

From: [Melissa Muller](#)

To: Groote Archipelago COVID-19 ADVICE 6 - 31 March 2020
Tuesday, 31 March 2020 11:12:00 AM

Subject:

Date:

Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[Poster A4 Covid-19 ALC Permit Required.pdf](#)
[COVID-19 business update - 30 March.msg](#)

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Groote Archipelago COVID-19 ADVICE 6 - 31 March 2020

Hi All

As you would have seen, over the weekend and yesterday there were further announcements made by the Australian and NT governments of tighter travel restrictions and more social distancing strategies.

You may also have seen speculation across social media yesterday that there was a positive case of COVID-19 on Groote Eylandt. I can confirm that there are NO known cases of COVID-19 in the Groote Archipelago. Please be assured that any positive test in the NT triggers strict communication protocols, including contact tracing and the announcement of the case on coronavirus.nt.gov.au and securent.nt.gov.au. If there are positive cases on Groote Eylandt you will be informed. Anything you hear from an unofficial source is a rumour at best. Please be mindful not to share information from unofficial sources, I understand that we all want to be as prepared as possible but we also need to make sure we are sharing official, accurate information. I am always happy to be contacted to discuss any concerns you have.

While there are currently no known cases of COVID-19 in the Groote Archipelago, there are currently 15 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the NT that all relate to persons who have recently returned from interstate or international travel. This means we must all continue to be vigilant to make sure we are doing everything to prevent possible spread.

Please be aware that this email advice is based on the most up-to-date information but the situation is rapidly changing. Further advice will be provided as required.

New Interstate Quarantine Laws

Currently anyone arriving in the NT from overseas is required to undertake a 14-day forced quarantine period at a designated hotel. The Chief Minister has announced that as of midnight Wednesday 1 April 2020 this will also apply to any interstate arrivals in the NT. Please note that any interstate arrivals after midnight Friday 3 April 2020 will also be required to undertake a 14-day forced quarantine period but they will be required to do so at their own cost. This cost is estimated to be approx. \$2,500. As mentioned above, all of the NT's COVID-19 cases are currently related to international or interstate arrivals. This new policy is being implemented to discourage people from travelling to the NT at this time to minimise the risk of bringing in further

cases of COVID-19.

There are exemptions available for essential workers and medical and compassionate grounds, for more information please see <https://coronavirus.nt.gov.au/community-advice/border-controls>

Social Gathering Update

The Prime Minister announced over the weekend that social gatherings should now be limited to two people. The Chief Minister asked that Territorians follow that advice, and stated that if it was not followed stricter enforcement would follow.

Current government advice is to remain at home if you can. Reasons to leave home include shopping for what you need, medical or compassionate grounds, to exercise and to work or learn (if you cannot do that remotely).

Two-Week Groote Archipelago Travel Shutdown (C.O.B. 31 March 2020 – 6am 14 April 2020)

The ALC has issued a directive that it will be shutting down **all** passenger flights (GEMCO has confirmed it will support the directive and participate in this temporary cessation of travel) to and from the Groote Archipelago for a period of two weeks, commencing close of business 31 March 2020 to 6am 14 April 2020. The ALC also asks that travel between Alyangula and the Aboriginal Communities is restricted to the access or delivery of essential services during this time. From 6am 1 April 2020, the ALC implement controls at the intersection outside Angurugu on the highway outside Angurugu to ensure only residents and essential workers are entering the Communities.

The purpose of this shutdown is to ascertain that there are no cases of COVID-19 in the Archipelago and allow for further planning of future measures.

Biosecurity Act Determination

Most of remote Australia (including the entire Groote Archipelago) has now been declared part of a 'Designated Biosecurity Area' under the Commonwealth Biosecurity Act. This means that there will be restrictions on entry to the Groote Archipelago until further notice.

Groote Archipelago and Community Access Permit

The ALC has introduced the Groote Archipelago and Community Access Permit. All non-Traditional Owner residents and visitors to the Groote Archipelago are now required to apply for this permit. The permit will require a two-week self-quarantine period for anyone arriving on Groote, the ALC's preference is that this period is served ON Groote Eylandt however you should not travel until you have an approved permit. Employers should be able to provide further guidance on this, or visit <https://www.anindilyakwa.com.au/coronavirus/groote-archipelago-community-access-information> for more information and the application form. Queries should be directed to the ALC via ALCpermits@alcnt.com.au or 0436 930 960.

Please note that access to the Aboriginal Communities and Satellite Communities will only be approved for essential workers. The ALC asks that everyone begins applying for these permits but that they will be focusing on individuals that require access to the Aboriginal Communities during the Two-Week Shutdown period. They will aim to have all other permits in place prior to April 14 2020.

Recreation Areas are still able to be accessed with a Recreation Permit. Please continue to check for closures before heading out and be mindful to restrict your group size to reflect social gathering advice.

New Website for Anindilyakwa Information

The amazing crew at the Groote Eylandt Language Centre have launched a brand new website: anindilyakwasafe.net

It's primary purpose is to collate and disseminate information in the Anindilyakwa language. There are resources developed by the language centre, resources developed by NTG and videos

taken of important information being shared on local radio. Check it out and don't forget to like their facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/gelanguagecentre/>

GEMCO Update

GEMCO/South32 are working closely with the ALC and governments and have instigated a comprehensive monitoring regime for their entire workforce (including their FIFO workers) and introduced a range of measures to minimise the potential risk of their workforce spreading COVID-19. GEMCO have had their Pandemic Plan endorsed by the Northern Territory Chief Medical Officer.

Please subscribe to the GEMCO Community News and follow the GEMCO Community Facebook page for their latest updates <https://www.facebook.com/GEMCOcommunity/>

Schooling Update

The Department of Education has decided that all Schools on the Groote Archipelago will remain open until the end of Week 10 (Friday 3 April 2020), however parents may elect to keep their children at home for the remainder of Term 1.

All students will not be required to attend Week 11 (Mon 6 – Thurs 10 April 2020) as it has been designated as planning time for Term 2, however Schools will welcome any children of workers who cannot make alternative arrangements.

Business Update

Please continue to support our local businesses as much as you can. Businesses can access a range of supports from the NT and Australian governments (see <https://coronavirus.nt.gov.au/community-advice/business> for more details).

If you require further assistance Developing East Arnhem Ltd (DEAL), an economic development corporation based in Nhulunbuy has agreed to assist Groote Archipelago businesses navigate the available supports. Their latest Business Update is attached and contains a range of resources for businesses to seek more information, as well as DEAL's contact details to be added to their distribution list.

More Information

More information is available at coronavirus.nt.gov.au, www.secureNT.nt.gov.au and www.health.gov.au

Follow the advice regarding hand washing, coughing and sneezing into a tissue or your elbow and social distancing. While there is only 12 cases of COVID-19 in the NT and none on Groote, these measures are good health practice and forming habits now will set us in good stead if the situation changes. Minimise social interactions and if you are sick do not attend work.

This is a rapidly evolving situation and I thank you all for continuing to stay informed and for taking the necessary steps that to keep the Groote Archipelago safe. As always, if you would like to discuss anything further please contact me on 0438 304 647.

Stay safe.

Jesse Fatnowna

Regional Director – Groote Eylandt
Regional Network, East Arnhem Region
Department of the Chief Minister
m. 0438 304 647

jesse.fatnowna@nt.gov.au

Lot 548, Oval Road, Angurugu NT 0822
PO Box 306, Alyangula NT 0885



boundlesspossible.com.au



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