures to keep East Arnhem COVID-19 free has been the efforts of local residents, businesses and [essential workers](#) coming to the East Arnhem region who abide by travel restrictions and [quarantine requirements](#) and are staying where they are wherever possible.

Thank you for your collective efforts to keep everyone in the region safe. Please continue your vigilance even as we transition to a 'new normal'.

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

Coronavirus testing

Expanded testing criteria

In line with national advice, the Northern Territory has expanded testing criteria for COVID-19. Anyone with respiratory symptoms is now eligible to be tested for COVID-19.

If COVID-19 enters the East Arnhem region, these expanded testing criteria will help Miwatj, Marthakal, Laynhapuy and Top End Health services to monitor the risk of community transmission and contain any spread of COVID-19 as quickly as possible.

The Gove District Hospital Pandemic Clinic is now open to facilitate screening for COVID-19 locally. Respiratory Clinics in remote communities right across the region are also ready to assist with this strategy.

Please do not go directly to the Gove Pandemic Clinic or your local clinic for screening – you should phone first to make an appointment.

If you have respiratory symptoms, please contact 0476 828 005 (Monday to Friday: 8.30am to 3.30pm) to book an appointment and to receive further instructions for testing. After hours, call the national advice hotline on 1800 020 080. You can also call your local Miwatj Health clinic.

Point-of-care testing

As we mentioned in our recent update, point-of-care testing will be rolled out to health services across Australia. Point-of-care testing will enable medical professionals to rapidly test and deliver results, without the need to send tests away for analysis, which can take a number of days. Point-of-care testing machines have been delivered to Alyangula, Gove District Hospital and Galiwin'ku and are expected to be able to support the expanded testing arrangements in the next week or two once all the necessary consumables arrive.

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.

In our recent updates we shared some detail of the about the Local Emergency Management Committees (LEMCs) across the region. LEMCs 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.

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. Summaries of these detailed plans are being prepared to share with local communities.

As at 27 April 2020

On 23 April, the LEMC for Nhulunbuy (including Yirrkala, Birritjimi and Gunyangara) and Laynhapuy homelands used a simulation exercise to test their preparedness. Yolngu community leaders also participated in the exercise and provided invaluable input for the LEMC to take forward, including ensuring more extensive involvement of Yolngu leaders in planning. All of the representatives involved in the exercise identified opportunities to strengthen existing plans, which will allow us to respond as effectively as possible in the event that COVID-19 enters the Peninsula communities.

We hope that similar exercises will be run across the region in the weeks ahead.

Don't go camping (yet)!

You might have seen some news today that NT Parks sites will, to varying extents, be open from midday on Friday 1 May 2020. The advice on this is available at <https://coronavirus.nt.gov.au/steps-to-restart>.

Please be aware that this announcement doesn't apply to the North East Arnhem region because none of the parks or recreation areas in are operated by NT Parks. The organisations that operate recreation areas in North East Arnhem are Dhimurru, Yirrkala Rangers (via the Northern Land Council) and Baniyala.com – we understand that Dhimurru are considering how the current requirements apply to their sites which are currently closed.

Keep an eye out for our updates later in the week to be sure you have up to date information about the status of parks across the region before the weekend.

One thing that we do know at this point is that advice about opening of NT Parks has been clear: no one who is outside a designated biosecurity area may enter to go to a park (of any sort) without quarantining first.

BUSINESS UPDATES

Airnorth

Airnorth has received Commonwealth funding to guarantee that a minimum number of flights will run throughout the coming weeks to ensure that essential workers, freight and supplies can be transported into the region. You can read Airnorth's media release explaining the services to 12 June 2020 [here](#). Advice about regional and remote air services is available here and this site will be updated as the airline schedules are adjusted over time.

East Arnhem Live

We hope you had the chance to check out the first instalment of East Arnhem Live on Saturday night, featuring Yirrnga Yunupingu. In case you didn't, you can catch up by streaming the video on [East Arnhem Land's Facebook Page](#).

East Arnhem Live is an initiative to bring the culture, history and beauty of East Arnhem Land to audiences across Australia and the world. It involves producing content featuring local artists, which is hosted online through Facebook. East Arnhem Live is proudly presented by Yolngu Radio in partnership with Developing East Arnhem Limited and Rirratjingu Aboriginal Corporation.

As at 27 April 2020

So far there are two more instalments scheduled, with further acts to be announced:

- Saturday 2 May 6.30pm ACST - The Andrew Gurruwiwi Band
- Saturday 9 May 6.30pm ACST - Yirrmal Marika (singer-songwriter and grandson of Dr M Yunupingu, former lead singer of Yothu Yindi)

For more details, keep an eye on [East Arnhem Land's Facebook Page](#).

DEAL 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.

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 <https://www.developingeastarnhem.com.au/coronavirus-covid-19-updates/>.

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 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.

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.