

Return to Country Biosecurity Areas and Self-Quarantine

FAQs

Remote community areas of the Northern Territory have been declared Designated Biosecurity Areas. They have been closed off to all non-essential travel in response to concerns about the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19)

Q. What is a Designated Biosecurity Area

Remote communities of the Northern Territory have been declared Designated Biosecurity Areas. That means those communities have special rules to restrict people coming in. Only residents and essential workers can enter a Designated Biosecurity Area and even then they must follow special rules.

Q. Why is this being done?

These restrictions are to prevent the spread of COVID-19 into our remote communities.

The restrictions have been requested by many leaders, communities and organisations to protect people and keep communities safe.

Q. When do the restrictions start and when do they end?

Restrictions to travel to remote areas to protect community members from COVID-19 started on Thursday, 26 March 2020.

The restrictions currently end on 18 June 2020 under the Biosecurity Act 2015. This period can be extended if it needs to. The Prime Minister and the Chief Minister are saying that people should expect for these changes to be in place for approximately 6 months. Health experts will continue to check the situation. If we all stay home it will slow the spread of COVID-19.

Q. What are the Designated Biosecurity Areas?

The Designated Biosecurity areas are based on the Local Government Areas (LGAs) in the NT.

The designated biosecurity areas are:

- Tiwi Islands
- West Arnhem
- East Arnhem including:
 - the Town of Nhulunbuy unincorporated LGAs and
 - the Town of Alyangula unincorporated LGAs
- West Daly
- Roper Gulf Victoria Daly
- Barkly
- Central Desert
- MacDonnell, including the Town of Yulara unincorporated area.

You can view the [maps of designated biosecurity areas](#) in the NT at www.coronavirus.nt.gov.au.

Q. What areas are excluded?

The following are excluded from the designated biosecurity areas:

- pastoral properties
- the Local Government Areas of:
 - Darwin
 - Palmerston
 - Litchfield
 - Coomalie
 - Wagait
 - Belyuen
 - Pine Creek Ward
 - Katherine, as well as Katherine Gorge accommodation facilities
 - Mataranka
 - Tennant Creek, and some Community Living areas east such as Corella Creek, Wogayla and Gulunnura
 - Alice Springs, including Golden Mile, Amoonguna, and some satellite outstations very close to Alice Springs.

Q. Can I stay in my community?

The safest place for community people is in their community, homeland or outstation. If people are in community, they are encouraged to stay there.

It's important to stay in your community, if you leave your safe zone you risk catching the dangerous virus.

Q. Will my community still have access to supplies?

All the important work in community will keep going. Clinic worker mob will still be there and food, and fuel and important workers like plumbers and electricians are still working and our schools are still open.

The Government are working really hard to make sure you do not run out of supplies in your community.

Q. What if I choose to leave my community, homeland or outstation, can I come back?

If you choose to leave your community and come into town, you will need to do that thing they call quarantine for 14 days before you are allowed back into your community.

Police mob will stop you at the checkpoints and ask you for evidence to prove you have completed the 14 day quarantine. If you haven't quarantined you will not be allowed back to country.

Q. What is quarantine?

Quarantine is really important. You must do quarantine before going back to country. It will stop your family, stop your friends and stop your old people / elders getting really sick. We have to look after everyone.

Quarantine is a place arranged by an NGO or Government where you must stay in that place for 14 days to make sure you are not sick before you go back to community. To get back into community you will need to show that you have been in quarantine for 14 days and are not unwell with COVID-19 symptoms.

This is to make sure when you do go home you are not taking the Corona virus with you and spreading it around. People already in the designated area are encouraged to stay on country and not travel too much. Each time they come out of their safe zone, they risk catching the dangerous virus so they will need to quarantine again for 14 days before they can go home again.

People leaving their communities by back roads to go to town and coming back in without staying in a quarantine place for 14 days are risking the lives of people in their community. For the safety of your family, your elders, your children, please stay in your community until the Government has said that it is safe to move around again. This may be for a long time, but it's serious so we don't spread the Corona virus and make our loved ones sick.

How do I get help to self-quarantine so I can get home?

Community members who require assistance to self-quarantine before returning to their home community or outstation that is within a designated area should contact the following in your region:

Top End

Larrakia Nation

Return to Country office between 8:45am and 3pm Monday to Friday.

Address: Larrakia Return to Country, 50 Bradshaw Terrace, Casuarina NT 0810

Phone: 08 8945 5211 or 1800 290 659

Email: rtc.officer1@larrakia.com

Big Rivers

Kalano Community Association Inc.

Big Rivers Child and Family Centre between 8am and 4pm Monday to Friday.

Address: Level 1, 42 Katherine Terrace, Katherine, NT 0850

Phone: 08 8918 6130

Email: msoundron@kalano.org.au

Central Australia

Welfare Group - Operated by Territory Families

For welfare support related to quarantine and isolation only

Phone: 0436 919 279

Email: TF.SouthernRegion@nt.gov.au

Return to Country - Operated by Tangentyere Council Aboriginal Corporation

All return to country requires 14 days quarantine prior

Address: 4 Elder Street, Alice Springs NT 0871

Phone: 08 8951 4262 or 08 8951 4291

Email: rtc@tangentyere.org.au

Barkly

Julalikari Council Aboriginal Corporation

Address: 13 Maloney Street, Tennant Creek NT 0860

Phone: 08 8962 2699

Email: geoff.evans@julalikari.com.au

It is very important that people going into a designated area self-quarantine for 14 days to protect the vulnerable people in our community.

Q. How long will I be there?

You must remain in quarantine for 14 days. After 14 days you will be taken straight home. If you leave early, you will not be able to go home.

If you leave early, you must complete an additional 14 days quarantine.

Q. Why do I have to stay for 14 days?

Maybe you think you are not sick. But that coronavirus is really cheeky and can hide for a little while. It will take 14 days to see if it is there.

Q. What do I need to take with me into quarantine?

Take what you require to stay comfortably. Plan for 14 days and make sure you take enough of what you need to stay happy, safe and entertained. Questions you might ask yourself include:

- Do I have enough clothes?
- Do I have my phone charger?
- Do I have all my medication with me?
- Do I have enough personal stuff like smokes?

Please note that you are not allowed to bring alcohol into the 14 day quarantine.

Q. Can I leave my room?

No. Depending on the organisation running the quarantine program in your area they may be able to help you complete 30 minutes of exercise per day (dependent of the number of people in quarantine). Apart from this you must not leave your room except only in the designated outdoor spaces.

Q. Can I have visitors?

No, quarantine means no visitors allowed. This will be difficult but you can maintain contact with family and friends by calling them or using FaceTime and messenger on the free Wi-Fi.

Q. What do I do if I don't want to stay anymore?

You must speak with a case manager – you will be given contact details when you enter quarantine. It is important that you have this conversation with them first before acting. If you leave quarantine, you will not be able to return home. You will then be required to restart your 14 days quarantine or be asked to leave

Q. Will it cost me money to stay in 14 days quarantine?

No. Your accommodation, meals and all services are fully paid for. If you choose to leave and need to do the 14-day quarantine again, you may be charged a fee.

Q. Can I smoke cigarettes?

Yes, but you cannot smoke in your room. You must bring your own smokes and all smoking must be outside of your room on your chair. No humbug or asking others for smokes.

Q. Can I smoke gunja?

No. Smoking gunja is illegal and is not permitted during quarantine.

Q. Can I drink alcohol?

No. There is no alcohol allowed in the 14-day quarantine.

Q. Can I interact with others staying in quarantine?

No. 14 days quarantine means no contact with anyone else, including those already in the 14 day quarantine.

Q. Can I avoid quarantine by driving the back roads into my community?

No, there are Police mob everywhere at checkpoints on main roads and back roads, they will be stopping and talking to everyone. They are helping to look after us all and to keep us safe, so please listen and follow what they ask/tell you to do.

You will not be allowed to enter a remote community without proof that you have done the 14 day quarantine. This is to make sure you don't accidentally spread COVID-19 from town into your community which could be very dangerous especially for Elders.

Q. What if I know someone is not doing the right thing?

Call the NT Police on [131 444](tel:131444) and report them.

Q. Who can I contact if I need more information?

If you want to know more about travelling to a remote community in the NT, call that remote travel hotline mob on [1800 518 189](tel:1800518189) or email remote.travel@nt.gov.au

Q. What ways can I help stop the spread of COVID-19?

- Don't touch your eyes, nose or mouth
- Don't share smokes or drinks
- Make sure you wash your hands!
- Stay on country, care for family
- Stay away from big mobs
- Do not touch or be close to people and no more handshakes or hugs
- Keep your distance of more than 1.5 meters to keep you and others safe

Q. What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

If you feel:

- Hot/fever
- Dry cough and short wind
- Paining throat
- Feel weak

Q. Who can I call if I feel sick?

Top End

Danila Dilba Health Service – 08 8942 5400

East Arnhem

Miwatj Health Aboriginal Corporation – 08 8939 1900

Big Rivers

Wurli-Wurlinjang Health Service - 08 8972 9100

Central Australia

Central Australian Aboriginal Congress - 1800 514 400

Barkly

Anyinginyi Health Aboriginal Corporation – 08 8962 2385

Remember for the most up to date information please visit:

www.coronavirus.nt.gov.au or call the Remote Travel Hotline on 1800 518 189