



COVID-19 Coronavirus

ALC Management Plan

Further to the ALC Message provided on 19 March 2020, the ALC is continuing to monitor the COVID-19 situation and to act to keep our communities safe. Significant changes have been introduced Nation-wide since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. This policy reflects the most up-to-date ALC policy for the management of COVID-19 on the Groote Archipelago. This policy will be updated and circulated to all organisations / service providers on the Groote Archipelago as necessary.

1. Home is Safe. Fortress Groote.

- 1.1. There have been no known cases of COVID-19 on the Groote Archipelago. The Groote Archipelago's greatest asset is its isolation. World-wide, the virus is spreading because people are living close together in cities. The ALC is working to protect Groote's borders to ensure the virus does not come here.
- 1.2. The greatest risk of the virus spreading to the Groote Archipelago is from people coming from other parts of Australia and in particular those who have been travelling overseas. Residents who may wish to leave Groote for a short time and then return to the Archipelago also bring that risk back.
- 1.3. All organisations and residents of the Groote Archipelago are strongly encouraged to stay put. Groote is the safest place to be. We request that all travel off the island is cancelled for the time being, unless absolutely necessary. The ALC cannot guarantee that people will be able to return to the Archipelago unhindered. Where it is absolutely necessary to travel, those leaving the Archipelago should be prepared to partake in a 14-day isolation when they return.
- 1.4. All measures listed below are designed to keep the Groote Archipelago safe.

2. Biosecurity Protections

- 2.1. As of 11.59PM AEDT Thursday 26 March 2020, the Groote Archipelago will be declared a 'Designated Area' under the Biosecurity Act (**Biosecurity Determination**).
- 2.2. This means that there will be restrictions on entry to the Groote Archipelago. This includes all Aboriginal Communities (including Satellite Communities) and Alyangula.
- 2.3. From midnight Thursday 26 March 2020, as a minimum baseline position all persons entering the Groote Archipelago must, for a period of 14 days prior to entering:
 - (a) Have been isolated from the general public;
 - (b) Have not showed any symptoms of the coronavirus; and
 - (c) Have not been exposed to any coronavirus potential, or any person with one or more signs or symptoms of the coronavirus.
- 2.4. Under the Biosecurity Determination, there is an exception for essential activities. Essential activities are defined as:
 - (a) providing any of the following for the benefit of one or more persons in the area:
 - (i) health care;



- (ii) education;
- (iii) services relating to prevention of, or recovery from, domestic violence;
- (iv) services relating to child protection;
- (v) policing services;
- (vi) emergency services;
- (vii) essential services of a kind typically provided by local government, such as rubbish collection;
- (viii) services, benefits, programs or facilities that the Chief Executive Centrelink has the function of providing;
- (b) providing correctional services in relation to one or more persons in the area;
- (c) providing funerary services in the area;
- (d) conducting, or taking part in, a sitting of a court or tribunal in the area;
- (e) operating, maintaining or repairing:
 - (i) equipment for providing electricity, gas, water or telecommunications services; or
 - (ii) other essential infrastructure in the area;
- (f) delivering food, fuel, mail or medical supplies in the area;
- (g) obtaining medical care or medical supplies in the area;
- (h) continuing the construction in the area of housing or transport infrastructure that was in progress immediately before the commencement of this instrument;
- (i) carrying out mining operations, or operations ancillary to mining operations, in the area in a manner that is agreed with a human biosecurity officer so as to minimise the extent to which other persons in the area are exposed to the persons carrying out those operations;
- (j) transporting freight to or from a place in the area.

2.5. In addition to the categories listed above, the ALC has power to grant exceptions for other persons to enter Aboriginal Communities. Those exceptions will be dealt with on a case by case basis, and be informed by expert medical/biosecurity expertise.

2.6. The Biosecurity Determination currently expires on 18 June 2020. This period can be extended if considered necessary.

2.7. The ALC is also introducing additional precautions on top of the Biosecurity Determination. These are outlined below.

3. Groote Archipelago Shutdown

3.1. In partnership with GEMCO, the ALC will be shutting down all flights to and from the Groote Archipelago for a period of two weeks, commencing close of business 31 March 2020. The total shutdown period will be from close of business on **31 March 2020 to 14 April 2020**.

3.2. During the shutdown period:

- (a) The ALC requests there is no movement between Alyangula and the Aboriginal Communities. Travel between Aboriginal Communities remains open.
- (b) The ALC requests that all Alyangula residents avoid social gatherings and implement social distancing measures.
- (c) Essential services will continue to operate. These include police, medical, stores and food supply, power and water, and radio and communications services. The ALC will determine what, if any, other services are to be deemed essential.



- 3.3. ALC programs will continue to operate on a modified basis during the shutdown period. This means:
- (a) The CSP office will continue to operate and be run by staff living in community. Alyangula-based staff will work from home.
 - (b) Preserving Culture programs will still operate, and be run by staff living in community. This means that the Language Centre, Men's Shed and Angurugu and Umbakumba radio stations will continue to operate. However, the Arts Centre will close for the shutdown period.
 - (c) The Spotter program will continue to operate in Angurugu.
 - (d) No cleaning will occur at the ALC offices for the shutdown period, as the cleaners are based in Alyangula. We ask that all staff take care to leave the office clean and tidy.
 - (e) The Royalty Shoppa Warehouse will be closed for the shutdown period.
 - (f) The Ranger program will continue to operate in the Pole 13 office, however those staff living in Community are asked to stay home for the shutdown period.
- 3.4. The ALC Board has determined there will be no funerals on the Groote Archipelago during the shutdown period. The ALC is working with the NT Government around bringing the school holidays forward to the shutdown period, and will provide further information to the schools around those measures.
- 3.5. In advance of the shutdown period, the ALC requests all organisations and service providers ensure that they are prepared for a two-week period with no flights on or off the Groote Archipelago. In particular, the ALC requests that all stores make careful note of the above date and ensure they have adequate stock to cover the shutdown period (barge services will be maintained during this time). If there are any concerns about an organisations preparedness for this shut down, please contact the ALC as soon as possible.
- 3.6. Information about post-shutdown measures are set out below.

4. ALC Staff Payments During Shutdown

- 4.1. All ALC employees who are not able to attend their usual workplace are requested to work from home during the shutdown period.
- 4.2. All ALC employees will continue to be paid during the shutdown period of the Groote Archipelago. For casual and part-time employees who are unable to attend work because of the protocols in place within the ALC COVID-19 response, their salary will be determined based on the average they have worked (and been paid) over the preceding 4-week pay periods.
- 4.3. The ALC recommends that other organisations operating on the Groote Archipelago adopt similar measures.

5. Post-Shutdown Measures

- 5.1. Following the shutdown period, flights to and from the Groote Archipelago will re-commence.
- 5.2. All passengers will be subject to health screening at the point of embarkation. GEMCO's health screening protocols will be adopted by all other charter and commercial air transport services.



- 5.3. The Groote Archipelago will remain a 'Designated Area' under the Biosecurity Determination referred to above. Acting in accordance with its decision making function under the Biosecurity Determination, the ALC may waive the off-island 14-day isolation period requirement where the person coming to the Groote Archipelago will complete their 14-day isolation period on island. The other requirements of the Biosecurity Determination will still apply.
- 5.4. Persons engaging in essential activities may be granted an exemption from the 14-day isolation period requirement. However, these organisations or service providers will still need to satisfy the ALC that they pose no risk to Community prior to entering the Groote Archipelago.
- 5.5. The ALC intends that following the shutdown period, organisations and service providers will be free to resume work in the Aboriginal Communities. However, any person wishing to work in an Aboriginal Community after the shutdown must first be issued a permit by the ALC. The permit system is explained below.
- 5.6. As the GEMCO mining operation is an essential activity for the purposes of the Biosecurity Determination, FIFO employees will be strictly isolated from Groote Archipelago residents and not required to undertake the 14-day isolation period. GEMCO's COVID-19 Precautions are outlined below. The ALC is satisfied these precautions mean the mining operation poses no risk to Community.
- 5.7. Due to fluid nature of this issue, further measures may be implemented to protect the residents of the Groote Archipelago as necessary.

6. Permit system

- 6.1. Following the shutdown period, all persons who wish to come to the Groote Archipelago must first apply for a permit from the ALC.
- 6.2. Permits will only be issued to persons who satisfy the ALC's safety requirements.
- 6.3. This means that permits for entry into the Groote Archipelago will only be granted to persons who:
 - (a) Have undertaken a 14-day isolation period off-island before travel or on-island or satisfied a medical test that they do not have coronavirus;
 - (b) Have not showed any symptoms of the coronavirus;
 - (c) Have not been exposed to any coronavirus potential, or any person with one or more signs or symptoms of the coronavirus.
- 6.4. As GEMCO's mining operation is an essential activity for the purposes of the Biosecurity Determination, GEMCO employees will not be required to apply for a permit.
- 6.5. The Groote and Community Access Permit will be accessed from the ALC website. Non-Traditional Owner residents and those wishing to enter the Groote Archipelago will need to complete the application and submit the completed for to the ALC for approval. Applicants will be required to agree to abide by the isolation and biosecurity requirements set out by the Land Council.
- 6.6. Permit holders must satisfy the conditions of the permit on an ongoing basis. Any permit holder who leaves the Groote Archipelago will have to re-apply for a permit on their return, and



complete a further 14-day isolation period on-island. Any permit holder whose eligibility for a permit changes must immediately inform the ALC.

- 6.7. The ALC requests that all non-GEMCO organisations and service providers on the Groote Archipelago provide a list of the names and addresses of all employees and contractors who will be applying for a permit following the shutdown period.
- 6.8. The ALC will keep and maintain a registry of all persons in the “Safe Bubble” who are authorised to work in the Aboriginal Communities. Any person who enters an Aboriginal Community without a permit will be liable for the penalties under the Biosecurity Determination.
- 6.9. The ALC permit system does not apply to Traditional Owner residents of the Aboriginal Communities and their families.
- 6.10. The “Safe Bubble” will include permit holders, and Traditional Owner residents of the Aboriginal Communities and their families.

7. GEMCO Precautions

- 7.1. GEMCO’s mining operation will continue. This section sets out what precautions are in place to ensure GEMCO’s operations will not impact the safety of the Groote Archipelago.
- 7.2. Currently, Alyangula residents have been requested to avoid travelling to Aboriginal Communities unless it is necessary to do so. Residents of the Aboriginal Communities have been requested to minimise travel into Alyangula.
- 7.3. During the Groote Archipelago shutdown period no one will be allowed to travel in and out of Alyangula. There will be no FIFO staff coming or going from the Groote Archipelago during this period.
- 7.4. Following the shutdown period, GEMCO has adopted precautions to ensure any FIFO staff do not come in contact with any residents of the Groote Archipelago. These precautions include:
 - (a) GEMCO has been decreasing its site-based staff to only front-line operators from 16 March 2020. Professional GEMCO staff who have the capacity to work from home will not be returning to the Groote Archipelago.
 - (b) All FIFO staff are subject to health screening and temperature checks by a registered nurse prior to coming to the Groote Archipelago. Any passenger who exhibits a temperature above 37.3°C and/or COVID-19 like symptoms or other risk factors is excluded.
 - (c) Members of the public are no longer able to purchase seats on any GEMCO charter flight.
 - (d) Social distancing measures have been introduced for all staff. This includes scheduling additional and larger charter planes to ensure space on flights, busses running at 50% capacity and modifications to the camp mess seating arrangements.
 - (e) Daily health and temperature screening is being conducted prior to entry to the mine site. Any worker who exhibits a temperature above 37.3°C and/or COVID-19 like symptoms or other risk factors is excluded.
 - (f) FIFO workers are excluded from areas accessible by the residential townships including the Alyangula Supermarket, shopping arcade, Post Office and Groote Eylandt Lodge.
 - (g) From midday 23 March 2020, GEMCO’s ARC restaurant, gym and community sporting hall will be closed in line with government requirements.



- (h) Social distancing will be implemented at all key service providers in Alyangula township, including the Post Office, Pharmacy, ANZ Bank and Alyangula Supermarket.
- (i) FIFO workers will be removed from front counter work at the Alyangula Supermarket, with those positions to be filled by residential staff. FIFO staff will only provide re-stocking support.
- (j) GEMCO's fuel bowser will continue to operate and be available for community members to use, but will be subject to frequent cleaning. Users are encouraged to use hand sanitiser before using the fuel bowser.

7.5. The ALC is comfortable that the precautions GEMCO have put in place are sufficient to keep the community safe.

8. Isolation precautions

- 8.1. The ALC, in partnership with the Northern Territory Government and GEBIE, have made available designated isolation accommodation within the Designated Area.
- 8.2. Any person showing symptoms of COVID-19 will be isolated in one of the above addresses, pending a blood test to confirm whether they do in fact have the virus.
- 8.3. Any person who tests positive to having the virus will be care-flighted off the Groote Archipelago to Darwin for appropriate care.

In conclusion, we continue to adopt a measured, calm and systematic approach based on a position of strength. As far as possible, we are committed to the continuity of programs and other essential services. These short term measures will allow us to safely return to business as usual on the Groote Archipelago as soon as possible.