

Positive COVID-19 Case on Groote Eylandt

[30th December 2021: from Liam Flanagan, A/Executive Director – East Arnhem Regional Network, Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet, Northern Territory Government]

On Tuesday evening a member of the GEMCO workforce travelled from Cairns to Groote Eylandt, following all NT Border Entry and GEMCO COVID requirements:

- Had a PCR test within 3 days prior to departure and showed evidence of the negative test result at pre-flight health screening
- Had a rapid antigen test at charter pre-flight health screening prior to departure from Cairns – this test result was negative
- Complied with mask wearing mandate on plane

Once on Groote Eylandt, the person received a text message from Qld Health, advising they are a close contact of a COVID-19 positive case and that they should immediately isolate.

The person travelled by car with 2 other people to camp and has since been in isolation.

On Wednesday 29th December the person was tested by NT Health and returned a positive COVID-19 PCR test.

The person involved has followed all NT Border Entry and GEMCO COVID requirements. It was simply unfortunate that the person had their pre-travel PCR test during the day on Boxing Day and later that evening became a close contact.

GEMCO was asked by the NT Centre for Disease Control (CDC) to isolate all passengers on the same plane until further direction from the CDC.

CDC advised the following:

- The impacted workforce member will be flown to Darwin, whilst 4 close contacts will remain in isolation in camp for 7 days, undergoing regular testing
- 15 people seated in close proximity on the plane are allowed to return to work, however, will undergo daily rapid antigen testing and be required to wear a mask for 7 days
- The remainder of the passengers are free to return to work, however subject to the usual border entry testing regime

GEMCO will continue to employ COVID controls including masks on buses, social distancing whenever possible and hand hygiene.

Regards,

Liam Flanagan
A/Executive Director – East Arnhem
Regional Network
Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet
Northern Territory Government

[includes minor correction to the date of positive test]