



WEST DALY
Regional Council

WEST DALY REGIONAL COUNCIL COVID-19 - ORGANISATIONAL PLAN

Executive Summary

Viral respiratory diseases have the greatest potential to cause pandemics and the key threat of emergence of a pandemic strain of virus lies at the human-animal interface. Every so often there has been emergence of novel influenza strains in animals such as birds (H5N1, H7N9) and pigs (H1N1) and these viruses have caused significant morbidity and mortality in humans.

To date none of these viruses have caused sustained human to human transmission. Pandemic influenza remains a key global health threat and the Australian Government and the broader Australian health sector is well prepared to respond to an influenza pandemic.

Introduction

The novel coronavirus outbreak represents a significant risk to Australia. It has the potential to cause high levels of morbidity and mortality and to disrupt our community socially and economically. The national approach to this plan has been based on the Australian Health Management Plan for Pandemic Influenza (AHMPPI), noting that the response to the novel coronavirus outbreak is now in the Initial Action stage.

To minimise the risk and prevent the spread of COVID-19 West Daly Regional Council (the Council) have adopted an organisational safety plan for all Essential Workers of the Council and for those who enter Communities, Homelands and work within other areas in the West Daly Region. In response to the COVID-19 Pandemic the Commonwealth Biosecurity legislation (Determination 2020) has been enacted restricting access to Remote Communities within the Northern Territory.

Purpose

This plan provides guidance for all essential workers, contractors and staff entering in and out or who will be travelling throughout the West Daly Region.

Only essential workers authorised by the Approved Remote Essential Workers (AREW) program working in conjunction with Northern Territory Land Councils can now visit remote communities. All previous permits issued prior to 14 March 2020 have been revoked.

Anyone intending to travel to or through a remote community will need to be an 'AREW'. Each essential worker travelling to a designated area will be required to carry upon them an AREW Card issued by the Northern Territory Government.

Essential Workers

Essential Workers are categorised as follows:

- are essential for the proper functioning of the Territory; or
- needs an exemption to avoid unusual, undeserved, or disproportionate hardship; or
- are governed by a COVID-19 management plan, imposed by the employer of The person or class of persons, to prevent the transmission of COVID-19.

Essential Activities

Essential Activities under the under the Commonwealth Biosecurity legislation (Determination 2020) are as follows:

- Health care
- Education
- Services relating to the prevention of, or recovery from, domestic violence
- Services relating to child protection
- Policing services
- Emergency services
- Essential services of a kind typically provided by local government
- Services, benefits, programs or facilities that the Chief Executive Centrelink has the function of providing
- Correctional services
- Funerary services
- Conducting, or taking part in, a sitting of a court or tribunal in the area
- Operating, maintaining or repairing equipment for providing electricity, gas, water, telecommunications, medical services or other essential infrastructure
- Delivering food, fuel, mail or medical supplies
- Obtaining medical care or medical supplies
- Continuing the construction in the area of housing or transport infrastructure that was in progress immediately before the commencement of the declaration, and
- Transporting freight to or from a place in the area.

THE PLAN

All essential workers, working within the West Daly Region are to abide by and follow the instructions listed below to minimise unnecessary contact with persons in the West Daly Region. Council will help minimise the spread of COVID-19 by:

- Ensuring all employees maintain appropriate social distancing - being able to maintain a distance of 1.5 metres between people
- Provision of hand hygiene products and suitable rubbish bins, with frequent cleaning and waste Disposal.

- No face-to-face meetings, gatherings or mixing of Territory and West Daly employees and exempt employees from outside the Region.
- If an employee becomes unwell (fever, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath), self-isolate the employee, do not send the employee to work, if the employee fits the criteria for testing, call GP or health clinic.
- Provision of separate facilities for employees from outside the Northern Territory and Territory employees.

West Daly Regional Council Staff

All staff are required to practice social distancing where possible.

Staff employed in positions (Community Night Patrol and Garbage Collection) that require direct or close proximity to persons of the Community must ensure that they follow the standard hygiene practices to minimise risk of infection. These include but are not limited to:

- cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or flexed elbow when you cough or sneeze
- wash your hands or use hand sanitiser after you cough or sneeze
- wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 30 seconds
 - after coughing or sneezing
 - before preparing food or eating
 - after toilet use
- avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

Employees are required to self-manage in accordance with this plan and employees when unwell can access leave provisions as outlined in Council's Enterprise Agreement.

West Daly Regional Council will provide Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including gloves, face masks and hand sanitisers to all staff providing an essential service. West Daly will also provide alcohol based sanitisers to wipe down vehicles, equipment and service areas after each use. Disposal of used PPE and sanitisers are to be placed in plastic bags inside rubbish bins and disposed of following the safe handling protocols.

Where possible staff that are not performing an essential service will be sent home until they are needed or can be temporarily redeployed to an essential service either within the Council or their Community, they will not lose their job due to COVID-19.

The Executive Team and Managers are encouraged to work from home where possible, these staff will be issued a Laptop and other necessary office equipment as required to allow work to be done from home.

The Council will also make available its current unoccupied accommodation to self-isolate employees and essential workers who may become ill and or develop symptoms that require testing.

Contractors

Works required to maintain essential infrastructure or to ensure properties are safe, secure and habitable are considered essential works. Travel to communities and Homelands will be limited to the completion of housing construction that is already underway, and immediate and urgent repair works from tenant and government housing such as:

- Burst water pipe or major leak
- Broken or blocked toilets or drains
- Exposed electrical wiring (or no electricity to the premises)
- Security issues
- A fault or damage that makes premises unsafe, insecure or is likely to cause injury.

Contractors who have AREW Card are to:

- Only have direct contact with community resident of the relevant property and limit this contact where possible.
- Confirm with residents before travelling, and before entering any property, that occupants are not in self-quarantine, self-isolation or unwell.
- No face-to-face meetings, gatherings or mixing of other Community, Homelands, Territory employees and exempt employees from outside the West Daly Region and the Territory.
- Advise residents that they are taking all precautions regarding hygiene and infection as directed by the Northern Territory Department of Health and the Northern Territory Chief Health Officer. This includes not shaking hands and maintaining a distance of 1.5 metres from persons.
- Bring their own food and supplies to avoid having to go to community stores.
- Employ appropriate cleaning practices before and after visiting communities and Homelands as part of good hygiene practice – wipe down and sanitise surfaces of vehicles and any equipment used after use.
- Practice good personal hand hygiene and cough/sneeze hygiene:
 - Wash your hands frequently with soap and water, before and after eating, and after going to the toilet; and
 - Cough/sneeze into your elbow, or use a tissue and dispose of tissues, and use an alcohol based hand sanitiser. Used tissues are to be sealed in plastic bags and disposed on in accordance with current guidelines.

Essential Workers/Exempt Persons

Persons and classes of persons that are essential to the proper functioning of the Territory may be deemed by the Chief Health Officer as essential personnel and exempt from the self-quarantine rules that apply when entering the West Daly Region.

All persons including Northern Territory residents who intend on entering into the West Daly Region and who are not exempted persons, are required to self-quarantine for 14 days prior to entering the West Daly Region.

Persons that meet the criteria for exemption under the Public and Environmental Health Act 2011 are not required to self-quarantine for 14 days but must still comply with strict conditions during their time in the Northern Territory and the West Daly Region.

All essential persons are required to apply for a AREW Card before entry into the West Daly Region is undertaken. Persons leaving the West Daly Region and entering into another Region are required to self-isolate before re-entering into the West Daly Region except for those that have an AREW Card issued by the Chief Health Officer.

Not all staff of West Daly Regional Council will be required to apply for a AREW Card, only those providing an essential service to the continuing Local Government operations of the West Daly Regional Council need to apply.

Essential Workers are included in the following list of services:

- Health services
- Emergency services
- National and Territory security and governance
- Specialist skills critical to continuity of industry or business and the maintenance of competitive operations and infrastructure
- Transport, freight and logistics
- Is essential for the proper functioning of the Northern Territory
- Essential services of a kind typically provided by local government
- Needs an exemption to avoid unusual, undeserved or disproportionate hardship; or
- Is governed by a COVID-19 management plan, imposed by the employer of the person or class of persons, to prevent the transmission of COVID 19.

Conditions for exempt persons

All exempt persons entering the Northern Territory and West Daly Region must still practice appropriate measures to limit the spread of coronavirus. If you are entering the West Daly Region and are exempt from self-quarantine you must:

- Sleep in a single room and not reside in a shared room or dormitory style accommodation if you are staying overnight.
- Monitor yourself for symptoms of fever, cough, sore throat, muscular pains, shortness of breath and unexpected tiredness.
- Take all reasonable steps to stay at least 1.5 metres away from any other person. You must only be within 1.5 metres of another person to:
 - obtain life essential supplies or services that cannot be readily obtained online;
 - be tested or assessed for infection by COVID-19, or seek medical advice;
 - or carry out a compassionate purpose e.g. to visit a dying close relative in hospital or other care setting, if your exempt person status is based on compassionate grounds.
- Practice strict cough and sneeze hygiene, including covering mouth and nose, the use of disposable tissues, and washing hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and water or a hand-sanitizer. Disposable tissues are to be disposed of in sealed plastic bags and in accordance with current guidelines.

While in the West Daly Region and not working, exempt transport, freight, ship and flight crews must:

- self-quarantine for 14 days unless departing earlier, for example:
 - A truck driver can stay in their truck
 - A member of a ship's crew can stay on their ship
 - Comply with any directions given by the Chief Health Officer, COVID-19 Hotline or a medical practitioner.

What do I do if I get sick?

If you develop symptoms (fever, a cough, sore throat, tiredness or shortness of breath) you should arrange to see your doctor for urgent assessment.

You should telephone the health clinic before you arrive and tell them your travel history and if you have been in contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus or have returned from overseas or interstate. Your doctor will organise testing if they decide you meet the criteria.

If you can't contact or get to your GP, but you have the symptoms, you should call 1800 008 002. This is a dedicated NT wide coronavirus (COVID-19) number for people who need to arrange testing only.

You must remain quarantined either in your home, hotel, accommodation or a healthcare setting until public health authorities inform you it is safe for you to return to your usual activities.

If you have concerns about your health, speak to your doctor.

The following links are available to all employees that can assist in managing exposure as outlined in this plan:

<https://health.nt.gov.au/> (NT Health)

www.securent.nt.gov.au (NT Government)

www.who.int (World Health Organisation)

www.health.gov.au (Department of Health)

www.smartraveller.gov.au (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade)

4. Records Management and Privacy

At all times an individual's information regarding their personal health and wellbeing must remain private and confidential in compliance with Council's records management and privacy policies.

Health or personal information:

- Should only be used for the purpose for which it was collected
- Must not be disclosed to any other person (except with the consent of that person)
- Must be held securely for the prescribed requisite period of time

Where there is a risk that an AREW or employee has exposed other employees or members of the public to the Corona Virus, then Council will advise other employees or members of the public whom that employee may have exposed to the virus.

Council will at all times take steps to protect the privacy of individuals and not disclose the name of the employee, only the nature of the exposure.

REFERENCES

[Work Health Safety Act NT – 2012](#)

[Work Health Safety Regulations NT – 2012](#)

[Department of Health Emergency Response Plan for Communicable Disease Incidents of National Significance](#)

WDRC Policy HR 29 – Communicable Diseases

WDRC Policy GOV13 Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

WDRC Policy S01 WH&S Manual

WDRC Enterprise Agreement

FURTHER INFORMATION:

www.coronavirus.nt.gov.au

Chief Executive Officer



Shaun Hardy
Chief Executive Officer

6 April 2020